



From the CGDA's Desk

This one, as promised, is from the CGDA's desk – not written at home, as on the last occasion. Many a time in the past fortnight I had thought of putting down my thoughts and to communicate with you all, but in the bustle of activities I simply couldn't make time to do so till I worked myself up today to key in my thoughts.

Truth be said, it's been an awfully busy fortnight and a bit, since I wrote the last message. Getting into the groove of a new office amid sundry important issues demanding my immediate attention and with numerous people dropping by to convey their thoughts has indeed been exciting, but it has also kept me on my toes. I have tried to understand the issues, dissect the problems and think through things, and get started on addressing the issues I had touched upon in my last message. I have also spoken to all the staff and officers – all the more felt necessary since most of them didn't know me (even not seen me before and I too, them!) – and conveyed what I would like to stand for and, conversely, what I expect from them. It's been a period of testing the water on either side. Quite a trying time, you may say, as we tried to take guard and settle down!

But I am glad to say that we have been able to quickly forge together and also taken few baby steps to move forward in line with the values I referred to in my last message. One such related to an invitation for me to a foundation-stone laying ceremony. I saw no value in indulging public funds on such ceremonies which would have only memorialized my name in a plaque set in stone. I had always balked at such expenditures in the past; so it didn't take me a moment to turn down the invite. But, more importantly, I took this opportunity to convey what I deemed extremely crucial and vital: the realization of value-for-money-and-time; and to let that realization permeate all our acts, so that the template of transparency and accountability animates every official transaction and no unnecessary, avoidable, and wasteful expenditure is incurred from the taxpayers' money. We have accordingly conveyed this to all PCsDA/CsDA in a circular (uploaded elsewhere in this website). I hope this spirit imbues all our actions, and buildings handed over and ready for occupation are put to use immediately, without waiting for the fanfare of later-day inaugurations.

As a sequel to this, I hope everyone behaves as responsibly as they are expected to as a public servant. Punctuality, honesty in application of mind and heart to the task assigned, fairness to men/issues, action not words, are crucially important. Countless officers (many from out-stations too) visited and discussed with me several issues they thought important enough to discuss. I gave them a very patient hearing. With many, the requests were mostly laden with their own personal (dare I say issues of their own postings/transfers and extension of tenures on one ground or another by leveraging some personal/familial problems!), either expressed edgewise and bunged in during the course of discussion or articulated at the end when taking leave. While I couldn't bring myself to demur at their requests, even subtly, out of politeness, I would appeal to these people to introspect and think beyond themselves – of their other colleagues, and quiz their conscience if these colleagues who aren't as pushy as they, should be made to suffer at their expense. If you keep nibbling at the cake, nothing will be left for the voiceless to partake. I thought it's important that the voiceless are lent a voice through a level playing field and an arm's length system that we need to invoke.

In keeping with the above sentiment and my promise for fairness and transparency, as also in line with the spirit of the Supreme Court judgment of 2013, I have tried to put in place an arm's length system by nominating IDAS officers presently working outside our department and who are in no way associated with the processing of the file(s) to the Defence Accounts Placement Boards (DAPB), both for our staff and officers up to the rank of Additional CsDA. Needless to say the reports of the DAPBs will be uploaded in the website to make you aware how decisions affecting you all have been processed and arrived at.

I can't but end this message without making a reference to one pseudonymous letter (among the many I've received), and for no reason other than that it made me sit up and think and mull. Couched in a language that is far from being vile and vituperative (in fact, it is polite and written in a tone of hurt and anguish), it made me acutely aware that we need to shore up on our behavior towards one and all and especially to our elder colleagues who in the official hierarchy could be way down the pecking order. I have circulated this among senior officers in the Headquarters without any embellishment – and quite deliberately so! – letting them to roll the thoughts expressed in their heads and find their own answers. They are senior enough for me to advise; I'll rather them respond on their own – and act. But I will be failing in my duty if I don't fervently appeal to all officers to be unfailingly courteous, correct, and polite in their official transactions. This is not to forget the need for us to be honest, transparent, and fair in every act of ours. Let professionalism, fairness, and transparency be our constant refrain in our everyday acts and ring down the corridors of our offices across the country.

June 19, 2015

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