STUDY NOTES · BASIC CONCEPT

What is the role of the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) of India?

Indian Economy

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The Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) is the highest-ranking military officer in India and acts as the principal military adviser to the Government of India. The post was created in 2019 to strengthen jointness, coordination, and modernization of the Army, Navy, and Air Force. Major roles are:

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1. Principal Military Adviser to the Government : The CDS advises the Prime Minister, Defence Minister, and Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) on all military matters.

2. Promotes Jointness Between the Three Services : The CDS ensures that the Army, Navy, and Air Force:

- Work together in planning
- Use joint logistics
- Conduct joint training
- Create integrated theatre commands
- This avoids duplication of resources and increases combat efficiency.

3. Head of the Department of Military Affairs (DMA) : CDS leads the DMA in the Ministry of Defence, responsible for:

- Joint military policy
- Procurement prioritization
- Personnel matters of the three services (except operational roles)
- Integration of service headquarters into the ministry

4. Long-term Defence Planning & Modernization : The CDS prepares:

- 5-year defence capability plans
- Defence procurement roadmaps

- Joint doctrine and training policies
- This ensures India builds a future-ready military.

5. Advisor for Nuclear Command Authority : The CDS is the military adviser to India's Nuclear Command Authority, which controls the country's nuclear arsenal.

6. Coordinates Defence Budgeting

The CDS prevents wasteful expenditure by:

- Removing overlapping procurement
- Promoting shared platforms
- Ensuring all three services align with national priorities

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7. Oversees Creation of Integrated Theatre Commands : The CDS is responsible for reorganizing the military into theatre commands, where all three services operate under a single commander for a region or mission.

8. Crisis Management & Strategic Guidance

The CDS plays a central role during:

- Wars
- Border tensions
- Security crises
- Humanitarian and disaster relief operations