THE CAVALIER

SSB Weekly

No. 05

Week of 31 August – 6 September 2026 · Current affairs for your SSB board

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THE WEEK

Five stories the board may ask about

1 DEFENCE · DIPLOMACY

RAKSHA: a roadmap for defence diplomacy

On 3 Sep Rajnath Singh released **RAKSHA**, a ten-year roadmap for India's defence partnerships. Its four pillars: strategic partnerships, capacity building (exercises and training), **indigenous exports**, and maritime security, with India as **net security provider** and first responder in the Indian Ocean. The same day, an India–Belgium defence CEOs' roundtable pitched joint work on drones, cyber security and underwater vehicles.

WHY IT MATTERS

Defence diplomacy uses the forces in peacetime: joint exercises, training foreign cadets, port calls, disaster relief and arms sales. It builds friendships that make war less likely.

YOUR BALANCED VIEW

Autonomy today means having many partners, not making everything alone. Relief missions and exports win friends faster than speeches.

IO MAY ASK

How does training foreign cadets at the NDA or IMA help India's own security?

Source: PIB, MoD, 3 Sep

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2 DEFENCE · INDUSTRY

₹1.8 lakh cr of defence output, and who makes it

Reviewing the 16 **Defence PSUs** on 1 Sep, Rajnath Singh noted that India made about **₹1.8 lakh cr** of defence equipment in 2025-26, of which DPSUs made ₹1.29 lakh cr, roughly 72%. He asked for timely delivery, fewer imports, and R&D judged by new technologies, not money spent. Seven of the 16 came out of the **Ordnance Factory Board** in 2021.

WHY IT MATTERS

Long wars are won by factories as much as soldiers. Recent conflicts showed ammunition and spares run out fast; a country must be able to make more, quickly, at home.

YOUR BALANCED VIEW

The public sector still carries most of the load. Real self-reliance needs private firms to grow and DPSUs to deliver on time.

IO MAY ASK

Why should India make its own weapons when it can buy better ones abroad?

Source: PIB, MoD, 1 Sep

3 INTERNATIONAL · SCO

The SCO turns 25: India's asks at Bishkek

The Prime Minister attended the 26th **SCO summit** at **Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan** (31 Aug–1 Sep), in the group's 25th year. Four Indian proposals made it into the Bishkek Declaration, among them **English as an official SCO language** beside Russian and Chinese. India repeated that there must be 'no double standards' on terror, and that connectivity must respect sovereignty and territorial integrity.

WHY IT MATTERS

India has no land border with Central Asia. The SCO gives it a standing seat with Russia, China and the Central Asian states, at a table where Pakistan also sits.

YOUR BALANCED VIEW

The SCO gives India a seat, not agreement. Using that seat to push its own agenda beats leaving the table to China.

IO MAY ASK

What does India gain from a group where China and Pakistan often stand together?

Source: PIB, PMO, 1 Sep

4 NATIONAL · ECONOMY

7.8% growth, and a credit-rating upgrade

Data released on 31 Aug showed real GDP grew **7.8%** in April–June 2026. On 2 Sep Japan's agency **JCR** raised India's credit rating a notch, from BBB+ to **A−**. It cited strong growth, a central fiscal deficit cut from 4.7% to 4.4% while capital spending stayed high, healthier banks, and forex reserves well above short-term foreign debt.

WHY IT MATTERS

A better rating lowers what India and its companies pay to borrow abroad. Growth pays for roads, schools and the defence budget.

YOUR BALANCED VIEW

The numbers are strong, but one quarter is not a trend. Growth matters most when it creates jobs and lifts wages.

IO MAY ASK

If the economy grows at nearly 8%, why do so many graduates still struggle to find jobs?

Source: PIB, MoSPI & MoF, 31 Aug & 2 Sep

5 SCIENCE · SPACE

EOS-05: India's first camera in geosynchronous orbit

On 4 Sep the Prime Minister hailed **GSLV-F17**'s launch of **EOS-05**, India's first imaging satellite in **geosynchronous orbit**, about 35,786 km up. Most imaging satellites fly 500–800 km up and pass a spot every few days; EOS-05 keeps the same hemisphere in view

all the time. The first try, EOS-03, was lost in 2021 to a cryogenic-stage failure.

WHY IT MATTERS

A low satellite gives sharp but occasional pictures. A geo imager watches cyclones, floods, fires, borders and coasts continuously, trading detail for persistence.

