THE CAVALIER

SSB Weekly

No. 01

Week of 3 – 9 August 2026 · Current affairs for your SSB board

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THE WEEK

Five stories the board may ask about

1 DEFENCE · STRATEGIC FORCES

Agni-4 test-fired by the Strategic Forces Command

The **Agni-4** medium-range ballistic missile was test-fired from the Integrated Test Range, Chandipur, Odisha, on 6 Aug and validated all parameters. It was a user trial by the **Strategic Forces Command**, which manages India's nuclear arsenal. Agni-4 is a two-stage, solid-fuelled, road-mobile missile with a range of about 4,000 km.

WHY IT MATTERS

India's doctrine is No First Use: these missiles exist so nobody dares strike first. A user trial shows the weapon works in service hands, which makes deterrence credible.

YOUR BALANCED VIEW

Deterrence works only if the other side believes it. Regular, quiet tests do more for peace than loud speeches.

IO MAY ASK

If India has promised never to use nuclear weapons first, why keep testing missiles?

Source: PIB, MoD, 6 Aug

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2 DEFENCE · ARMY

The Territorial Army: the citizen-soldier in focus

Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh chaired the MoD's Parliamentary Consultative Committee on 6 Aug on the **Territorial Army** (TA), calling it a 'living embodiment' of the **citizen-soldier**: members keep civilian jobs and put on uniform when needed. The TA has about 44,400 personnel in 59 units; its **Ecological Task Forces** have planted about 10 cr saplings.

WHY IT MATTERS

The TA gives the Army surge capacity, a ready reserve of trained soldiers. Its units were first responders in the Kerala floods, the Odisha cyclone and the recent Assam floods.

YOUR BALANCED VIEW

A reserve costs far less than a standing army, but only if it is trained regularly, not kept on paper.

IO MAY ASK

If you are not recommended here, would you join the Territorial Army? Why?

Source: PIB, MoD, 6 Aug

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3 NEIGHBOURHOOD · CHINA

27 Arunachal places named on India's official map

On 7 Aug the Centre, with the Arunachal government, marked **27 places and features** on the official **Survey of India** map of the state under standard names. They include Longju, the passes Thag La, Dzo La and Riza La, Jaswant Garh and the Sher-e-Thapa memorial. The aim: accurate recognition and public awareness.

WHY IT MATTERS

China claims Arunachal and issues its own names for places there, which India rejects. Some names carry military history: Longju saw a 1959 clash; Jaswant Garh honours a 1962 hero.

YOUR BALANCED VIEW

Maps are claims in ink. Naming our own places is a calm, lawful answer, but roads and posts on the ground matter more.

IO MAY ASK

Does putting names on a map change anything on the ground along the LAC?

Source: PIB, MHA, 7 Aug

4 NATIONAL · ECONOMY

UPI stays free for users, says the Finance Ministry

On 8 Aug the Finance Ministry said **UPI** users will pay no transaction charges and person-to-person transfers stay free. Any future **Merchant Discount Rate (MDR)** would cover only some merchant payments above a threshold, at a rate far below card MDR. A **Payment and Settlement Systems Act** amendment enables this, for UPI's long-term sustainability.

WHY IT MATTERS

Zero MDR since January 2020 made UPI universal. But servers, fraud checks and cyber-security cost money, and banks and payment firms carry it, partly helped by government incentives.

YOUR BALANCED VIEW

Keep it free for people and small shops. A tiny fee on big merchants is fair if it pays for safer payments.

IO MAY ASK

Nothing is truly free. Who should pay for UPI, and why?

Source: Cavalier daily, 8 Aug

5 SPORT · GOVERNANCE

Glasgow medals, and a push to clean up sports bodies

The PM hosted India's **Commonwealth Games 2026** (Glasgow) medal winners on 9 Aug; boxing was the standout. Two days earlier, at the **National Sports Federation Conclave**, the Sports Minister

called for open selection trials filmed before observers, action against the whole **doping** chain, and more home-grown coaches.

WHY IT MATTERS

Talent is rarely India's problem; the system around it is. Unfair selection and doping end careers, and the National Sports Governance Act, 2025 sets standards federations must meet.

