Tri-Services Integration – The Challenges

Why in news?

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- India is aspiring to integrate its defence forces command.
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- Recent comments from the high ranking military personnel clearly show their disinterest for such a move.
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How did the controversy brew?

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- Vice Chief of Air Staff, Air Marshal S.B.Deo, recently opined that services integration will affect budgets & resource optimization.
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- Also, Army Chief ‘General Bipin Rawat’ had said that the primacy of the Army in the envisioned joint services should be maintained.
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- These developments could unleash another round of inter-service turf war and affect several decisions on services integration.
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- This will also delay the commissioning of specialised commands for cyber space and Special Forces.
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- Notably, 34 recommendations relating to services integration are pending before the union cabinet currently.
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How is the progress in constituting a CDS?

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- K.Subramanyam committee that was constituted after Kargil, proposed the

creation of the post of “Chief of Defence Staff – CDS”.
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- CDS was envisoned as a full-fledged five star officer who would be senior to the forces chiefs – (The proposal never went through).
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- After much deliberation, consensus has veered towards a Permanent Chairman for Chiefs of Staff Committee (CoSC).
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- The permanent chair is proposed to be a four star officer – who will be equivalent to the three service chiefs.
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- Some voice that this will only enhance the protocol nightmare.
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How does the future look?

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- India’s primary threats are still on land, from the northern and western borders but newer challenges have emerged.
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- The Indian Ocean is becoming a major arena of friction, with increasing Chinese forays.
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- While the threat of war stills exists, conventional full-scale war is not a possibility anymore.
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- Future combats are expected to be majorly short and swift engagements which call swift action by the forces in unison.
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- The recently released ‘Joint military doctrine’ of the Indian armed forces was a welcome move to enhance coordination.
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- A lot of work is needed on the ground to achieve even a fraction of what has been articulated in the doctrine.
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Source: The Hindu

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