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ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR COMMAND (ANC) COULD BE A FIT MODEL FOR CREATING THEATRE COMMANDS

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ORGANISED BY CENJOWS
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Lt General Ajai Singh began his lecture by explaining about the meaning of 'theaterisation' and gave examples from his tenure while he served as a Commander in chief in Andaman Nicobar Islands in India. He spoke about theaterisation in the context of India initially and then switched to speaking about China.

Theaterisation means the reorganisation of military commands in order to make it more effective. This idea works under a specific geographical entity for creating these commands. General Singh quoted, "*theaterisation is not an option anymore*". In the relevance of India, he explained that how India is doing theaterisation which includes "*decision making, accountability and empowerment*". It has been designed to control all assets of the military. It includes Army, Navy and the Air Force).

Currently, there is only one theatre command in India and that too in Adaman Nicobar Islands. Since, General Singh was posted in Adaman islands, so he was able to speak about the situation prevailing there precisely. He said that Adaman Command is under CDS, a model which needs to be adopted for all future theatre commands. Indian troops are now familiar to the idea of theaterisation post the Kargil War.

The Andaman Command is based in Port Blair and was created on October 01, 2001. General Singh spoke about the relevance of securing India's security interests in the Malacca Strait and Southeast Asian region. He showed the map of the world and spoke about some trading routes including the relevance of Hambantota port, Strait of Malacca and Sudan strait. He highlighted as to how the real estate placed under C in C from individual services has helped in transforming the optimisation of land, a practice which needs to be adopted pan India.

Over the years, theaterisation, has been discussed by the government of India, however over the past one year, the current BJP government, which had introduced theaterisation in their manifesto in their third term and with the bill introduced on 8th August 2023, it can be pointed out that after 23 years, the Indian Government has finally realized the importance of theaterisation for the Indian armed forces, since

today India is fighting a war on two fronts with two different neighbours, China and Pakistan and as General Ajai Singh quoted *"If you want to make decisions by a committee as prevalent now then the decisions will always be slow."*

He emphasized that India should have a clear security strategy in mind indicating to the need of theaterisation. The lecture also highlighted the shift in theaterisation from committee command to theatre command. Apart from the importance of shift to theatre command, the General also highlighted the Russia-Ukraine war and discussed how crucial decisions that were taken by the European Union's committee command have not always been only slow but have been harmful to Ukraine.

Therefore, over the years, the fact can be established that theaterisation is a not a concept on a paper but is needed in practicality since India faces a constant threat from China, needs a joint and a proper chain of command which is not slowed down by a joint committee taking slow decisions. Though over the years, with a proper chain of command through theaterization, the government and the armed forces should also consider uniformity in all the domains.