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Gen Bipin Rawat named as country's 1st Chief of Defence Staff

- Indian Army **General Bipin Rawat** has been named as the country's first Chief of Defence Staff (CDS). The Chief of Defence Staff will be a **4-star General**, the principal military advisor to the **defence minister**, and will head the new Department of Military Affairs.
- The Chief of Defence Staff will ensure the jointness in training, logistics and procurement of the three services. General Rawat is the first officer to hold the post of the Chief of Defence Staff
- The Defence Ministry had also amended the army, air force and navy rules by bringing in a new clause that allows the CDS to serve upto a maximum age of 65 years.
- The CDS will administer **all tri-services organisations**, but their command will be with the Chief of the service which has a predominant role in their functioning.
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"India State of Forest Report 2019" released

- The **Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate** Change released the biennial "India State of Forest Report (ISFR)", in New Delhi.
- The report provides information on forest cover, tree cover, mangrove cover, growing stock inside and outside the forest areas, carbon stock in India's forests, Forest Types and Biodiversity, Forest Fire monitoring and forest cover in different slopes & altitudes.
- The report is published by the Forest Survey of India (FSI). The FSI has been mandated to assess the forest and tree resources of the country including wall-to-wall forest cover mapping in a biennial cycle.
- This is the **16th edition of India State** of Forest Report. In comparison to the assessment of 2017, there is an increase of **5,188 sq. km** in the total forest and tree cover of the country.

Some key highlights of the report:

- The total forest and tree cover of the country is 80.73 million hectare. It is 24.56% of the total geographical area of the country.
- The forest and tree cover has increased by more than 130 million hectares in the last 4 years.
- Area-wise, Madhya Pradesh has the largest forest cover in the country.
- In terms of forest cover as percentage of total geographical area, the top five States are Mizoram (85.41%), Arunachal Pradesh (79.63%), Meghalaya (76.33%), Manipur (75.46%) and Nagaland (75.31%).

- In comparison with ISFR 2017, the increase in the forest cover has been observed as 3,976 sq km and that in tree cover is 1,212 sq. km.
- The top 3 states showing increase in forest cover are Karnataka (1,025 sq. km) followed by Andhra Pradesh (990 sq km) and Kerala (823 sq km).
- Mangrove cover has been separately reported in the ISFR 2019 and the total mangrove cover in the country is 4,975 sq km which showed an increase of 54 sq Km as comapre to that of 2017. Top three states showing mangrove cover increase are Gujarat (37 sq km) followed by Maharashtra (16 sq km) and Odisha (8 sq km).
- The extent of bamboo bearing area of the country has been estimated 16 million hectare showing an increase of 0.32 million hectare.
- The total carbon stock in country's forest is estimated 7,124.6 million tonnes and there an increase of 42.6 million tonnes in the carbon stock of country as compared to the last assessment of 2017.
- There are 62,466 wetlands covering 3.8% of the area within the Recorded Forest Area (RFA)/Green Wash (GW) of the country.
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General Mukund Naravane becomes new Indian Army chief

- General Manoj Mukund Naravane took charge as the 28th Chief of Army Staff. He succeeded General Bipin Rawat who retired on 31st December, 2019. Earlier, General Naravane was serving as vice chief of the Indian Army.
- In his 37 years of service, he has also headed the Army's Eastern Command that takes care of India's nearly 4,000-km border with China.
- General Mukund Naravane is an alumnus of the National Defence Academy and the Indian Military Academy. He was commissioned into the 7th battalion, the Sikh Light Infantry Regiment in June 1980.

Indore tops national cleanliness rankings for first two quarters

- The **Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)** has announced the results of the **1st and 2nd quarters** of the **Swachh Survekshan 2020.**
- **Indore** has topped the cleanliness charts for two consecutive quarters among cities with over 10 lakh population while Kolkata was the worst performer. Jamshedpur has topped the cleanliness charts for two consecutive quarters among cities with 1 lakh to 10 lakh population.
- The rankings were conducted in a league format for the first time and were split into three quarters (April to June, July to September and October to December 2019) and different categories based on the population of the city.
- The rankings were based on collection, transportation, processing and disposal of waste.

