

Current Affairs



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Defence & Security

CDS: Role and Powers



Issue

General Bipin Rawat, the outgoing Chief of Army Staff will take charge as the first Chief of Defence Staff, the newly created integrated position to coordinate between armed forces.

Background

The CDS is a high military office that will oversee and coordinate the working of the three Services, and offer seamless tri-service views and single-point advice to the Executive.

Details

The CDS serves as the permanent Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee which has the three service chiefs as members, and also as the head of the newly created Department of Military Affairs (DMA) in the ministry. The former is a military role while the latter is a role in the government.

The CDS will act as the Principal Military Adviser to the Defence Minister only on tri-services matters.

The three service chiefs will continue to advise the Defence Minister, as done so far, on matters exclusively concerning their respective services.

The government has also made it explicitly clear that the CDS will not exercise any military command, including over the three service chiefs. But the service chiefs will be members of the Chiefs of Staff Committee, which will be headed by the CDS.

None of the powers of the service chiefs, including of advising the government, has been curtailed and transferred to the CDS.

The only thing is the role of Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee, which used to be headed by the senior-most chief by rotation.

That has been shelved with the CDS being the permanent Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee, where he will be supported by the Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff.

The CDS has been given a time-bound task, to be done within three years, to bring about jointness in operations, logistics, transport, training, support services, communications, and repairs and maintenance of the three services, which will eventually lead to shedding of responsibilities by the service headquarters.

As the head of the DMA, the CDS has to also facilitate restructuring of military commands for optimal utilisation of resources by bringing about jointness in operations, including through establishment of joint/ theatre commands.

CDS in other countries

United States: Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) is the nation's highest-ranking military officer and the principal military adviser to the President, the Secretary of Defence (equivalent to Minister for Defence in India) and the National Security Council.

The CJCS is part of, and heads, a high-ranking body called the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS). Apart from the CJCS, it consists of the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (VCJCS), the military service chiefs from the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Space Force, and the chief of the National Guard Bureau.

United Kingdom: Chief of the Defence Staff

The Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) is the professional head of the Armed Forces and principal military adviser to the Secretary of State for Defence (equivalent to Minister for Defence in India) and the government.

The UK CDS reports to the Defence Secretary and the Prime Minister. The post is based at the Ministry of Defence and works alongside the Permanent Under Secretary (also called Permanent Secretary), the senior civil servant in the Defence Ministry.

The CDS is the main military voice on the Defence Board. As the military strategic commander, CDS is responsible for how operations are carried out.

Australia: Chief of the Defence Force

Australia has a diarchy system, under which the Chief of the Defence Force (CDF) and the Secretary for the Department of Defence (a senior civilian public servant in the Ministry) jointly manage the Defence organisation. The CDF has primary responsibility for the command of the Australian Defence Force (ADF), and acts under the direction of the Minister of Defence.

The CDF is the principal military adviser to the Minister and provides advice on matters that relate to military activity, including military operations.

Notes

Al Shabaab militant group



Issue

A military base in Kenya, used by US and Kenyan forces, came under attack from the Al Shabaab militant group. US aircraft and vehicles were destroyed in the assault.

Background

There have been confrontations between the US and Al Shabaab in the past, but this is the first time the latter has struck US forces inside Kenya, considered to be a key base for fighting the highly resilient militant group.

Details

The Islamist Al Shabaab group is active in East Africa and is involved in the ongoing civil war in Somalia. The group has been fighting to overthrow the weak West-backed Somali government, the latter being supported by a 21,000-strong African Union peacekeeping force.

The US established Camp Simba in Kenya's Lamu county more than a decade ago, where it maintains under a 100 personnel. The US trains and gives counterterror support to its East African partners at the Manda Bay airfield that also acts as a base fighting against the group.

The group is responsible for many attacks such as suicide attack on an upscale hotel and office complex in Nairobi, raid on the Baledogle base in Somalia, which is used by both Somali special forces and American troops etc.

Al Shabaab

Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen, more commonly known as al-Shabaab is a jihadist fundamentalist group based in East Africa (Somalia in particular). In 2012, it pledged allegiance to the militant Islamist organization Al-Qaeda.

The group has retreated from the major cities; however, al-Shabaab still controls large parts of the rural areas.

Al-Shabaab has been designated as a terrorist organization by Australia, Canada, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Notes

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Anti-Satellite missile (ASAT)



Issue

India showcased its Anti-Satellite (ASAT) missile capability to the world as the ASAT weapon from Mission Shakti was unveiled on Republic Day.

Background

A DRDO marching contingent displayed the ASAT missile along with a second equipment, the Air Defence Tactical Control Radar (ADTCR).

Details

Anti-satellite weapons (ASAT) are space weapons designed to incapacitate or destroy satellites for strategic military purposes. Several nations possess operational ASAT systems.

Although no ASAT system has yet been utilised in warfare, a few nations have shot down their own satellites to demonstrate their ASAT capabilities in a show of force. Only the United States, Russia, China, and India have demonstrated this capability successfully.

Mission Shakti

India conducted Mission Shakti, an anti-satellite missile test, from the Dr. A P J Abdul Kalam Island launch complex. This was a technological mission carried out by DRDO. The satellite used in the mission was one of India's existing satellites operating in lower orbit.

The significance of the test is that India has tested and successfully demonstrated its capability to interdict and intercept a satellite in outer space based on complete indigenous technology.

The capability achieved through the Anti-Satellite missile test provides credible deterrence against threats to our growing space-based assets from long range missiles, and proliferation in the types and numbers of missiles.

Weaponisation of space

The principal international Treaty on space is the 1967 Outer Space Treaty. India is a signatory to this treaty, and ratified it in 1982. The Outer Space Treaty prohibits only weapons of mass destruction in outer space, not ordinary weapons.

India supported UNGA resolution 69/32 on No First Placement of Weapons on Outer Space. Equally, India supports the substantive consideration of the issue of Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS) in the Conference on Disarmament where it has been on the agenda since 1982.

Notes



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