



A tragic loss

India must realise CDS Gen. Rawat's plans for genuine tri-service operational capabilities. The CDS officer is the principal staff officer and chief military adviser to the Minister of Defence. He also heads the Department of Military Affairs. Bipin Rawat was the first CDS officer.

CDS and aim of tri-service integration:

1. Many of his plans to give India genuine tri-service operational capabilities are still to be realised. In such a situation, the Government should not lose time in appointing his successor to ensure that the plans on the drawing board do not suffer.
2. An aggressive China and a still belligerent Pakistan define India's security challenges.
3. Though the concept of having a CDS was recommended by a Group of Ministers in 2000 after the Kargil war, it took another 20 years for one to be appointed.
4. The CDS, who functions as Principal Military Adviser to the Defence Minister, is expected to work in tandem with the three service chiefs who continue to operate in their respective domains — a role and function that is still in the making.
5. To ensure that the new CDS and the service chiefs function as a team, the Government would do well to keep in mind the principle of seniority while choosing Gen. Rawat's successor.



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE: WHO, WHAT

Department of Defence
Headed by Defence Secretary

Department of Military Affairs
Headed by the CDS

**Department of Defence
Production**
Headed by Secretary Defence
Production

**Department of Defence Research
and Development**
Headed by DRDO chief

**Department of Ex-servicemen
Welfare**
Headed by Secretary ESW

DUAL-HATTED ROLE OF CDS

- Permanent Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee
- Head of Department of Military Affairs in Defence Ministry



The dual-hatted role refers to the two hats the CDS wears

1. **Two roles:** one of the permanent Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee which has the three service chiefs as members, and the other of the head of the newly created Department of Military Affairs (DMA) in the ministry.
2. The former is a military role while the latter is a role in the government; it is as the head of DMA that his major responsibilities within the ministry will be discharged.

What are integrated theatre commands?

1. In the simplest words, it is a unified command under which all the resources of the Army, the Navy and the Air Force are pooled, depending on the threat perception.
2. The commands could be geographical — like looking at a border with a particular country — or thematic, as a command for all maritime threats.
3. Several nations in the world have theatre commands, including the United States and China.

The proposed commands are

1. A Maritime Theatre Command, which will take care of all the maritime security needs of the country on both the eastern and the western seaboard, and will include air strike assets and amphibian forces of the Army.
2. An Air Defence Command, which will be mandated with air defence across the country and beyond. The fighter jets will have reconnaissance and surveillance assets as well.
3. Two or three land-based commands are proposed. If there are two commands, there will be one each for India's borders with China and Pakistan.
4. But there is also a proposal to have another command looking at India's borders with Pakistan and China in Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh, given the unique territory and security needs of the country in that region.