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1. Lt. Gen. Dhiraj Seth Appointed as Next Chief of Army Staff

The Ministry of Defence announced that Lt. Gen. Dhiraj Seth will be appointed as the next Chief of the Indian Army.

(i) The tenure of the current Chief of Army Staff, Upendra Dwivedi, is set to end on June 30. Following the seniority principle, the Defence Ministry has made this appointment.

(ii) According to the ministry's statement, Lt. Gen. Dhiraj Seth, who is currently serving as the Vice Chief of the Army Staff, will assume office on June 30.

(iii) He is known for formulating strategic plans aimed at modernizing and strengthening the Indian Army. He joined the Army in December 1986.

(iv) A former student of the National Defence Academy, he has served in various branches of the Army for over four decades.

(v) As a Lieutenant General, he commanded the Shatrugat Corps, one of the Army's most capable strike formations.

2. EU Membership Talks with Ukraine and Moldova Begin

Despite the ongoing war with Russia, formal negotiations to admit Ukraine and Moldova into the European Union (EU) are set to begin in Luxembourg.

(i) Ambassadors of all 27 EU member states approved the move during a meeting held in Brussels, Belgium.

(ii) Ukraine views EU membership as an important security guarantee for its post-war future.

(iii) Although membership in NATO would provide stronger security assurances, the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump remains opposed. Other countries are also reluctant to admit Ukraine into NATO while the war continues.

(iv) Russia, which strongly opposes Ukraine joining NATO and cited it as a major reason for launching the war in 2022, has not strongly objected to Ukraine's EU membership bid. Ukraine applied to join the EU in the early days of the conflict.

(v) To become a full EU member, a country must successfully complete negotiations in 35 policy areas ranging from agriculture to trade, a process that can take many years.

(vi) The upcoming talks will focus on key chapters related to the EU's core values and policies.

3. India and Nepal Discuss Cross-Border Railway Connectivity

Officials from India and Nepal held discussions on enhancing cross-border railway connectivity, including passenger train services between the two countries.

(i) The discussions took place during the 10th Project Steering Committee meeting and the 8th Joint Working Group meeting held in Kathmandu on June 11 and 12.

(ii) According to the Indian Embassy in Nepal:

- Both countries discussed strengthening bilateral cooperation in the railway sector and improving rail connectivity.
- Particular attention was given to a proposed passenger train service between Janakpur in Nepal and Ayodhya in India, including the preparation of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).
- Janakpur is traditionally believed to be the birthplace of Sita, the wife of Lord Rama. It is located about 220 km from Kathmandu and 500 km from Ayodhya and attracts large numbers of pilgrims from both countries.
- Discussions also covered the final location survey report for the Raxaul–Kathmandu broad-gauge railway project, as well as operationalizing the India-assisted Jayanagar–Bijalpura–Bardibas and Jogbani–Biratnagar railway lines.
- Technical support for the proposed East–West Railway Corridor connecting Nepal's southern Terai districts was also discussed.

4. Nipah Virus Case Reported in Kerala

Authorities have intensified measures to prevent the spread of the Nipah virus after a case was confirmed in Kozhikode district, Kerala.

(i) A 43-year-old man from Ramanattukara in Kozhikode district tested positive for the virus.

(ii) Nipah virus is associated with fruit bats and can spread from animals to humans. It can also spread between humans through respiratory transmission.

(iii) The infection can cause severe respiratory illness and encephalitis (inflammation of the brain).

5. India Successfully Tests Ballistic Missile Defence System

The Ministry of Defence announced the successful testing of India's Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) System, designed to intercept and destroy enemy missiles in flight.

(i) The system is capable of intercepting long-range nuclear missiles and airborne warning and control system (AWACS) aircraft from enemy nations.

(ii) According to the Ministry:

- Three different tests were conducted on June 10 and 11.
- The system successfully intercepted missiles both within and outside the Earth's atmosphere.
- With this achievement, India joins a select group of nations possessing advanced BMD capabilities.
- A medium-range anti-ship missile test was also successfully conducted.
- The tests demonstrated several critical technologies developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), strengthening India's defense preparedness against diverse threats.

6. Lok Adalat in Tamil Nadu Settles Over 91,000 Cases

A total of 91,369 cases were resolved during the National Lok Adalat held in Tamil Nadu, resulting in

compensation and settlements worth ₹664.47 crore.

(i) Lok Adalats are conducted four times a year across India to dispose of long-pending court cases through mutual settlement.

(ii) According to S. Balakrishnan, Member Secretary of the State Legal Services Authority:

- Cases relating to motor accident claims, cheque dishonour, labour disputes, electricity-related matters, maintenance claims, and other categories were heard.
- Through negotiations and mutual consent of both parties, 91,369 cases were settled.
- As a result, affected parties received a total of ₹664.47 crore.

7. Prime Minister Narendra Modi Begins One-Week Visit to France and Slovakia

Prime Minister Narendra Modi departed on a week-long official visit to France and Slovakia.

(i) Visit to France

- Modi will participate in the G7 Summit and hold bilateral talks with leaders from various countries.
- His first stop is Nice, France, where he is scheduled to meet French President Emmanuel Macron on June 14.
- Both leaders will jointly inaugurate "Bharat Innovates," a three-day event showcasing technological innovations from Indian higher education institutions and Government-supported technology institutes.
- Discussions are expected to focus on India's plan to procure 114 Rafale fighter jets from Dassault Aviation.
- Under the proposal:
 - 18 Rafale aircraft will be manufactured entirely in France and delivered in fly-away condition.
 - The remaining aircraft are planned to be produced in India with 50% indigenous components.
- The two sides will also discuss opportunities for French companies in India's nuclear energy sector, where private participation has recently been permitted.
- More than 12 new bilateral initiatives are expected to be announced.

(ii) Visit to Slovakia

- Modi will travel from Nice to Slovakia and participate in several events from June 14 to 16.
- He will become the first Indian Prime Minister to visit Slovakia since the country gained independence in 1993.
- He is scheduled to meet Slovak President Peter Pellegrini and Prime Minister Robert Fico.

(iii) G7 Summit

- Modi will return to France on June 16 to attend the two-day G7 Summit in Évian as a special invitee.
- The G7 comprises Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the European Union.
- He is expected to hold discussions with several world leaders on the sidelines of the summit.
- Officials are reportedly working on arranging a meeting between Modi and U.S. President Donald Trump, although no formal confirmation has been issued.

(iv) Final Leg of the Visit

On June 18 and 19, Modi will visit Paris and participate in the VivaTech Technology Conference alongside President Emmanuel Macron, concluding his European tour.