

# Create joint culture: CDS Gen Chauhan to armed forces as govt looks at rolling out theatre commands

## ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: The proposed theatre commands will lay the foundation for catapulting the armed forces into the next orbit of military preparedness and war fighting, Chief of Defence Staff Gen Anil Chauhan said on Tuesday.

His comments came as India looks at implementing the ambitious and long-awaited theaterisation plan.

In an address at an event, the Chief of Defence Staff Chief also called upon the three services to create a joint culture as they move towards forming "joint operational structures".

He said the theatre commands will not be an end state but the beginning of the next set of reforms.

The integrated theatre commands will lead to many reforms like single to multi

domain operations, fusing space and cyber space into traditional domains, digitisation and visualisation, net centric to data centric among others, he said.

Developing joint culture in the armed forces would be "jointness 2.0" which is the way forward, the Chief of Defence Staff said delivering the Maj Gen Samir Sinha Memorial Lecture.

He 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".

Acknowledging the distinct culture of all the three services, Gen Chauhan underscored that there was a need to create a fourth culture in the services.

"We must be able to distill the best of each service, and incorporate the highest common factor, rather than settle for the least common denominator," said the Chief of Defence Staff.

He mentioned various initiatives of symbology that were being processed towards fostering the joint culture, including tri-services participation in national events.

Under the theaterisation model, the government seeks to integrate the capabilities of the army, air force and navy and optimally utilise their resources for wars and operations.

According to the theaterisation plan, each of the theatre commands will have units of the Army, the Navy and the Air Force and all of them will work as a single entity looking after security challenges

in a specified geographical territory.

At present, the Army, Navy and the Air Force have separate commands.

The theatre commands are being planned to integrate the capabilities of the three services and to ensure optimal utilisation of their resources.

In his address, the Chief of Defence Staff termed jointness and integration as prerequisites to the creation of functional integrated theatre commands, and explained the significance of such commands.

"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," he said.

# MoS Ajay Bhatt hails Project Udbhav, says it focuses on making Army 'future-ready'

## ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Union minister Ajay Bhatt said Tuesday the strength of a country resides not only in its military might but also in its ability to adapt to changing circumstances and leverage its cultural heritage as a source of power.

The minister of state for defence was addressing an event at the National Museum here to mark the culmination of Project Udbhav, which aims to promote indigenous discourse in the Army by integrating India's ancient strategic acumen into a contemporary military domain with a focus on making the force "future-ready".

The project is a collaboration of the Indian Army and Delhi-based think-tank United Service Institution of India (USI).



Praising the Army and USI, Bhatt said, "The aim of this project envisioned by USI is to find invaluable insights into our strategic culture by finding ancient texts and oral traditions... The geopolitical landscape is continuously evolving and it is necessary for our armed forces to be adaptive and innovative in their thinking."

In his address, the minister also praised the ancient Indian philosophy of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam', which was part of the tagline used by India during its year-long presidency of the G20.

"The ancient principle of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'... has transcended cultural boundaries and become a guiding light in international diplomacy," Bhatt said.

The Union minister said that in the last decade, the government of India has started a significant journey towards promoting indigenisation initiatives in various areas.

From health to manufacturing and from basic infrastructure to defence, solid efforts have been made for a

strong national commitment towards indigenisation, he added.

"There is a need to honestly make efforts to imbibe Indian thoughts and values even in our works and decisions. The dream of 'Viksit Bharat' can only be realised when we fully understand the priceless wisdom of our ancient past and implement it contextually in shaping modern ambitions and policies," he said.

The event was also attended by Army Chief Gen Manoj Pande and other senior officials of the force.

Bhatt further said that by delving into India's ancient texts and traditions, Project Udbhav "not only enriches our understanding of strategic culture but also lends a valuable discerning thinking on unconventional war strategies, diplomatic traditions, and moral thoughts in a war".

"As we delve into our history and understand it deeply, it is essential to identify that historical narratives are not limited to buildings and objects alone, there is a sea of knowledge beyond that.

"In our ancient texts, there is a rich history, historians are well aware of this and it is a subject of continuous research, which the defence minister has earlier done," Bhatt said.

Therefore, the minister said, it is important that "we continuously discuss our history, and reevaluate it so that we can ensure that our past is neither distorted nor oversimplified".

