**Joint culture in the armed forces is way forward: CDS**

Stating that jointness and integration are prerequisites to the creation of functional Integrated Theatre Commands (ITC), the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), General Anil Chauhan, said on Tuesday that theatre commands would lay the foundation for catapulting the armed forces into the next orbit of military preparedness and war fighting.

“The creation of such commands will separate the ‘operational’ functions from the Raise-Train-Sustain (RTS) and other administrative functions, and will allow greater focus of the operational commander to matters of security,” Gen. Chauhan said at the 22nd Major General Samir Sinha memorial lecture organised at the United Service Institution of India.

Jointness 2.0, which is developing a joint culture in the armed forces, is the way forward, he stressed, calling upon the three Services to create a joint culture as they move towards forming joint operational structures. The CDS said Jointness 1.0 was about better bonhomie and consensus among the Services, and as there were no major differences, there is an impetus to move towards the next level which is Jointness 2.0.

Highest common factor

“Joint culture, though different from service-specific culture, needs to respect the uniqueness of each Service. We must be able to distil the best of each Service, and incorporate the highest common factor, rather than settle for the least common denominator,” Gen. Chauhan said. In this regard, he said the proposed ITCs would not be an end state but the beginning of the next set of reforms.

The ITC would lead to many reforms such as single to multi-domain operations, fusing space and cyberspace into traditional domains, digitisation of battlefield information and visualisation, net-centric to data-centric among others, he added.

Mandate of CDS

The mandate of the CDS is to ensure “jointness” of the three Services in operations, logistics, transport, training, support services, communications, repairs and maintenance and the top priority is the reorganisation of the armed forces geography-centric ITC.

The effort got delayed due to a lack of consensus between the Services and was stalled by the death of the first CDS, Gen. Bipin Rawat, and then the delay in the appointment of his successor. With Gen. Anil Chauhan taking over as the second Chief of Defence Staff, the stalled process is back on track and is in advanced stages. The formation of ITC has also been included by the BJP in its election manifesto.