YOUR BALANCED VIEW

Medals grow from a broad base of school and college sport. Fair selection costs nothing and is the place to start.

IO MAY ASK

Why does a country as large as India win so few Olympic medals?

Source: PIB, PMO & MYAS, 7 & 9 Aug

QUICK-FIRE

Know these cold

Ramsar site No. 101	Glaw Lake, Kamlang Tiger Reserve · Arunachal's first · 3 Aug
300 GW non-fossil	Crossed as on 31 Jul · over half of installed capacity · 2030 target 500 GW
Fugitives	274 brought back from 36 countries, 2019–26 · BHARATPOL links 1,400+ agencies to INTERPOL
Future Warfare Course	4th tri-services edition · Manekshaw Centre, from 3 Aug · run by HQ IDS

Sindoor blood drive	Base Hospital, Delhi Cantt, 9 Aug · 1,000 sportspersons from Maharashtra donated
'Boss Scam'	I4C alert, 7 Aug · malware hijacks WhatsApp to order fake payments
USBRL	272 km all-weather rail link to Kashmir · survey for a 190 km Jammu/Reasi–Poonch line
Who's who	CDS Gen NS Raja Subramani · COAS Gen Dhiraj Seth · DG Naval Ops Vice Adm Manish Chadha (from 3 Aug)
Dates	3 Aug Organ Donation Day · 7 Aug National Handloom Day · 8 Aug Quit India Day (1942)

TALKING POINT

Agni-4, the Territorial Army and 27 names on the Arunachal map share one theme: **credibility**. Security rests as much on being believed as on being armed.

PRACTICE

Speak it

LECTURETTE OF THE WEEK

India's Nuclear Doctrine

Why now: This week the Strategic Forces Command test-fired Agni-4 from Chandipur, a reminder that India's missiles exist to deter, not to strike first.

OPEN · 30S

“The best nuclear weapon is the one that never has to be used.” Today I will speak on India's nuclear doctrine.

POINT 1 · 40S

The doctrine. Adopted in 2003: credible minimum deterrence, No First Use, massive retaliation if attacked, no use against non-nuclear states, and civilian control.

POINT 2 · 40S

The machinery. A triad: Agni missiles on land, fighters like the Rafale and Su-30MKI in the air, and Arihant-class submarines at sea, the hardest leg to destroy. Only the Political Council of the Nuclear Command Authority, chaired by the PM, can order use; the Strategic Forces Command executes.

POINT 3 · 40S

The debate. Critics say No First Use hands the initiative to the enemy. Supporters say it lowers the risk of accidental war and marks India as a responsible power.

CLOSE · 30S

India's deterrent keeps the peace by making war unthinkable. Credible, minimum and under civilian control: that balance has served India since Pokhran-II in 1998.

Name the three legs of the triad in one breath and keep one date ready (2003). Practise aloud against a 3-minute timer.

How to give a lecturette → **110 lecturette topics →**

GROUP DISCUSSION OF THE WEEK

“Every young Indian should undergo a year of compulsory military training”

On 6 Aug the Defence Minister called the **Territorial Army**, about 44,400 personnel in 59 units, a 'living embodiment' of the citizen-soldier: civilians who wear uniform when the nation needs them. TA units were first responders in the Kerala floods and the Odisha cyclone, and have planted about 10 cr saplings.

FOR

- It builds discipline, fitness and teamwork at the age when habits form.
- A trained reserve gives surge capacity in war and disasters, as the TA has shown.
- Youth from every state and class serve side by side, which builds national integration.
- Citizens who have served understand the forces and value them more.

AGAINST

- Modern forces need skilled volunteers, not lakhs of unwilling conscripts.
- Training, feeding and equipping millions every year would cost more than it returns.
- A lost year of study or work hurts careers, especially in poorer families.
- Forced service breeds resentment; NCC, TA and NSS already offer willing routes.

HOW TO CONCLUDE

Make it attractive, not compulsory. Expand the NCC and TA, link service to college credit and jobs, and let willing citizens become trained citizen-soldiers.

GD guide for the SSB →

OUR SSB FACULTY

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Col Manoj Batra (Retd)



Col Vijayant Thakur (Retd)

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Facts from PIB press releases of the week. Views are framed for discussion practice.