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A Startup Revolution, the Goal of 'Innovation Capital'

Context

- In recent years, **Tamil Nadu has emerged as a dynamic hub for innovation and entrepreneurship**, moving far beyond its traditional industrial identity rooted in manufacturing.
- The **story of Torus Robotics**, a young company that began its journey in a government-backed incubation program and **went on to sign a ₹100-crore investment memorandum** with the Government of Tamil Nadu, **symbolises this transformation**.
- **What makes such stories remarkable is not just the success of individual startups but the deliberate, system-driven approach** that the State has adopted to nurture, scale, and integrate startups into its economic growth strategy.

Pillars of Tamil Nadu's Startup Revolution

- **Catalytic Role of State Capital**
 - The **Tamil Nadu Startup Seed Grant Fund (TANSEED)** exemplifies this principle. By providing seed grants of ₹10 lakh to startups and ₹15 lakh to women-led, green-tech, and rural ventures, **the State has managed to generate an impressive 28-fold multiplier effect** in private investment.
 - **Startups like Ippopay, Gallabox, and Dream Aerospace**, initially backed by modest grants, went on to **attract more than ₹537 crore in follow-on investments**.
 - Tamil Nadu has **extended this model to frontier sectors as well**.
 - The **Tamil Nadu Space Tech Fund**, with milestone-based assistance of up to ₹50 lakh, supports innovations ranging from satellite development to AI-driven geospatial solutions.
 - **Such initiatives demonstrate the State's forward-looking commitment** to positioning itself as a leader in deep-tech.
- **Inclusion as Strategy, Not Charity**
 - Recognising structural barriers faced by historically disadvantaged groups, **the government launched the SC/ST Startup Fund, which has already disbursed over ₹60 crore** in equity investments.
 - The **Periyar Social Justice Venture Lab furthers this mission**, helping marginalised entrepreneurs access acceleration programs, networks, and funding opportunities.

- Tamil Nadu's focus on women entrepreneurs has been equally robust.
- **Bootcamps like Thozhili have equipped hundreds of women** with training and incubation support, while special seed grants for physically challenged and transgender founders ensure that innovation opportunities are universally accessible.
- **The Gramam Thorum Puthozhil scheme**, aiming to establish 100 startups in 100 villages, extends entrepreneurship to rural communities, decentralising wealth creation.

• **A Connected, Decentralised Ecosystem**

- By setting up **ten regional hubs across cities like Madurai, Coimbatore, Tiruchi, and Salem**, the government ensures that infrastructure, mentorship, and markets are within reach of entrepreneurs across the State.
- **Plans to roll out 100 pre-incubation centres** in smaller institutions further democratise access to entrepreneurial pathways.
- **Digital platforms like MentorTN and TANFUND complement physical hubs**, enabling seamless connections between mentors, investors, and entrepreneurs.
- **Similarly, initiatives such as StartupTN Smart Card, BrandLabs, and the Corporate Innovation Initiative reduce operational frictions** and integrate startups with established enterprises.
- This **systemic approach ensures that entrepreneurs receive not only funding but also access to knowledge**, branding tools, and market linkages.

Implications and Future Strategy: From Systems to Global Recognition

- The transformation of Tamil Nadu's startup ecosystem **illustrates the power of systems over slogans**.
- **By institutionalising support structures**, embedding inclusion, and fostering collaboration between government, academia, and industry, **Tamil Nadu has built a compounding engine of innovation**.
- Where once startups struggled in isolation, **today they thrive within an enabling environment**.
- This **momentum is set to culminate in the Tamil Nadu Global Startup Summit (TNGSS) 2025**, to be held in Coimbatore.
- **Designed as a landmark event, the summit will bring together over 30,000 visitors, 2,000 delegates, and 750 exhibitors from 35 countries**.
- **With inclusive facilities for women participants, AI-enabled matchmaking for investors and entrepreneurs, and masterclasses from global leaders such as Google, Meta, Microsoft, and Harvard Innovation Labs, the summit promises to cement Tamil Nadu's place as a global innovation hub**.

Conclusion

- **Tamil Nadu's journey from an industrial economy to a vibrant startup ecosystem** highlights the transformative potential of inclusive, well-designed policy frameworks.
- **By focusing on catalytic capital, structural inclusion, and decentralised networks, the State has created a model where innovation is not confined to elite circles** but spread across communities and demographics.

- **With the upcoming Global Startup Summit 2025**, Tamil Nadu is poised not only to showcase its achievements but also to **write the next chapter in India's innovation story**, one where systems enable dreams, and startups are not just born, but built to last.

A Startup Revolution, the Goal of 'Innovation Capital' FAQs

Q1. What are the three pillars of Tamil Nadu's startup strategy?

Ans. The three pillars are catalytic use of State capital, inclusion as a core growth strategy, and the creation of a decentralised, connected ecosystem.

Q2. How has Tamil Nadu's startup ecosystem grown in the last four years?

Ans. Tamil Nadu's registered startups have increased six-fold, from 2,032 to over 12,100, with half of them being women-led.

Q3. What is the role of TANSEED in supporting startups?

Ans. TANSEED provides seed grants to early-stage startups, which has generated a 28-fold multiplier effect in attracting private investment.

Q4. How does Tamil Nadu promote inclusion in entrepreneurship?

Ans. The State supports women, SC/ST, rural, physically challenged, and transgender entrepreneurs through dedicated funds, bootcamps, and incubation programs.

Q5. What is the significance of the Tamil Nadu Global Startup Summit 2025?

Ans. The summit aims to connect entrepreneurs, investors, and global leaders, showcasing Tamil Nadu as a global hub for innovation and collaboration.

