THE CAVALIER

SSB Weekly

No. 10

Week of 5 – 11 October 2026 · Current affairs for your SSB board

IN THIS ISSUE

1 The IAF at 94
2 Standing by veterans
3 Cargo to Bangladesh
4 Mental health helpline
5 Highways for wildlife

Quick-fire facts · Lecturette: **The North East: India's Gateway to the East** · GD: **Who pays for climate?**

THE WEEK

Five stories the board may ask about

1 DEFENCE · AIR FORCE

At 94, the IAF keeps humans in charge

The IAF marked its **94th anniversary** at Air Force Station Hindan, Ghaziabad, on 8 Oct, under the theme 'Infallible, Impervious and Precise'. Air Chief Marshal AP Singh said AI and autonomous systems will be brought in "while keeping **human authority at the core**". The static display put **one-way attack drones** beside fighters, and he cited Operation Sindoor as proof of readiness.

WHY IT MATTERS

A machine can find and strike a target faster than a human can approve it. Keeping a human in the loop trades some speed for accountability.

YOUR BALANCED VIEW

Speed matters, but a machine cannot answer for a wrong kill. Let autonomy assist; a human must decide.

IO MAY ASK

Should a machine ever be allowed to choose and fire on a target by itself?

Source: PIB, MoD, 8 Oct

2 DEFENCE · VETERANS

60,000 leave the forces a year. Then what?

On 10 Oct Vice-President C. P. Radhakrishnan visited a **Sainya Sampark Mela** at Deoghar, Jharkhand, where the Army and district officials met ex-servicemen, **Veer Naris** and dependents in one place to settle pension and other grievances. He said the nation must stand with soldiers' families. Veterans' welfare runs through the **Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare** (2004) and Sainik Boards at the Centre, states and districts.

WHY IT MATTERS

About 60,000 people leave the forces each year, most in their 30s, with decades of working life ahead. Under Agnipath, most Agniveers will leave at around 22, without a pension.

YOUR BALANCED VIEW

Gratitude is not enough. A soldier's skills must become a civilian qualification that an employer can read.

IO MAY ASK

What should happen to an Agniveer who is not retained after four years?

Source: PIB, 10 Oct

3 NEIGHBOURHOOD · BANGLADESH

First cargo from upper Assam sails to Bangladesh

On 5 Oct a barge carrying **540 tonnes of methanol** from Namrup left Bogibeel Terminal, Dibrugarh, for Bangladesh: the first cargo from upper Assam to a foreign port since Independence. It sails about 768 km down **National Waterway-2** (the Brahmaputra), then along the **Indo-Bangladesh Protocol Route**, 1,300 km in all. New customs and immigration posts at Bogibeel and Dhubri made it possible.

WHY IT MATTERS

By land, Assam's goods must loop round Bangladesh through the narrow Siliguri corridor, the 'Chicken's Neck'. A river route through a friendly neighbour gives the North East a second door.

YOUR BALANCED VIEW

One barge is a trial run, not a trade route. It pays off only if sailings become regular and ties with Dhaka stay steady.

IO MAY ASK

Why does the North East depend so much on Bangladesh, and is that a risk?

Source: PIB, MoPSW, 5 Oct

4 NATIONAL · SOCIETY

Tele-MANAS turns four, with 47 lakh calls

On **World Mental Health Day** (10 Oct) the Health Ministry said **Tele-MANAS**, the free, 24×7 helpline **14416** launched in 2022, has

taken over 47 lakh calls through 53 cells in all 36 states and UTs. Of callers whose details were recorded, 73% were aged 18–45, and more men called than women. Exam, work and relationship stress were common reasons.

WHY IT MATTERS

India's national mental health survey (2015-16) found that most people with a mental disorder get no treatment. Stigma keeps them silent; a phone call is a safe first step.

YOUR BALANCED VIEW

Asking for help is strength, not weakness. But a helpline works only if counsellors and doctors wait on the other side.

IO MAY ASK

How do you handle stress, and whom do you turn to when things go wrong?