Some key results of the Swachh Survekshan 2020:
Top three cities with over 10 lakh population in 1st quarter (April to June):
1. Indore (Madhya Pradesh)
2. Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh)
3. Surat (Gujarat)

Top three cities with over 10 lakh population in 2nd quarter (July to September):
1. Indore (Madhya Pradesh)
2. Rajkot (Gujarat)
3. Navi Mumbai (Maharashtra)

Top three cities with 1 lakh to 10 lakh population in 1st quarter (April to June):
1. Jamshedpur (Jharkhand)
2. New Delhi

Top three cities with 1 lakh to 10 lakh population in 2nd quarter (July to September):
1. Jamshedpur (Jharkhand)
2. Chandrapur (Maharashtra)

Among the Cantonment Boards, the rankings in 1st quarter (April to June) were as follows:
1. St.Thomas Mount Cantonment (Tamil Nadu)
2. Jhansi Cantonment (Uttar Pradesh)
3. Delhi Cantonment (Delhi)

Among the Cantonment Boards, the rankings in 2nd quarter (July to September) were as follows:
1. Delhi Cantonment Board (Delhi)
2. Jhansi Cantonment Board (Uttar Pradesh)
3. Jalandhar Cantonment Board (Punjab)
4. Secunderabad Cantonment Board in Hyderabad is the worst performer among other cantonment boards.

National Affairs

- **Minister of State (I/C) for Civil Aviation** launched the Biometric enabled **Centralised Access Control System (CACS)** and 'e-BCAS Project Training Module'. The two projects aims to enhance security and ease of doing business at airports.
- **NITI Aayog** has released the **2nd edition** of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) India Index. According to the SDG India Index, India's composite score has improved from 57 in 2018 to 60 in 2019.
- Bengaluru will host the 107th edition of the Indian Science Congress. It will be the ninth time the city will host the annual convention. University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS), Bengaluru will host the event.
- The Election Commission of India has launched a Political Parties Registration Tracking Management System (PPRTMS). The system enables the applicants to track the status of the applications for the party registration.
- The ISRO Chairman announced that the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will establish a 2nd launch port in Thoothukodi district in Tamil Nadu.
- **Kerala** became the 1st state in the country to pass a resolution against the Citizenship Amendment Act.
- The Indian Railways has renamed its security **force RPF (Railway Protection Force)** as **Indian Railway Protection Force Service.**

States in the News

- **Jharkhand Mukti Morcha** leader **Hemant Soren** was sworn in as the **11th Chief Minister of Jharkhand.**
- The 11-day long **'Dhanu Jatra'** begins at Bargarh in western Odisha. Dhanu Jatra is considered as the largest open-air theatre of the world.
- **UPSRTC (Uttar Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation)** has launched **'Damini'** helpline service considering the safety of the women passengers.
- In **Tripura, Lai Haraoba,** a ritualistic festival observed by Manipuri meitei communities began in Agartala.
- Gujarat Chief Minister **Vijay Rupani** unveils the **2nd tallest statue of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel** in the world at Ahmedabad. **50 feet tall bronze statue with a weight of 70 thousand kilograms** has been unveiled at the Sardardham campus near Vaishnodevi Circle in Ahmedabad.
- **Maharashtra Government** has launched a **'Cyber Safe Women'** initiative under which awareness camps will be held across all the districts of the state regarding cyber safety.

International Affairs

- NASA Astronaut **Christina Koch** has created a record for the longest single spaceflight by a woman. She has surpassed the earlier record of 288 days in space which was previously established by NASA astronaut **Peggy Whitson in 2017.**
- President of Nepal launched the **"Visit Nepal Year 2020"** during the ceremony held at historic **Dasaratha Rangashala** in Kathmandu. Mythical creature Yeti has been selected as mascot of the campaign.
- The Pacific nation of Palau has become the first country to ban sun cream which is harmful to corals and sea life. The ban prohibits sun cream containing any of the 10 ingredients which includes **oxybenzone** and **octinoxate**, that absorbs ultraviolet light.
- **Umaro Cissoko Embalo** has won the **Guinea-Bissau's** presidential election. According to the National Electoral Commission of Guinea-Bissau, Umaro won the presidential election with 53.55% of votes. He will replace the incumbent President Jose Mario Vaz.
- **Iran's** top **commander General Qassim Soleimani** has been killed in a U.S. drone strike in Baghdad.
- Iran's supreme leader **Ayatollah Ali Khamenei** named the Deputy Head of the **Revolutionary Guards' foreign** operations arm **Esmail Qaani** to replace Qasem Soleimani as its commander.

Agreements/MoUs Signed

- **Government of India** signed MoU with **Flipkart** for selling the products made by women self-help groups under Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM) on the e-commerce platform.

