

# Chief of Defence Staff to aid synergies

He will be the single-point military adviser to Centre



DINAKAR PERI  
NEW DELHI

In a major decision for higher level military reforms and tri-service integration, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday announced the appointment of a Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) who will be above the three service chiefs. The modalities are expected to be finalised in the next few months, defence sources said.

"I announce that there will be a Chief of Defence Staff going into the future who would be above the three service chiefs. This is going to make the forces even more effective," he announced in his Independence Day speech from the Red Fort. The creation of the CDS will eventually lead to the formation of tri-service theatre commands intended to create vertical integration of the three forces. However, it is not clear if the CDS will be a four-star or a five-star officer.

**Avoiding duplication**

The CDS will be a single-point military adviser to the government and synergise long-term planning, procurements, training and logistics of the three services. This is expected to save money by avoiding duplication between the services, at a time of shrinking capital expenditure within the defence budget. "The Defence Ministry will constitute an implementation committee which will finalise the modalities which is expected to

take few months," a defence source said.

Given the time frame, the Chief of the Army Staff, General Bipin Rawat, could be the front runner to be the country's first CDS as he has tenure till December 31 and would be the senior-most officer after Air Chief Marshal B.S. Dhanoa, also the current Chairman of Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC), who retires on September 30.

**Kargil panel**

The creation of a CDS to act as a single-point military adviser to the Prime Minister on strategic issues was one of the key recommendations of the Kargil review committee on higher military reforms after the 1999 conflict. Despite much deliberation, the issue did not make progress due to lack of consensus and apprehensions from the services.

In 2012, the Naresh Chandra committee recommended the appointment of a Permanent Chairman COSC as a midway to allay apprehensions over the CDS. Currently, the senior-most of the

three chiefs functions as the Chairman of the COSC but it is an additional role and the tenures have been very short.

The CDS is also one of the 99 recommendations made by the Lt. General D.B. Shekatkar (retd.) Committee which submitted its report in December 2016 and had 34 recommendations pertaining to tri-service integration.

Speaking to *The Hindu* on the announcement, Lt. Gen. Shekatkar said that with the fast-changing security and defence environment, this was the right moment for India to have a CDS. He said that during the Kargil conflict, if India had a CDS it would not have suffered so many casualties in the initial stages as the Indian Air Force took time to come in support and "so it was felt there is need for a central point authority who can advise the government".

"There are three different agencies buying the same thing. You are wasting the resources," he added.

**Positive impact**

"The announcement of the institution of CDS by Prime Minister Modi has been made keeping in view of the much needed reform to streamline and further improve the coordination among the three forces and their functioning. CDS will have a long lasting and a positive impact on India's security," Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said in a post on Twitter.

## Freedom show



1) The Delhi Police contingent marches in the parade at the Red Fort; 2) students make merry at the function; 3) children make a statement; and 4) the audience in attention.

■ SANDEEP SAXENA & R.V. MOORTHY

## People should travel within India, says PM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

With 20-million-odd Indian tourists travelling abroad on vacation every year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday urged them to visit 15 tourist destinations within the country by 2022 to give a fillip to the domestic tourism sector.

Addressing the nation from the Red Fort, Mr. Modi said if domestic tourism increased, international footfalls would too.

"I know people travel abroad for holidays but can we think of visiting at least 15 tourist destinations across India before 2022, when we mark 75 years of Independence," he asked.

## Call to shun single-use plastic

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday urged people to shun single-use plastic and encourage the usage of jute and cloth bags to protect the environment.

On World Environment Day last year, the government had announced its intention to phase out single-use plastic such as straws and cups by 2022.

"By October 2, I want to urge the citizens to give up single-use plastic," Mr. Modi said on the 73rd Independence Day while addressing the nation from the Red Fort.

## IN BRIEF



**'Spirit of patriotism waning among youth'**

PANAJI

In his Independence Day address on Thursday, Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant said that patriotism was declining among the youth. The Chief Minister hoisted the national flag at the Old Secretariat building here on Thursday and inspected a guard of honour before addressing the gathering. PTI

**Pak. observes 'Black Day' on India's I-Day**

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan on Thursday observed 'Black Day' on the occasion of India's Independence Day to protest New Delhi's move to revoke the special status in Jammu and Kashmir. Black flags were hoisted on roof tops and vehicles across the country to symbolise the protest. Rallies were held in cities and seminars were organised to highlight Pakistan's stand on the Kashmir issue. PTI

**Repeal of Article 370 undemocratic: Mamata**

KOLKATA

Observing that the revocation of Article 370 in Kashmir was done using "undemocratic means" and "under the shadow of a gun", West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday said that people in Kashmir are in a "lot of pain". This year, the Trinamool Congress observed the 'Freedom at Midnight' programme by hoisting the national flag at various places in the city.

**Pak. to award two pilots who downed Indian jet**

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan will confer top military awards on two of its Air Force officers for their valour during an aerial combat with India in February, President Arif Alvi has announced. Wing Commander Muhammad Nouman Ali, who downed an IAF jet piloted by Abhinandan Varthaman on February 27, will be given the Sitara-e-Jurat. Squadron Leader Hassan Mahmood Siddiqui will be awarded the Tamgha-e-Shujaat. PTI

# PM puts population back on govt. agenda

The significance of Modi flagging the issue in his Independence Day speech is not lost on anyone

NISTULA HEBBAR  
NEW DELHI

Noting that those keeping the size of their families small are practising a form of patriotism, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his Independence Day speech on Thursday, set off speculation that a renewed governmental push for population control may be in the offing, as in the States such as Assam.