YOUR BALANCED VIEW

Persistence matters as much as sharpness. Geo and low-orbit satellites together give both early warning and fine detail.

IO MAY ASK

How do satellites help the armed forces, in peace and in war?

Source: PIB, PMO & DoS, 4 Sep

QUICK-FIRE

Know these cold

India–Belgium	Belgian PM in India, 2–4 Sep · backs a permanent UNSC seat for India · 9,000+ Indian soldiers fell in Flanders, WWI
AVM Shakti Sharma	First woman from a non-medical branch to reach two-star rank · ACAS (Education), IAF, 1 Sep
INS Sudarshini	Navy's sail training ship at Barcelona, Spain, 1 Sep · expedition Lokayan 26
Sarang	IAF's five-helicopter Dhruv display team reached Egypt, 6 Sep, for the El Alamein Airshow (8–10 Sep)
Aero India 2027	16th edition · AF Station Yelahanka, Bengaluru · 8–12 Feb 2027 · registration opened 3 Sep

Quantum-safe links	C-DOT unveiled 14 indigenous quantum products, 31 Aug · Q-VIKRAM is a defence-grade encryptor
Semicon 2.0	All six pillars notified, 31 Aug · 85,000 chip engineers trained in four years
Drug-free India	Roadmap to July 2029, announced 6 Sep · NCC and NSS volunteers to become Nasha Mukt Bharat Mitras
Dates	5 Sep Teachers' Day (Dr S. Radhakrishnan's birth anniversary) · 6 Sep International Vulture Awareness Day

TALKING POINT

A diplomacy roadmap, a factory review, a satellite and a ratings upgrade, all in one week. **National power** is built in embassies, factories and labs as much as on the battlefield.

PRACTICE

Speak it

LECTURETTE OF THE WEEK

Defence Diplomacy

Why now: On 3 Sep the Defence Minister released RAKSHA, a ten-year defence-diplomacy roadmap. In the same week INS Sudarshini called at Barcelona and the IAF's Sarang team flew to Egypt.

OPEN · 30S

"A warship in a friendly port can say more than a hundred speeches." Today I will speak on defence diplomacy.

POINT 1 · 40S

Shared history. Over 9,000 Indian soldiers died in Flanders in WWI, and the 4th Indian Division fought at El Alamein in 1942. This week the Belgian PM's visit and Sarang's trip to Egypt both drew on that history.

POINT 2 · 40S

First responder. Relief wins trust fastest: Operation Rahat (Yemen, 2015), Dost (Türkiye and Syria, 2023), Sadbhav (Typhoon Yagi, 2024) and Brahma (Myanmar, 2025). At sea, the IFC-IOR at Gurugram (2018) shares a common maritime picture with partner navies.

POINT 3 · 40S

The limits. An arms sale ties a buyer to India for decades of spares and training, so exports must arrive on time. Partners judge India by what it does in a crisis. Diplomacy backs hard power; it cannot replace it.

CLOSE · 30S

Defence diplomacy wins friends before a war and allies during one. Every exercise, port call and relief mission is an investment in India's security.

Quote one operation (Dost, 2023) and one example from this week (Sarang in Egypt). Practise aloud against a 3-minute timer.

How to give a lecturette → 110 lecturette topics →

GROUP DISCUSSION OF THE WEEK

“Free trade agreements do India more good than harm”

On 4 Sep in Mumbai, the Commerce Minister said the **India–EU FTA**, concluded on 27 Jan 2026, will cut or remove tariffs on over 95% of goods each way. The partners cover 2 billion people and a quarter of world GDP; trade has doubled in a decade to nearly $140 bn. India has also signed deals with the UAE, Australia, EFTA and the UK.

FOR

- Bigger markets mean more exports, factories and jobs.
- Competition pushes Indian firms to raise quality.
- Access to technology: Belgium pitched chips, green hydrogen and defence co-production.
- Trade ties are strategic ties; they bind partners in a divided world.

AGAINST

- Cheap imports can hurt small firms and farmers.
- Sensitive sectors like dairy and agriculture need protection.
- Non-tariff walls remain: the EU's carbon border levy works like a tariff on Indian steel.
- India walked out of RCEP in 2019 fearing a flood of imports.

HOW TO CONCLUDE

FTAs help when India bargains hard: open up where it is competitive, shield sensitive sectors, and use the access to build at home. A trade deal is a tool, not a goal.

GD guide for the SSB →

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