Banking/Economy/Business News

- **Finance Minister** has launched an e-auction platform **"eBkray".** The platform will enable online auction of attached assets by banks. The platform provides navigational links to all PSB e-auction sites, property search feature.
- **State Bank of India** will introduce **One Time Password (OTP)-based ATM cash withdrawals.** The step has been taken to reduce the occurrences of unauthorised transactions happening at ATMs. SBI will introduce one-time password for every cash withdrawal of **Rs 10,000** and above between 8 am and 8 pm.
- **HDFC Life Insurance** has partnered with **Paytm** to expand its distribution. The partnership is aimed to enable customers of Paytm to purchase insurance products from **HDFC Life.**
- **Mastercard** has announced an agreement to acquire **RiskRecon. RiskRecon** is one of the leading providers of data analytics solutions and artificial intelligence focused on cyber-risk and security and offering solutions to mitigate cyber risks faced by the companies.

- The Union Finance Minister has announced that the **Merchant Discount Rate (MDR)** charges for businesses with **over Rs 50 crore** annual revenues will be waived off from January 1, 2020. Also, the digital transactions made using RuPay credit cards, or UPI QR codes will not face any additional charges for merchants or customers from January 1, 2020.
- **Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC)** has announced that it has paid Rs 1,12,000 crore as Integrated **Goods and Services Tax (IGST) refunds to exporters.**
- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has launched a mobile app **"Mobile Aided Note Identifier (MANI)".** The visually challenged people can identify the denomination of a currency note by using the mobile app "MANI".

Committees

- A Group of Ministers (GoM) has been constituted to to expedite revival plan of **BSNL & MTNL.** The GoM will fast-track and oversee the implementation of the **Rs 69,000 crore** revival plan for state-owned telecom corporations BSNL and MTNL.

Appointments/Resignations

- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the re-employment of **V K Yadav** as the **Chairman of Railway Board.** The appointment has been done for a period of one year.
- The **Andhra Pradesh government**-appointed Indian Administrative Service (IAS) official **Dr Kritika Shukla and Indian Police Service (IPS) official M Deepika,** as Special Officers for implementing the Andhra Pradesh Disha Act 2019.
- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet approved the proposal of Ministry of Home Affairs for extending the deputation tenure of **IPS Abhinav Kumar, Inspector General, Border Security Force (BSF),** up to June 27, 2021, in relaxation of IPS Tenure Policy.

Defence News

- Union Home Minister laid the foundation stone of **Directorate General Building of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)** in New Delhi. The Home Minister also launched a new logo **"Garud"** for those engaged in providing security to the common man and VIPs.
- **S S Deswal** has been given the **"additional" charge to head Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF).** The Union home ministry took the decision as CRPF's serving Director General (DG) R R Bhatnagar retired on 31st December, 2019.

Awards and Recognitions

- **Piyuus Jaiswal** was awarded the Global Bihar Excellence Award 2019.
- The Union Ministry of Science and Technology have awarded **Swarna Jayanti** Fellowships to **14 scientists** to pursue basic research in frontier areas of science and technology.
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Summit and Conference

- **49th Border Coordination Conference** between border guarding forces of **India and Bangladesh** was held in **New Delhi.**

Ranks and Reports

- Indian paddler **Manav Thakkar** became world no.1 in the latest **International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF)** rankings in the Under-21 men's singles category.

Sports News

- Australian pace bowler **Peter Siddle** has announced his retirement from International Cricket. In his career of 11 years, he represented Australia in 67 Tests, 20 ODIs and 2 Twenty20 matches.
- India skipper **Virat Kohli** and pace bowler **Jasprit Bumrah** were the only Indians in Wisden's T20 International team of the decade.
- Indian Grandmaster **Koneru Humpy** wins the **World Women's Rapid Chess Championship** held in Moscow, Russia. She won the title after drawing the Armageddon game against Lei Tingjie of China. Humpy lost the first tie-break game and then won the second to reach the Armageddon game.
- **Assam Chief Minister** has launched the torch relay of the **Khelo India Youth Games in Guwahati, Assam.** The 3rd edition of the tournament will be held in January 2020.
- The **Indian Olympic Association (IOA)** has withdrawn its boycott call for the **2022 Commonwealth Games** to be held in Birmingham. The decision was taken during its Annual General Meeting held in New Delhi.

- Chief Executive Officer of **"Khelo India Games"** has announced that **"Lawn bowls" and "cycling"** will be included in the 3rd edition of Khelo India Games.
- The **5th Ice Hockey Association of India (IHAI)** National Ice Hockey Championship -2020 has begun **in Leh, Ladakh**.

Important Days

- The **world Braille Day** is observed annually on **4 January.** World Braille Day celebrated since 2019, is observed to raise awareness of the importance of Braille as a means of communication in the full realization of the human rights for blind and partially sighted people.

