

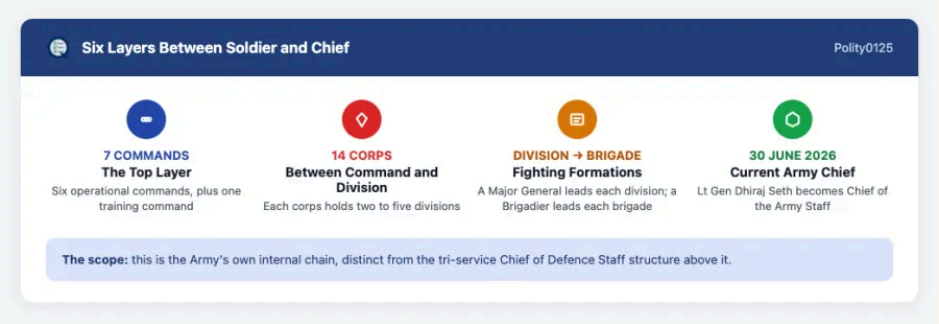
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# Structure of Indian Army

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# Structure of Indian Army

A single soldier sits inside six layers of command before reaching the Army Chief. This lesson shows how the Indian Army is actually organised, from Command down to Battalion. It also covers the new Army Chief and the theaterisation plan.




Command, Corps, Division, Brigade, Battalion: the Army's internal chain.

> **Commands** Seven: six operational + one training.
> **Corps** About 14 operational Corps.
> **Division** Led by a Major General.
> **Army Chief** Lt Gen Dhiraj Seth, from 30 June 2026.

**Command:** Top layer of the Army's chain.

**Corps:** Holds two to five divisions.

**Strike Corps:** Built for fast offensive operations.

**ARTRAC:** Army Training Command.

## 1 Chapter 1: The Chain of Command

*Must Know*

### Five levels

- The Army's internal chain runs Command → Corps → Division → Brigade → Regiment/Battalion.
- A single soldier sits inside six layers of command before reaching the Army Chief.
- This is the Army's own chain. It is separate from the tri-service Chief of Defence Staff structure above it.
- Read more: India's Defence Organisational Structure.

### Sizes

- A **Corps** holds two to five divisions.
- A **Division**, led by a Major General, holds three to four brigades.
- A **Brigade**, led by a Brigadier, holds three battalions.
- Read more: Divisions of Indian Army and Regiments of Indian Army.

**Remember:** Command → Corps → Division → Brigade → Battalion.

> **Quick check 1.** A Brigade, led by a Brigadier, holds three battalions. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

## 2 Chapter 2: The Seven Commands

*Must Know*

### Where they sit

- The Army has seven Commands: six operational and one training.
- **Northern Command:** Udhampur.
- **Southern Command:** Pune.
- **Eastern Command:** Kolkata.

- **Western Command:** Chandimandir.
- **Central Command:** Lucknow.
- **South Western Command:** Jaipur.
- **Training Command (ARTRAC):** Shimla. Read more: Himachal Pradesh.

## The oldest Command

- Southern Command, established in 1908, is the Army's oldest Command.
- It predates independence by nearly four decades.
- Its colonial-era origins sit beside Northern Command's present focus on Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh.
- So the Command map reflects both colonial origins and current strategic priorities.

> **Quick check 2.** North Eastern Command is one of the Army's seven Commands. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

# 3 Chapter 3: Corps and Strike Corps

*Good to Know*

## About 14 Corps

- The Army fields around 14 operational Corps.
- Some are dedicated Strike Corps built for offensive operations.
- Most Corps are “holding” formations. They are built to defend a fixed stretch of border.
- A Strike Corps is built, equipped and placed to launch a fast offensive push into enemy territory if war breaks out.
- India keeps a small number of them. Offensive capability, not just border defence, is central to its deterrence posture.

## Why a separate Training Command

- Training sits in its own Command, not inside each operational Command.
- This is a deliberate choice. It centralises doctrine and instruction as one specialised function.

## Two layers, slowly merging

- The Army’s Command structure and the tri-service CDS structure are two separate layers today.
- Reforms like theaterisation aim to merge pieces of both, without fully replacing either.

**Quick check 3.** Most Corps are holding formations; a Strike Corps is built for fast offensive operations. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

**Think it through: Think it through: why keep training in its own Command?**

Each operational Command is busy with its border or region. A single training Command keeps one standard of doctrine and instruction across the whole Army.

