

“Incipient schemes... with far-reaching



Admiral Arun Prakash, former CNS, urges that the Government must constitute a parliamentary committee with military advisers to oversee transformational reforms

(Image above of the Central Government Secretariat (North Block) in New Delhi and (inset) Admiral Arun Prakash when CNS)

It would be no exaggeration to say that, after decades of procrastination by successive governments, the creation of two new entities – a Department of Military Affairs (DMA) and a Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) – a year ago, was the most significant development in the national security domain since Independence. The crux of this development lay in two crucial and long-overdue reforms. One, the management of the armed forces, so far

assigned to the civilian Defence Secretary, was brought under a military officer, the CDS. And two, the designation of CDS as Secretary DMA (although an incorrect equivalence for a four-star general) made him the first military officer to be recognised as a functionary of the Government of India (GoI) by its *Allocation of Business Rules*.

This radical restructuring has raised hopes that since the DMA is now a part of the GoI, the anomalies and imbalances

– organisational, hierarchical and financial – unilaterally imposed on the armed forces over seven decades would be addressed and remedied at long last. While the DMA is, hopefully, considering these issues and coming to grips with its assigned charter, it has seen fit to share with the media some incipient schemes with far-reaching implications. This has brought certain important issues into the public domain, which bear discussion.