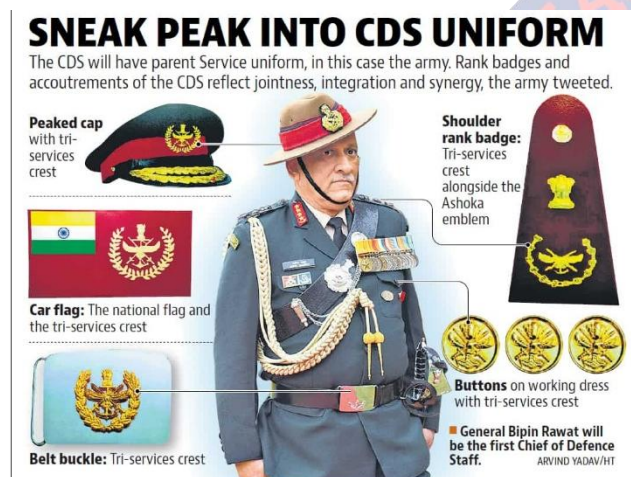


**PRELIMS EDGE 2026****10-05-2026****CHIEF OF DEFENCE STAFF**

Context: Union Govt. has appointed Lieutenant General Raja Subramani as the next Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) after General Anil Chauhan completes his tenure on 30 May.

**About the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS):**

- The CDS is the **highest-ranking four-star military officer** and permanent Chairman of the **Chiefs of Staff Committee**.
- The idea of CDS was **recommended in 2001** by the Group of Ministers after studying the **Kargil Review Committee** report of 1999.
- The post of CDS was finally created in **2019** on the recommendations of the committee headed by **Lt General DB Shekatkar**.
- General Bipin Rawat became the first CDS in 2019.

- The CDS is placed at **12th in the Table of Precedence**, just below the Attorney General of India and the Cabinet Secretary.
- The **Appointments Committee of the Cabinet** chaired by the Prime Minister appoints the CDS.
- **Eligible Officers:** Serving or retired Air Marshals, Air Chief Marshals, Army Commanders, Navy Commanders, and equivalent three-star and four-star officers of the tri-services can be appointed as CDS.
- **Retired officers can be appointed** as CDS only if they have not attained the age of 62 years on the date of appointment.
- The CDS serves up to the **age of 65 years** and there is no fixed tenure limit.

Roles and Responsibilities:

- **DMA Head:** The CDS heads the Department of Military Affairs (DMA) and oversees tri-service policy, staffing, training, and reforms.
- **Military Adviser:** The CDS acts as the principal military adviser to the Defence Minister on joint operational matters.
- **Tri-Service Coordination:** The CDS promotes operational synergy and reduces inter-service friction among the three armed forces.
- **Procurement Role:** The CDS prioritizes inter-service procurement and capital acquisition proposals.
- **Nuclear Role:** The CDS performs an advisory role in the Nuclear Command Authority.

- **Tri-Agency Oversight:** The CDS supervises Cyber, Space, and Special Operations agencies.
- **Command Reforms:** The CDS facilitates theatre command creation and restructuring of military commands.

Source: Lieutenant General NS Raja Subramani (Retd) appointed as Chief of Defence Staff (PIB)

LABOUR CODES

Context: The four labour codes that were passed by Parliament in 2020 were officially notified by the Union Govt., thus bringing them into force.

- ❶ The Code on Wages, 2019
- ❷ The Industrial Relations Code, 2020
- ❸ The Code on Social Security, 2020
- ❹ The Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020

About the Four New Labour Codes:

- They merge 29 overlapping and outdated central laws into a cohesive framework of 4 Codes that provides clarity, consistency, and equity in the workforce.

Reason behind Changes in Labour Laws:

- **Attract investment** and encourage industrial activity.
- Protect existing employment, and provide employment to new workers.
- Bring about **transparency** in administrative procedures.
- **Increase the revenue** of states.
- Facilitating **ease of doing business** in the country for investors.

Wage Code:

- **Removes multiplicity of wage definitions** to reduce litigation as well as compliance costs.
- **Links minimum wage to employee skills** and place of employment.
- Seeks to **universalize minimum wages** and timely payment of it irrespective of sector & wage ceiling.
- National **Floor Level Minimum Wage** set by Union Govt. and be revised every 5 years.
- **States will fix minimum wages** for their regions, which cannot be lower than the national floor wage.
- **Concerns:**
 - No transparency in mechanism for setting of floor wage
 - Does not clarify framework for inspection system - Code proposes an ad-hoc mechanism called "inspection scheme".
 - Provides for appointment of Inspector-cum-Facilitator by govt. This may lead to the revival of inspector-raj system.