# 4 Chapter 4: Past Paper

*Exam Point of View*

## CDS (II) 2016: the fake-Command trap

- The question asked which of four options is **not** one of the Army's Commands: South Western, North Eastern, Central or ARTRAC.
- The trap is "North Eastern Command". It sounds real because the Army works heavily in the northeast, but no such Command exists.
- The real seven are Northern, Southern, Eastern, Western, Central, South Western and ARTRAC.
- (Source: CDS (II) 2016, Q103.)

**Quick check 4.** The Southern Command is the newest of the Army's Commands. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

# 5 Chapter 5: In the News, 2026

*Current Affairs*

## A new Army Chief

- On 30 June 2026, Lieutenant General **Dhiraj Seth** became Chief of the Army Staff. He succeeded General Upendra Dwivedi.
- (Source: PIB.)
- He was commissioned into the Armoured Corps in December 1986.
- He is the first Armoured Corps officer to lead the Army in nearly three decades, since General Shankar Roy Chowdhury.
- He had commanded both South Western Command and Southern Command before becoming Chief. That is a rare distinction.
- A Chief's own Corps background often shapes which operational priorities get emphasis at the top.
- Read more: Dhiraj Seth.

## Theaterisation enters its final phase

- India's long-delayed plan to merge Army, Navy and Air Force units into joint Theatre Commands is nearing final government approval in 2026.
- (Source: The Federal.)
- The plan centres on three Theatre Commands: a Northern one focused on China, a Western one focused on Pakistan, and a Maritime one covering the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- Chief of Defence Staff General N.S. Raja Subramani took over on 31 May 2026. He inherited the final blueprint and is presenting it for Cabinet Committee on Security approval.

## Two Army legends

- Read more: Sam Manekshaw and K.M. Cariappa, who rose within this same hierarchy.

**Quick check 5.** Lt Gen Dhiraj Seth became Army Chief on 30 June 2026. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

## Quick Q&A

- **Commands in the Army?** Seven.
- **Oldest Command?** Southern, 1908.
- **Corps holds?** Two to five divisions.
- **Army Chief 2026?** Lt Gen Dhiraj Seth.
- **Theatre Commands planned?** Three.

## Practice MCQs

**1. What is the correct order of the Indian Army's internal hierarchy, from top to bottom?**

**A.** Corps, Command, Division, Brigade

**B.** Command, Corps, Division, Brigade

**C.** Brigade, Division, Corps, Command

**D.** Division, Command, Corps, Brigade

See answer ↓

**2. Which Indian Army command is headquartered at Udhampur, and is responsible for Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh?**

**A.** South Western Command

**B.** Central Command

**C.** Northern Command

**D.** Western Command

See answer ↓

**3. Which officer rank typically leads an Indian Army Division?**

**A.** Colonel

**B.** Brigadier

**C.** Major General

**D.** Lieutenant General

See answer ↓

**4. Lt Gen Dhiraj Seth, who became Chief of the Army Staff on 30 June 2026, comes from which corps?**

**A.** Armoured Corps

**B.** Corps of Engineers

**C.** Army Ordnance Corps

**D.** Infantry

See answer ↓

**5. The Indian Army is organised into how many commands?**

**A.** 4

**B.** 6

**C.** 5

**D.** 7

See answer ↓

**6. Which of these is NOT one of the Indian Army's commands?**

**A.** Army Training Command

**B.** South-Western Command

**C.** Central Command

**D.** South-Eastern Command

See answer ↓

# Answer Key

1. **B.** The Indian Army's internal hierarchy runs: Command, then Corps, then Division, then Brigade, then Regiment/Battalion. ↑ Q1
2. **C.** Northern Command, headquartered at Udhampur, is responsible for Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. ↑ Q2
3. **C.** A Division, holding three to four brigades, is led by a Major General. ↑ Q3
4. **A.** Lt Gen Dhiraj Seth comes from the Armoured Corps, commissioned in December 1986, the first Armoured Corps officer to become Army Chief in nearly three decades. ↑ Q4
5. **D.** The Indian Army has 7 commands (6 operational plus the Army Training Command). ↑ Q5
6. **D.** There is no 'South-Eastern Command' — the Army's commands include South-Western, Central, and the Army Training Command. ↑ Q6

## Quick-check answers

1. **True.** ↑ 1
2. **False.** ↑ 2
3. **True.** ↑ 3
4. **False.** ↑ 4
5. **True.** ↑ 5

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