THE CAVALIER

SSB Weekly

No. 07

Week of 14 – 20 September 2026 · Current affairs for your SSB board

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Quick-fire facts · Lecturette: **Disaster Management in India** · GD: **Russian arms dependence**

THE WEEK

Five stories the board may ask about

1 DEFENCE · ARMY

Army chief in Moscow, US troops at Auli

Army chief **Gen Dhiraj Seth** visited Russia (16–18 Sep) for talks with the head of Russia's Land Forces and stops in Moscow and Saint Petersburg. The same week the 22nd **Yudh Abhyas** with the US Army opened at Auli, Uttarakhand (15 Sep), alongside Mahajan range in Rajasthan: 600 troops a side practising **Integrated Battle Groups** in the mountains.

WHY IT MATTERS

Much of India's kit, from T-90 tanks to Su-30MKI jets, is Russian-origin and needs spares for decades. The US is a newer but fast-growing partner. India needs both.

YOUR BALANCED VIEW

Strategic autonomy is not sitting on the fence. It means choosing partners issue by issue, and building our own weapons.

IO MAY ASK

Can India stay close to both the US and Russia, or will it one day have to choose?

Source: PIB, MoD, 15 & 16 Sep

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2 DEFENCE · JOINTNESS

Soldiers, diplomats and police study the battle for the mind

The **CORE Programme 2026** (14–18 Sep, New Delhi), run by HQ Integrated Defence Staff, put senior officers of all three Services in one room with Defence, External Affairs and Home ministry officials. It ran exercises on **cognitive warfare** and counter-disinformation, and concluded that diplomatic, informational, economic and military power (**DIME**) must work as one.

WHY IT MATTERS

Cognitive warfare targets what a people believe. It need not sell a lie; it only needs people to stop trusting any news. That fight runs through civilian phones, not just borders.

YOUR BALANCED VIEW

The answer to disinformation is not censorship but credibility: an official voice that is fast, accurate and trusted well before a crisis.

IO MAY ASK

In a crisis, a video of "our soldiers retreating" goes viral. What should the government do?

Source: Cavalier daily, 18 Sep

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3 NEIGHBOURHOOD · NEPAL

After the floods, India keeps Nepal's lights on

Floods damaged **Nepal's** hydropower plants, so on 14 Sep India approved up to **654 MW** of power for Nepal, 18 hours a day, until 31 Dec. Normally the flow runs the other way in the monsoon, with Nepal selling surplus hydro power to India. A 2024 deal targets **10,000 MW** of Nepali exports to India over ten years.

WHY IT MATTERS

Nepal sits between India and China, and the 1950 treaty keeps our border open. Help in a disaster builds more trust than any speech.

YOUR BALANCED VIEW

Shared power lines make neighbours depend on each other in a good way. Being first with help is Neighbourhood First in action.

IO MAY ASK

Nepal has sometimes leaned towards China. Why should India keep helping it?

Source: PIB, Ministry of Power, 14 Sep

4 NATIONAL · JOBS

Provident fund cover widens to ₹25,000 salaries

On 16 Sep the Cabinet raised the **EPFO wage ceiling** for compulsory provident-fund cover from ₹15,000 to **₹25,000 a month**. Over **51 lakh** more employees now get statutory social security: retirement savings (EPF), a monthly pension (EPS) and insurance if they die in service (EDLI). The ceiling had not moved since 2014.

WHY IT MATTERS

Many first jobs pay ₹15,000–25,000. Until now such workers were formally employed but unprotected: no PF, no pension, no insurance.

YOUR BALANCED VIEW

Good for young workers, though employers must pay more. The test is whether small firms hire formally or push staff off the books.

IO MAY ASK

Would you take a higher salary with no PF, or a lower one with full social security? Why?

Source: PIB, Cabinet & Labour, 16 Sep

5 ENVIRONMENT · WILDLIFE

A last-chance centre for the Great Indian Bustard

On 14 Sep the Environment Minister opened a **Soft Release Centre** for the **Great Indian Bustard** at Naliya, Kachchh, where captive-bred birds learn the wild in stages. Fewer than 150 survive. A **"jump-start"** trick swaps a wild female's infertile eggs for viable ones from the breeding centre; one such chick has now lived over three months in the wild.

WHY IT MATTERS

The gravest threat is collision with power lines, many carrying solar and wind power from the same dry lands. Clean energy and an endangered bird compete for one landscape.