The issue of population control and its advocacy by the political class is not new.

**Many Bills**

A total of 35 private member Bills regarding population control have been introduced in Parliament since Independence, with the Congress MPs contributing the largest number.

Additionally, eight members from the BJP, five from



**On the anvil:** With the PM's speech, an interventionist move on population may be in the making. ■ SANDEEP SAXENA

the TDP, two from the All India Anna Dravid Munnetra Kazhagam and one each from the Trinamool, Revolutionary Socialist Party, Samajwadi Party and Rashtriya Janata Dal have introduced

## Sonia urges nation to stand against intolerance, bigotry

Chidambaram raises issue of former J&K CMs in custody

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

Marking India's 73rd Independence Day at the Congress headquarters on Thursday, interim party president Sonia Gandhi called upon citizens to fight bigotry, injustice and discrimination.

"A democratic and resilient India at 73 has no place for bigotry, superstition, sectarianism, fanaticism, racialism, intolerance or injustice. Yet millions of fellow citizens encounter discrimination every day," Ms. Gandhi said in her Independence Day message.

"We must rise as a nation to stand against every act of injustice, intolerance and discrimination to truly cherish our freedom," she added.

In his message, CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury reminded citizens of India's pluralism as a core value of the Constitution.

Former Union Minister P.



Sonia Gandhi hoisting the national flag at the Congress headquarters in New Delhi. ■ SANDEEP SAXENA

Chidambaram also took to Twitter to ask why "freedom was being denied" to three former Chief Ministers of Jammu and Kashmir on the occasion of Independence Day.

"Why is freedom being denied to three former CMs

of J&K since August 6th? Why are two former CMs under virtual solitary confinement and one former CM under house arrest? Why are political leaders who fought secessionists and militants locked up?" asked Mr. Chidambaram

The former Union Home Minister, also questioned the detention of Kashmiri bureaucrat-turned-political activist Shah Faesal who was stopped at Delhi airport from flying to Turkey and was sent back to Srinagar.

"Why is freedom being denied to a son of India and Kashmir, Shah Faesal?," he tweeted.

**Parliament event**

In a first for Parliament, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla presided over a flag-hoisting ceremony inside the Parliament complex.

He urged citizens to be participants in building a new India.

and mass awareness programme on population control or policy interventions has always been a touchy issue, following incidents of coercive sterilisation, even forced vasectomies, during the Emergency between 1975 and 1977.

Manu Gaur heads Taxab, which works on population issues, and his Responsible Parenting Bill, 2019, was the model for Mr. Balyan's Bill. He acknowledges that there is a mental block, but says population control should not run around overs fears of forced sterilisation.

"You will have noticed that Prime Minister Modi also only spoke of responsible parenthood," he said.

"In the Bill that we are pushing, parents who have more than two children will be provided health care and

## 'Modi-Shah have given purna swaraj'

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
AHMEDABAD

Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani said on Thursday said that while Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel gave 'swaraj' (independence) to the country, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah have given 'purna swaraj' (complete independence).

He was referring to the Modi government's move of abrogating Article 370, which gave special status to Jammu & Kashmir, and dividing the state into two Union Territories.

Speaking at the Independence Day function in Chhota Udepur town of central Gujarat, Chief Minister Rupani said, "This year's Independence Day celebrations are historic because it has come immediately after Article 370 and 35-A were scrapped. This special status had fuelled separatism in that State."

basic nutritional subsidies available to others, but they will be kept out of all other facilities, including standing for polls, government jobs, and will be charged double the GST for every child over the two child norm," Mr. Gaur said.

**Assam example**

The Assam government has barred (from a set cut-off) all those with more than two children from government jobs and made rules preventing such parents from contesting elections to the local bodies and other positions.

The significance of Mr. Modi flagging the issue from the ramparts of the Red Fort has not been lost on anyone, and there is a feeling that a more interventionist move on population control is probably on the anvil.

# Ladakh lives it up in its transition to Union Territory

MP leads the show with his dancing and beating of drums

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
LEH

Ladakh, which will become an Union Territory after the bifurcation of Jammu and Kashmir, celebrated Independence Day on Thursday, with local BJP MP Jamyang Tsering Namgyal saying the region has got its "independence from Kashmir".

Banners bearing slogans such as "UT of Ladakh celebrates its first Independence Day" were seen hanging along the roads of the town.

The MP, whose speech in the Lok Sabha after the abrogation of special status to Jammu and Kashmir drew praises, was seen dancing and playing the drums along with locals.

Mr. Namgyal hoisted the national flag at the local BJP office along with party national general secretary Ram Madhav.

On August 5, the Centre stripped Jammu and Kashmir of its special status given



**Festive mode:** BJP MP Jamyang Tsering Namgyal dances during the Independence Day celebrations in Ladakh. ■ PTI

under Article 370 and split it into two Union territories, Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, which will come into existence on October 31.

"We decided to celebrate Independence Day in the traditional Ladakhi style through the beating of the *daman* and *surna*," Mr. Namgyal said, adding that the celebrations were "just a trailer for the development of Ladakh".

In a series of tweets, the MP said the tricolour in every house in Ladakh symbolised the patriotism of the people and their unwavering commitment towards India.

The MP also shared pictures on Twitter of Buddhist monks hoisting the national flag at his village of Matho.