The Army chief said in his address that the project was launched at the maiden edition of the Indian Military Heritage Festival last October by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

Bhatt also said that India's history is an amalgamation of different thoughts and accomplishments which is a source of inspiration not only for Indians but also for people around the world.

Today, through social media and other digital platforms, the dissemination of information has connected the world together, due to which curiosity towards India's ancient knowledge systems is growing in the world, the Union minister added.

Bhatt also inaugurated an exhibition themed on the 'Evolution of Indian Military Systems, Warfighting, and Strategic Thought -- from Antiquity to Independence', which showcases the evolution of India's military systems and strategy.

# Can court examine legality of arrest after cognisance of ED's complaint taken: SC to Hemant Soren

## ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Tuesday asked former Jharkhand chief minister Hemant Soren whether a writ court can examine the legality of his arrest after the trial court has taken cognisance of the prosecution complaint filed by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in the money laundering case against him related to an alleged land scam.

A vacation bench of Justices Dipankar Datta and Satish Chandra Sharma, which posted the matter for further hearing on Wednesday, asked Soren's counsel to first satisfy the court as to how interim bail can be granted to him for campaigning in the Lok Sabha poll when his application for regular bail has been dismissed.

"The trial court, after taking a prima facie view that offence has been committed, has passed a judicial order taking cognisance of prosecution complaint. What will happen to that judicial order especially when it has not been challenged? You have to satisfy us, can a writ court examine the legality of arrest after the judicial order taking cognisance has been passed," the bench told senior advocates Kapil Sibal and Arunabh Chowdhury, who appeared for Soren.

Both the lawyers sought time till Wednesday to respond to the court's queries.



Additional Solicitor General SV Raju, appearing for the ED, opposed Soren's interim bail plea, contending his case was different from that of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, who was granted interim bail on May 10 for campaigning in the general elections.

He said the trial court had on April 4 taken cognisance of the prosecution complaint, ED's equivalent of a charge sheet, upon finding that a prima facie case was made out against Soren.

Sibal said no offence of illegal possession of land is made out against Soren under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), which is not a predicate/scheduled offence.

"I am raising a question of constitutional infirmity. It relates to my freedom. It relates to taking away of my right to liberty under Article 21. Why can't I challenge my arrest under the PMLA, when no offence is made out. The writ court can interfere, if my rights are affected," he

said.

The senior lawyer submitted that if the court is not inclined to grant interim relief to Soren, then it will have to hold that the moment an accused moves a regular bail application, his right to challenge section 19 of the PMLA (power of arrest) stands extinguished.

"We need assistance on the issue from both the sides," the bench said while referring to the subsequent developments following Soren's arrest like dismissal by the high court of his plea challenging his arrest, cognisance of the prosecution complaint (charge sheet), and dismissal of his regular bail application.

Sibal said the trial court has only taken a prima facie view that an offence has been committed but the petitioner's case is that his arrest itself is bad in law.

"This is totally different. The material before the trial court does not disclose commission of offence under the PMLA and hence arrest is illegal," he said.

The bench said, "We need to have some intense debate on the issue and need assistance from both sides. We are keeping our mind open and have not formed our opinion. Satisfy us."

Sibal said the high court had reserved its order on Soren's plea challenging his arrest on February 28, and on May 3, the court pronounced the verdict.

"Yes, I have moved for regular bail before the trial court on April 15 but what else could I have done," he said, adding that the bail application was moved without any prejudice to Soren's rights and contentions.

Raju intervened and said that Soren simultaneously pursuing bail while challenging his arrest in the high court was akin to "riding two horses at a time".

Raju, who raised preliminary objections to the maintainability of Soren's petition, told the bench, "This case cannot be compared with the other case (Kejriwal's case). Else, every day someone will come challenging arrest and criminal proceedings will go for a toss. It will open a Pandora's box."

He added that unlike Kejriwal's case, Soren was arrested on January 31, long before the schedule for the Lok Sabha election was announced on March 16.

The ED has, in its affidavit, said Soren is actively attempt-

ing to "subvert" the probe in the money laundering case against him by "misusing state machinery". It has opposed his "special prayer" for interim bail to campaign in the Lok Sabha polls.