YOUR BALANCED VIEW

Both can win: route lines around core habitat and fit bird diverters. Losing a species to save some cable is a poor trade.

IO MAY ASK

If a solar park threatens the last 150 bustards, which would you choose, and why?

Source: PIB, MoEFCC, 14 Sep

QUICK-FIRE

Know these cold

SLINEX-26 (13th)	India–Sri Lanka navies · Visakhapatnam · 17–21 Sep · INS Kavaratti, INS Jyoti & SLNS Sindurala

INS Trishul	Port call at Alexandria, Egypt, 14–17 Sep · PASSEX with ENS Bernees · crew at Chatby War Memorial (19 Indian names)
IAF Dronathon-2026	Pokhran, 14–16 Sep · IAF UAS Roadmap released · indigenous Vayu UTtaM drone-traffic system shown
NGMV (2nd ship)	Steel cut at Cochin Shipyard, 17 Sep · 6 Next Generation Missile Vessels, ≈ ₹9,804 cr · built for sea denial
HAL trainers	Handover lined up at Bengaluru, 18 Sep · 2 Tejas FOC twin-seaters (complete a 2010 order) + HTT-40 basic trainers
Suryakiran	First display over Meerut, 19–20 Sep · 9 Hawk Mk 132s · Asia's only nine-aircraft aerobatic team
NCC	"Aparajita – Parang La 2026": 20 girl cadets trekked ~250 km over a 5,578 m pass · flagged in at Karzok, Ladakh, 16 Sep
Weather radar	India's 51st Doppler Weather Radar at Sambalpur, Odisha, 17 Sep · 14 in 2014 · ~81 planned under Mission Mausam
Kishau dam	Six states signed for a 232.6 m dam on the Tons, the Yamuna's largest tributary, 15 Sep
Who's who	COAS Gen Dhiraj Seth · CAS Air Chief Marshal AP Singh · DG NCC Lt Gen Virendra Vats

TALKING POINT

Diplomats at a military seminar, a power line to Nepal, the BSF planting mangroves in Kachchh: this week showed that **security is whole-of-nation**, not the soldier's job alone.

PRACTICE

Speak it

LECTURETTE OF THE WEEK

Disaster Management in India

Why now: This week India commissioned its 51st Doppler weather radar at Sambalpur and sent up to 654 MW of emergency power to flood-hit Nepal.

OPEN · 30S

"Disasters are natural; the damage is often man-made." Today I will speak on disaster management in India.

POINT 1 · 40S

The risk. Floods, cyclones, earthquakes, landslides and heatwaves: India faces almost every kind. A long coastline and the young Himalaya make cyclones and landslides routine.

POINT 2 · 40S

Warning saves lives. Doppler radars have grown from 14 in 2014 to 51 today, with about 81 planned under Mission Mausam. Better cyclone warnings and timely evacuation have sharply cut deaths in states like Odisha.

POINT 3 · 40S

Response, at home and abroad. The NDRF, the armed forces and local volunteers are the first responders. India now helps neighbours too, as with emergency power to flood-hit Nepal this week.

CLOSE · 30S

We cannot stop a cyclone, but we can decide how many people it harms. Preparedness is always cheaper than relief.

Use one before-and-after figure (14 → 51 radars). Keep each point to about 40 seconds.

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

GROUP DISCUSSION OF THE WEEK

"India should reduce its dependence on Russian arms"

From 16–18 Sep Army chief **Gen Dhiraj Seth** was in Russia for talks on training and defence industry, while Indian and US troops, 600 a side, trained together in the 22nd **Yudh Abhyas** at Auli. Russia remains India's largest single arms supplier, from T-90 tanks to Su-30MKI jets and the S-400.

FOR

- One main supplier is one point of failure: spares for old fleets can dry up.
- Rafale, P-8I, C-17 and Apache show other partners can fill the gaps.
- Indigenisation lists and Aatmanirbhar Bharat aim to cut imports from every source.
- Money spent at home builds Indian industry and jobs, not someone else's.

AGAINST

- A huge Russian-built fleet will serve for decades and needs Russian support.
- Russia gave licensed production: Su-30MKI at HAL, T-90 at Avadi.
- BrahMos, built jointly, is now an export, sold to the Philippines in 2022.
- A Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership is not dropped lightly.

HOW TO CONCLUDE

Diversify, don't abandon. Keep Russia for sustainment and co-development, add new partners, and above all build at home, so no single country holds India's trigger.

GD guide for the SSB →

OUR SSB FACULTY

Train with officers who sat on the board



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.