Industrial Relations Code:

- Helpline for redressal of **problems of migrant workers**.
- **Women have to be permitted to work in every sector at night** (with their consent) and security must be provided by the employer.
- **Increased penalties** in the event of the death/injury to a worker due to an accident at his workplace
- **14 days prior notice for Strike** so that in this period, an amicable solution can be tried to be worked out.
- **Concerns:**
 - Definition of strike broadened to include "concerted casual leave by 50% or more workers"

- Several restrictions on right to strike – workers may be subject to penal sanctions.
- Definition of “industry” includes terms like “charitable”, “philanthropic”, etc. – these are vague and can be misused.
- Institutionalization of “fixed term contracts” as tenure of employment.

Occupational Safety, Health & Working Conditions Code:

- **Free health checkups once a year** by employer for aged workers.
- Legal right for getting **Appointment Letter** (for the first time in India)
- Covers workers from **IT and Service Sector**.
- **Concerns:**
 - Excludes many economic activities such as agriculture - which employs >50% of total working population
 - Unorganised sectors such as small mines, restaurants, machinery repairs, construction, brick kilns, etc find no mention.
 - Does not specify minimum standards for Occupation Safety and Health.
 - Does not specify daily and weekly working hours.
 - No equal treatment for contract labour that perform same work as that of permanent workers.

Social Security Code:

- GoI to formulate various schemes for comprehensive social security to workers in unorganised sector.
- **“Social Security Fund”** will be created in order to implement such schemes.
- Work to bring newer forms of employment like **“platform or gig worker”** into ambit of social security.

- **Provision for Gratuity** made for Fixed Term Employee and no minimum service period to be eligible.
- **National database of migrant workers** - registration done on a portal through a simple Self Certification procedure.
- **Concerns:**
 - Does not emphasise social security as a right
 - Does not stipulate a clear date for enforcement
 - No consideration for unemployment protection for unorganised workers,
 - No stringent penalty for non-contribution of Provident Fund dues by employer/contractor.

Source: Centre operationalizes Labour Codes, publishes Rules; trade unions protest (The Hindu)

PM GRAM SADAK YOJANA

Context: The silver jubilee events marking 25 years of the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) and the national launch of PMGSY-IV will be held on May 10th.



About Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY):

- It is a **centrally sponsored scheme** launched in the year 2000 to provide all-weather rural road connectivity to eligible rural habitations.
- Nodal Agency: **Ministry of Rural Development**
- The funding pattern is a **60:40 ratio** between Centre and State, and a 90:10 ratio

for Northeastern States and Himalayan States.

- **PMGSY I (2000):** It was launched to provide rural connectivity, by way of a single all-weather road, to the eligible habitations as per Census 2001.
- **PMGSY-II (2013):** It was launched with a target to upgrade 50,000 Km in various States and Union Territories.
- **Road Connectivity Project for Left Wing Extremism Affected Areas (RCPLWEA) (2016):** It was launched for construction and upgradation of strategically important roads; mainly to improve the road connectivity in left wing extremism affected districts and adjoining areas.
- **PMGSY-III (2019):** It was launched for consolidation of 1,25,000 Km to connect major rural links connecting habitations, inter-alia, to Gramin Agricultural Markets (GrAMs), Higher Secondary Schools and Hospitals.

PMGSY-IV:

- The Union Cabinet has approved PMGSY-IV for the period **2024-25 to 2028-29**, aiming to enhance rural connectivity by constructing **62,500 km** of new all-weather roads.
- It will connect **25,000 unconnected habitations** with populations of **over 500 in plains, over 250 in Northeast and hill states, and over 100 in Left Wing Extremism (LWE) districts**.
- The new roads are expected to catalyze socio-economic development in remote rural areas and improve access to educational, health, market, and growth centres. The scheme is designed to create **40 crore human-days of work employment**.

Institutional Arrangements:

- **National Rural Infrastructure Development Agency (NRIDA)** provides technical & managerial support.
- **State Rural Roads Development Agencies (SRRDAs)** for state-level implementation.
- **OMMAS (Online Management, Monitoring, & Accounting System):** Web-based system developed by C-DAC to enhance transparency in PMGSY construction projects.
- **eMARG Platform:** Uses geo-tagged photos from its mobile app to verify road maintenance work for payments and monitor contractor performance.
- **Grievance Redressal:** "Meri Sadak" App to raise concerns related to slow pace, abandoned work or bad quality.

Use of New materials/Green technologies:

- **Fly Ash, Lime, Polymers** etc.
- **Portland Cement Concrete** for White topping
- **Cold Mix Asphalt** for lower PM10 emissions and reduced energy consumption than Hot Mix Asphalt.
- **Waste Plastic** as a modifier for bituminous hot mixes.
- **Coir geo-textiles** are used for soil strength in road pavements and stabilization of side slopes.
- Use of **Iron, Copper and Steel slag** increases resistance of the road to wear and tear.