The agency said Soren's arrest on January 31 has been upheld by the Jharkhand High Court and his regular bail application dismissed by the trial court on May 13.

On May 13, Soren referred to the top court's order granting interim bail to Kejriwal in the money laundering case against him linked to the alleged Delhi excise scam and sought identical relief for himself.

In his appeal filed through advocate Pragya Baghel, the JMM leader said the high court had erred in dismissing his plea.

The ED has alleged that "huge amounts of proceeds of crime" were generated by Soren through manipulation of official records by showing dummy sellers and purchasers in the guise of forged/bogus documents to acquire huge parcels of land having value in crores of rupees.

The probe against Soren pertains to an 8.86-acre plot of land in Ranchi that the ED has alleged was illegally acquired by him.

Soren is currently lodged in judicial custody in Ranchi's Birsa Munda Central Jail.

# 290 cases of COVID-19 variant KP.2, 34 cases of KP.1 detected in India: INSACOG data

## ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: As many as 290 cases of KP.2 and 34 cases of KP.1, both sub-lineages of COVID-19 that are responsible for surge in cases in Singapore, have been found in India, according to official data.

However, a source in the Union health ministry told PTI that they are all sub-variants of JN.1 and there is no associated increase in hospitalization and severe cases.

"So there is no reason for concern or panic. The mutations will keep happening at a rapid pace and this is the natural behaviour of viruses like SARS-CoV2," the source said.

The source further said that the INSACOG surveillance is sensitive and is able to pick up the emergence of any new variant and sam-

ples are also picked from hospitals in a structured manner to detect any change in the severity of disease due to virus.

Data compiled by the Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (INSACOG) showed that 34 cases of KP.1 have been found across seven states and UTs with 23 cases registered from West Bengal.

The other states are Goa (1), Gujarat (2), Haryana (1), Maharashtra (4), Rajasthan (2) and Uttarakhand (1).

As many as 290 cases of KP.2 have been registered with Maharashtra reporting the highest number at 148, according to the data.

The other states and Union territories are Delhi (1), Goa (12), Gujarat (23), Haryana (3), Karnataka (4), Madhya Pradesh (1),

Odisha (17), Rajasthan (21), Uttar Pradesh (8), Uttarakhand (16) and West Bengal (36).

Singapore is seeing a new COVID-19 wave as the authorities recorded more than 25,900 cases from May 5 to 11 with KP.1 and KP.2 accounting for over two-thirds of cases in Singapore.

Globally, the predominant COVID-19 variants are still JN.1 and its sub-lineages, including KP.1 and KP.2.

KP.1 and KP.2 belong to a group of COVID-19 variants scientists have nicknamed 'FLiRT', after the technical names of their mutations.

The strains in FLiRT are all descendants of the JN.1 variant, an offshoot of the Omicron variant. KP.2 was classified by the World Health Organization as a Variant Under Monitoring.

# Cong leaders "failed" to protect party's constitution: Nirmala Sitharaman

## ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

PATNA: Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday slammed Congress leaders for spreading lies that the

NDA intends to change the constitution and said leaders of the grand old party should stop talking about such things as they "failed" to protect the constitution of their

own party just to promote one family.

"Congress and RJD leaders are spreading lies that the BJP-led NDA would change the Constitution after coming to power: Congress leaders should stop talking about protecting the Constitution. How can they talk about such things, when Congress leaders failed to protect the constitution of their own party? They must remember how former Congress president Sitaram Kesri was locked in a room to prevent any obstacle in Sonia Gandhi's elevation in the party", she said while interacting with media persons here.

Alleging that the RJD and Congress are trying to "rob" SCs, STs and OBCs of quotas and divert these to Muslims, she said, "They want to give reservation on the basis of religion to benefit Muslims only, which is against the Constitution. The Congress and RJD are trying to rob SCs, STs and OBCs of quotas and divert these to Muslims. The Congress party in Karnataka has already done this".

"When Congress was in power, it never gave due respect to Baba Saheb Ambedkar. He was given the Bharat Ratna in 1990. They don't deserve to speak about the Constitution or Baba Saheb Ambedkar. Modi Ji has taken several steps for uplift of the weaker sections of society...and also for the



overall growth of the country", she said.