Obituaries

- The pontiff of **Pejawar Mutt, Vishwesha Tirtha Swami** passed away in Udupi. He was born at **Ramakujna** in **Dakshina** Kannada district on April 27, 1931.
- The **Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party (NDPP)** leader and Nagaland Assembly Speaker **Vikho-o Yhoshu** passed away.
- Eminent Assamese dramatist, litterateur and social activist **Ratna Ojha** passed away.

Miscellaneous News

- **Indian Railways** introduced a new **"Passenger Information System"** at **Anakapalle Railway Station** of **Vijayawada** Division in South Central Railway.
- The annual New Delhi **World Book Fair, in its 28th edition,** will focus on how **Mahatma Gandhi** influenced generations of writers through his writings.
- Indian mountaineer **Malavath Poorna,** the youngest girl to have climbed the world's highest mountain Mt. Everest 5 years ago, accomplished another feat by conquering **Mt. Vinson Massif, Antarctica's highest mountain peak (4,987 mts).**

Static Takeaways

- Headquarters of NASA: Washington, D.C.; Established: July 29,1958.
- Jharkhand was created on 15h November 2000.
- Babulal Marandi was the first Chief Minister of Jharkhand.
- Ranchi is the capital of Jharkhand.
- Director General of Border Security Force: Vivek Kumar Johri.
- Bangladesh Capital: Dhaka; Currency: Taka; PM: Sheikh Hasina.
- Union Finance Minister: Nirmala Sitharaman.
- Chairperson of SBI : Rajnish Kumar; Headquarters: Mumbai; Founded: 1 July 1955.
- CEO and Co-Founder of RiskRecon: Kelly White.
- Director General CRPF: Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar.
- Union Home Minister: Amit Shah.
- Ministers of State (Independent Charge) of Housing and Urban Affairs: Hardeep Singh Puri.
- CEO of NITI Aayog: Amitabh Kant.
- The registration of political parties is governed by the provisions of Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951.
- Chairman of ISRO: K.Sivan; Headquarters: Bengaluru; Established: 1969.
- Prime Minister of Nepal: K P Sharma Oli; Capital: Kathmandu.
- President of Nepal: Bidhya Devi Bhandari; Currency of Nepal: Nepalese rupee.
- President of Palau: Tommy Remengesau; Capital: Ngerulmud; Currency: US Dollar.
- Capital of Guinea-Bissau: Bissau; Currency: Eco.
- RBI 25th Governor: Shaktikant Das; Headquarters: Mumbai; Founded: 1 April 1935, Kolkata.
- Chief Minister of Nagaland: Neiphiu Rio; Governor: R. N. Ravi.
- Chief Executive Officer of "Khelo India Games": Avinash Joshi.
- Minister of State (I/C) for Civil Aviation: Hardeep Singh Puri.
- Chairman of CBIC: Pranab Kumar Das.
- Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change: Prakash Javadekar.
- Chief Minister of Assam: Sarbananda Sonowal; Governor: Jagdish Mukhi.
- President of Commonwealth Games Federation: Dame Louise Martin.

- Chief of Indian Olympic Association: Narinder Batra.
- CRPF is India's as well as the world's largest paramilitary force with over 3.25 lakh personnel in its ranks.
- It was raised as the Crown Representatives Police (CRP) in 1939 under the British and post Independence, named as CRPF in 1949.
- Union Minister of Railways: Piyush Goyal.
- CM of Kerala: Pinarayi Vijayan; Governor of Kerala: Arif Mohammed Khan.
- Union Railway Minister: Piyush Goyal.
- Iran Capital: Tehran; Currency of Iran: Rial; President of Iran: Hassan Rouhani.
- UP Present CM: Yogi Adityanath, Governor: Anandiben Patel.
- Capital of Tripura: Agartala.
- CM of Tripura: Biplab Kumar Deb.
- Governor of Tripura: Ramesh Bais.
- CM of Andhra Pradesh: YS Jaganmohan Reddy.
- Governor of Andhra Pradesh: Biswa Bhusan Harichandan.
- Flipkart established: October 2007; Headquarter of Flipkart: Bengaluru.
- Governor of Bihar: Phagu Chauhan, Chief Minister: Nitish Kumar.
- Union Minister of Science and Technology: Dr Harsh Vardhan.
- President of Ice Hockey Association of India: K. L. Kumar.
- Gujarat CM: Vijay Rupani; Governor: Acharya Dev Vrat; Capital: Gandhinagar.
- Maharashtra CM: Uddhav Thackeray; Governor: Bhagat Singh Koshyari; Capital: Mumbai.
- President of ITTF: Thomas Weikert; Headquarters of ITTF: Lausanne, Switzerland; ITTF founded: 1926.
- BSF formed: 1 December 1965; DG BSF: V K Johri.