Source: **The Hindu**

The Battlefield, Change and the Indian Armed Forces

Context

- **Artificial intelligence, automation, swarms of drones**, and inexpensive precision weapons have radically lowered the cost of force while accelerating decision cycles and amplifying operational risk.
- **For India, facing potential confrontations along two fronts and in multiple domains**, the consequence is stark: technological purchases alone will not suffice.
- **India must remake the architecture of power:** doctrine, command, force design, professional military education (PME), and the defence industrial base must be integrated into a single, adaptive system.

The problem: fissures between technology and organisation

- The **Indian Armed Forces have taken essential steps**, new doctrines (Joint Doctrine, 2017; Army Land Warfare Doctrine, 2018), tri-service agencies for cyber and space, and capability buys such as MQ-9B drones and Rafale-M fighters.

- Yet **capabilities without coherent command structures** and cultural alignment **risk being stove-piped**.
- **Despite political emphasis on jointness for over a decade**, joint PME and **true operational integration are only now being implemented**; the pace of organisational change has lagged operational needs.
- The **underlying problem is not a single deficiency but a mismatch**: a technological tempo that demands rapid, multi-domain responses and an institutional tempo that favours slow, service-centred decision cycles.

Proposed Solutions

• From coordination to command: Theatre Commands and Legal Reforms

- Moving from mere coordination to unified command is the **central organisational prescription**.
- **Empowering theatre commanders** with administrative and disciplinary authority (as reflected in recent rules) **aligns authority with responsibility**, a prerequisite for fast, coherent action.
- But **authority must be paired with accountability**, legal clarity, and safeguards. Phased activation of theatre commands, with clear metrics and sunset reviews, will help manage inter-service resistance while proving operational utility.
- **The alternative, half-measures that give commanders fragments of authority, will only preserve the worst of both worlds**: confusion in crisis and inertia in peace.

• Doctrine and multi-domain evolution

- Future conflicts will be multi-domain from the opening salvo: **choices made in cyberspace, space, and the information environment will shape kinetic outcomes**.
- Doctrine must therefore be anticipatory. **India's Ran Samvad emphasis on hybrid warriors**, officers versed in scholarship, technology and narrative shaping, is a necessary conceptual shift.
- **Doctrine must move beyond stove-piped playbooks** to multi-domain campaigns that synchronise ISR, cyber effects, electronic warfare, maritime denial, and precision fires.
- The **Joint Doctrine and land warfare publications supply a baseline**, but doctrines must be living documents updated continuously through experimentation, red-teaming, and integrating lessons from exercises into PME.

• Force design: modularity, speed, and logistics

- The **emergence of Integrated Battle Groups (Rudra)** and modular units (Bhairav) is a practical response to the need for speed and tailored lethality.
- These **mission-specific brigades promise 12-48-hour deployments** with integrated armour, artillery, engineers, drones and loitering munitions.
- **But rapid entry forces demand rapid logistics**, resilient C2, and joint sustainment: absence of logistic parity will render fast brigades brittle.

- **Equally, maritime reforms, carrier-centred posture bolstered by Rafale-M, strengthen blue-water options**, yet need an unmanned and subsurface roadmap to deter across the spectrum of conflict.
- **Professional Military Education and the technologist-commander**
 - Reforming PME to produce technologist-commanders is vital.
 - **Officers must be fluent in code**, data-centred decision-making, and information operations; they must also be comfortable failing fast in controlled settings and iterating.
 - **Embedding rapid prototyping into exercises, creating joint courses** with industry and universities, and rotating technologists through command postings will break the knowledge-silo barrier.
 - **Education without institutional pathways** for technologists to rise into **command echelons will, however, blunt the initiative.**

Risks and mitigation

- **Inter-service rivalry:** Mitigate via phased authority transfer, joint career pathways, and pooled incentives (budgets tied to joint readiness milestones).
- **Overcentralisation:** Avoid giving theatre commanders unchecked power; embed legal oversight and parliamentary reporting.
- **Cyber and AI vulnerabilities:** Invest in resilient architectures, adversarial testing, and human-in-the-loop safeguards for AI decisions.
- **Industrial bottlenecks:** Reform procurement, finance, and testing frameworks to enable the rapid prototyping loop.

Conclusion

- The **technologies that compress time and expand domains of conflict also demand that the nation knit its forces**, doctrine and industry **into an adaptive organism capable of rapid learning** and decisive action.
- The **textual prescription, theatre commands, modular forces, tri-service technologies**, joint PME and civil-military fusion, is **sound in orientation.**
- The **decisive factor will be execution: clear metrics, phased command activation with accountability**, relentless joint testing, and an industrial loop that rewards iteration.

The Battlefield, Change and the Indian Armed Forces FAQs

Q1. Why is jointness critical for India's armed forces today?

Ans. Jointness is critical because modern wars are multi-domain, and India faces simultaneous threats from China and Pakistan that require faster, integrated responses across land, sea, air, cyber, and space.

Q2. What is the main difference between "coordination" and "command" in military reforms?

Ans. Coordination involves services working together loosely, while command gives theatre commanders real

authority and accountability to lead integrated forces during operations.

Q3. How do Integrated Battle Groups (IBGs) strengthen India's readiness?

Ans. IBGs strengthen readiness by combining armour, artillery, engineers, and drones into modular units that can deploy within 12-48 hours to specific areas of confrontation.

Q4. What role does Professional Military Education (PME) play in future reforms?

Ans. PME trains technologist-commanders who can understand data, technology, and narratives, enabling them to lead effectively in multi-domain and information-centric wars.

Q5. Why must India establish clear metrics for military reforms?

Ans. Clear metrics are essential to measure progress, hold commanders accountable, and ensure reforms translate into real operational readiness rather than paper-based change.

Source: **The Hindu**

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