Source: From village roads to the pace of development under Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's leadership: 25 years of PMGSY (PIB)

PLACES IN NEWS

Manas National Park



- It is located in **Western Assam** at the foothills of the Eastern Himalayas.
- It is bordered to the north by **Bhutan's Royal Manas National Park**.
- It has five national and international designations: **UNESCO World Heritage Site, National Park, Tiger Reserve, Biosphere Reserve, and Important Bird Area**.
 - UNESCO it as a Natural World Heritage Site in 1985.
- Its elevation ranges from **60 to 1,500 meters** above sea level.
- Indigenous tribes, such as the **Bodo**, live in and around the park. The **Manas River** flows through the park.
- It has rich biodiversity due to its location between the **Sub-Himalayan Bhabar Terai** and **Himalayan subtropical broadleaf forests**.
- It contains four major vegetation types: Sub-Himalayan light alluvial **semi-evergreen** forests, East Himalayan **moist and dry deciduous** forests, low alluvial **savanna** woodlands, and Assam Valley semi-evergreen **alluvial grasslands**.
- Rare species such as the golden langur, clouded leopard, fishing cat, pygmy hog,

hispid hare, and red panda are also found in the park.

Rwanda



- Rwanda recently invited India to participate in 'Nuclear Energy Innovation Summit for Africa'
- Rwanda is a landlocked country in **Great Rift Valley** of Central Africa, where African Great Lakes region and Southeast Africa converge.
- Located a few degrees south of the Equator, Rwanda is bordered by **Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi**, and the **Democratic Republic of Congo**.
- 80% of Rwanda drains into **Lake Victoria** via a series of small rivers while remaining 20% drains into the Congo via the **Rusizi River**.
- It has several volcanoes that form part of the **Virunga volcanic chain**.
- In 1897, **Germany** colonized Rwanda, followed by **Belgium**, which took control in 1916 during World War I. Rwanda got **independence in 1964**.
- A civil war broke out in the 1980s between the **Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups**, which would culminate in the **Rwandan Genocide** in 1994 (by Hutu extremists).

- The Tutsi-led **Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF)** won the civil war and has ruled Rwanda as a **de facto one-party state since 1994** with Paul Kagame serving as president since 2000.
- Rwanda ranks among the **lowest in international measurements of government transparency and civil liberties**, despite recent gains that elevated it to the medium category on the Human Development Index.
- Rwanda's economy is based on services, agricultural exports, and manufacturing. **Coffee and tea** are the major cash crops that it exports, although it is surpassed in **banana** production. **Tourism** is a fast-growing sector and is now Rwanda's leading foreign exchange earner.

TERMS IN NEWS

Geocell



- It is a **3-dimensional** cellular system used in geotechnical engineering to **improve soil stability and load-bearing capacity**.
- It consists of **interconnected honey comb like cells** made from geosynthetic materials such as high-density polyethylene (**HDPE**) or polyester.
- These cells are **expanded on site to form a mattress-like layer** and are filled with soil, sand, aggregate, clay, gravel, concrete, or recycled materials for ground stabilization.

- Once filled and compacted, the geocell layer **integrates with the underlying soil** to create a stable and reinforced structure with improved durability and structural integrity.
- By **restricting the movement of soil particles**, geocells create a stiff "mattress" effect that distributes heavy loads over a wider area. The cellular structure **holds topsoil and vegetation in place** on steep slopes, preventing it from washing away during heavy rainfall.
- Geocells are used for constructing steep vertical mechanically stabilized earth structures, airport runways, and urban green infrastructure.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the four new labour codes, which recently came into force:

1. While Union Govt. decides the minimum wage, the floor wage will be fixed by each State Govt.
2. Social security provisions have been extended to platform/gig workers for the first time.
3. The codes aim to create a national database of unorganized workers in order to improve policy making.

How many of the above statements are correct ?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

Q2. Consider the following statements regarding the PM Gram Sadak Yojana:

1. It is a centrally sponsored scheme under the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.

2. It has a specific focus on road connectivity in Left Wing Extremism affected districts.
3. "Meri Sadak" App allows citizens to raise concerns related to slow pace of work or bad quality of roads under PMGSY.

Which of the above statements are correct ?

- (a) 1 and 2
- (b) 1 and 3
- (c) 2 and 3
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Q3. Consider the following nations located in Africa:

1. Sierra Leone
2. Cameroon
3. Rwanda
4. Angola
5. Burundi
6. Zambia
7. Burkina Faso

How many of these nations are located in the Great Rift Valley region of Africa ?

- (a) Only three
- (b) Only four
- (c) Only five
- (d) Only six

Q4. This protected area lies at the foothills of the Eastern Himalayas, very close to the border with Bhutan. It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, National Park, Tiger Reserve, Biosphere Reserve, and Important Bird Area. It has rich biodiversity due to its location between the Sub-Himalayan Bhabar Terai and Himalayan subtropical broadleaf forests.

Identify the protected area described above:

- (a) Kaziranga National Park
- (b) Dibru-Saikhowa National Park
- (c) Mouling National Park
- (d) Manas National Park

Q5. Consider the following statements regarding the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS):

1. The CDS is a five-star military officer and permanent Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee.
2. The CDS is appointed by the President of India.
3. The CDS serves either for three years or till the age of 70, whichever is earlier.

How many of the above statements are correct ?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

Answers:

1. B
2. C
3. A
4. D
5. D