She maintained that the accelerated growth of eastern states has always remained a top priority of the NDA-led Central government.

"The Central government wants eastern states - Bihar, West Bengal, Odisha - to become engines of growth for the whole country as part of the goal to make India a developed country by 2047", said the Union Finance Minister.

As far as Bihar is concerned, she said, "Bihar's growth was adversely affected due to 'jungle raj' before 2005. The per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Bihar was Rs 21,282 in 1991, higher than Odisha. But during 'jungle raj' it came down to Rs 14, 209, almost a 33 per cent drop in the Bihar per capita GDP. I must say that post-2002 per capita GDP in Bihar rose to Rs 37,000".

The NDA government has so far provided 40 lakh houses to poor people under the Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana (Rural and Urban), she added.

# Maliwal assault case: CM's silence speaks volumes about his stance on women's safety, says Delhi LG

## ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Delhi Lt Governor V K Saxena on Tuesday said Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's "deafening silence" on the alleged assault of AAP Rajya Sabha MP "speaks volumes of his stance on safety of women" and asked him to come clean on the matter.

The Delhi Police on Saturday arrested Kumar, an aide of Kejriwal, after Maliwal accused him of assaulting her on May 13 at the Delhi Chief Minister's official residence.

In a statement on X by Raj Niwas, Saxena said the Delhi Police is investigating the matter and it will be brought to its "logical conclusion."

He also called the alleged U-turn by the party on the matter "baffling."

"I have been deeply distressed over the unfolding media narrative over the last few days on the issue of alleged assault on Ms Swati Maliwal, MP, Aam Aadmi Party, at the residence of Chief Minister, when she went there to meet



him all alone.

"Yesterday, she called me out of sheer anguish, describing at length her traumatic experience, and the subsequent intimidation and shaming that she is being subjected to by her own colleagues. She also expressed concerns over reported tampering of evidence and coercion against her," he said.

On Kejriwal, Saxena said, "I would have expected that at least for the sake of propriety, my CM would have come clean, rather than being evasive and dodgy. His deafening silence speaks volumes of his stance on safety of women."

Delhi is the national capital and is home to the entire diplomatic community from around

the world and "such shameful incidents and the insensitive and conspiratorial contemptuous government response, on an issue of women safety, tarnishes India's image worldwide," he said.

"Had such an incident happened in any other Chief Minister's residence in the country, external forces with vested interests, inimical to India, would have unleashed a scathing global narrative around women safety in India. The absence of any outrage in this case leaves several questions unanswered," he said in the statement.

Saxena rooted for Maliwal even, as he said, she has been "vociferous," "hostile" and "blatantly partisan towards me

and my office, often criticizing me unjustifiably."

Saxena said it was "most disturbing" that the alleged scene of crime was the drawing room of the Chief Minister, even while he was allegedly present in the house, and that it was carried out by his "closest aide" on a woman who was alone.

"Her fellow member of Rajya Sabha confirmed her narrative in full media glare, and assured that the CM would take firm action against the culprit -- his aide.

"Subsequently, a total U turn was done in the matter; apparently at the behest of the highest functionary. This too is inexplicable and baffling," he said.

On May 14, senior AAP leader Sanjay Singh had said that the incident with Maliwal was "highly condemnable" and claimed that Kumar had "misbehaved" with her.

Days later, Atishi, in a press conference, termed the case a "BJP conspiracy" to frame Kejriwal and called Maliwal its "face."

# NIA conducts multi-state raids in Bengaluru's Ramshwaram Cafe blast case

## ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Tuesday carried out multi-state raids in connection with its probe in Bengaluru's Ramshwaram Cafe blast case, officials said.

Several customers and hotel staff members were injured, some of them griev-

ously, in the blast that caused extensive damage to the cafe in the IT city on March 1.

"Multi-states raids were underway in different locations," a senior NIA official said, without sharing further details.

The probe agency, that took over the case on March 3, had on April 12 arrested two key accused, including the mas-

termind Abdul Matheen Ahmed Taahaa, in the matter.

Taahaa and the other accused, Mussavir Hussain Shazib, who had allegedly placed the Improvised Explosive Device (IED) at the cafe, were arrested from a lodge near Kolkata, where they were staying under the assumed identities.

