

'PLANS UNDER WAY ON CREATION OF INTEGRATED BATTLE GROUPS'

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Proactive approach: The concept of IBG has already been validated by the 17 Mountain Strike Corps in its exercises. APAnupam Nath

The Army has identified a holding formation on the Western front and a Strike formation on the Northern borders to be converted into agile Integrated Battle Groups (IBG), Army chief Gen. Manoj Pande said while stating that consultations are complete and is now in the process of final compilation.

"The purpose of restructuring our existing formations into integrated battle groups was to have forces which are lean, agile and tailor-made which would afford the commanders the flexibility and more options for their employment in the respective theatres to achieve the desired outcomes. To that extent we have identified a holding formation on the Western front and a Strike formation on the Northern borders for the IBGisation to commence," Gen. Pande said in an interaction with a group of presspersons on Monday.

These consultations with all stakeholders we have more or less formalised and it is now in the process of final compilation, he said adding, once this happens they will see as to how this can be taken forward and apply to perhaps other formations in the Army.

The concept of IBG has already been test-bedded by the Army's 9 Corps and was later validated by the 17 Mountain Strike Corps in its exercises.

As reported by *The Hindu* earlier, each IBG would be tailor made based on Threat, Terrain and Task and resources will be allotted based on the three T's. The idea is for them to be light with centralised logistics and be able to mobilise within 12 -48 hrs based on the location.

While a Command is the largest static formation of the Army spread across a defined geography, a Corps is the largest mobile formation. Typically, each Corps has about three Divisions. The idea is to reorganise them into IBGs which are Brigade sized units but have all the essential elements like infantry, armoured, artillery and air defence embedded together. The IBGs will also be defence and offensive in nature.

After the terrorist attack on Parliament in 2001, the Indian military undertook massive mobilisation but the Army's formations which were deep inside took weeks to mobilise losing the element of surprise. Following this, the Army formulated a proactive doctrine known as 'Cold Start' to launch swift offensive, but its existence was denied in the past.

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