Source: PIB, MoHFW, 10 Oct

---

5 ENVIRONMENT · WILDLIFE

₹19,700 cr to help wildlife cross India's highways

Marking **National Wildlife Week** (2–8 Oct), NHAI released a document on 8 Oct showing about **₹19,700 cr** spent over five years on wildlife measures: over 2,150 crossing structures built or proposed, and guide fencing and noise barriers along 300+ km. The biggest share, ₹8,300 cr, went on **viaducts**, raised roads that leave the forest floor open below.

WHY IT MATTERS

A road splits animal groups so they cannot mix and breed, even if none is hit. Near Pench on NH-44, tigers and leopards have been caught on camera using such crossings.

YOUR BALANCED VIEW

Roads and forests can coexist, but only if crossings are planned in from the start, not added after the damage.

IO MAY ASK

If a highway must pass through a tiger reserve, how would you build it?

Source: PIB, MoRTH, 8 Oct

QUICK-FIRE

Know these cold

Mountain Guardian	India–UAE armies · Chaubatia, Uttarakhand · 5–18 Oct · Bhairav Battalion · mountain warfare
AHAP parachute	DRDO's first live jump at Nyoma, Ladakh, 6 Oct · jumped at 16,000 ft · designed by ADRDE Agra
Stratospheric airship	DRDO's High-Altitude Platform flew to 21 km, 6 Oct · held 20 km for 30+ min
FSS-1 'Surya'	First of 5 Fleet Support Ships (~44,000 t) launched at HSL Visakhapatnam, 6 Oct · ₹19,000 cr contract
Project Seabird	CDS Gen NS Raja Subramani opened housing and a KG school at Naval Base Karwar, 8 Oct · Phase IIA
Proof ranges	Revised SOP, 7 Oct · test charges waived for iDEX, TDF and Make projects · 3-day slot a quarter for industry

Next Air Chief	Air Marshal Ashutosh Dixit named next Chief of the Air Staff, 6 Oct
Dates	8 Oct Air Force Day (raised 1932) · 10 Oct World Mental Health Day · 2–8 Oct National Wildlife Week

TALKING POINT

This week was about **people behind the hardware**: the IAF keeps humans in charge of machines, veterans need a second career, and 47 lakh helpline calls show that stress is real. Strength starts with people.

PRACTICE

Speak it

LECTURETTE OF THE WEEK

The North East: India's Gateway to the East

Why now: On 5 Oct a barge carried 540 tonnes of methanol from Bogibeel, Dibrugarh, down the Brahmaputra to Bangladesh: the first cargo from upper Assam to a foreign port since Independence.

OPEN · 30S

"A region that touches five countries is not India's corner; it is India's front door." Today I will speak on the North East as India's gateway to the East.

POINT 1 · 40S

Geography. Eight states joined to the rest of India only by the narrow Siliguri corridor, the 'Chicken's Neck', while bordering China, Bhutan, Myanmar, Bangladesh and Nepal. That makes it both a security worry and a natural bridge to South-East Asia.

POINT 2 · 40S

Connectivity. Partition in 1947 cut the old river route, and Dibrugarh's steamer ghat closed in 1956. Now National Waterway-2 on the Brahmaputra, the Protocol Route through Bangladesh and over ₹6,800 cr in North East waterways are reopening it.

POINT 3 · 40S

Act East. Since 2014 the Act East Policy sees the region as the land link to ASEAN. Trade, tourism and jobs at home build loyalty and security far better than isolation.

CLOSE · 30S

The North East is not a frontier to be guarded alone; it is a gateway to be opened. Connect it well, and both its people and India's borders grow stronger.

Quote one number (540 tonnes) and one place (the Siliguri corridor). Practise aloud against a 3-minute timer.

How to give a lecturette → 110 lecturette topics →

GROUP DISCUSSION OF THE WEEK

"Rich nations must pay the bill for climate

change”

At the Pre-COP31 meetings in Fiji (PIB, 6 Oct), India asked for equal attention to **adaptation, mitigation and climate finance**, and for ‘common but differentiated responsibilities’ to be upheld. At COP29 in Baku, rich nations agreed to mobilise at least **$300 billion a year by 2035**. COP31 meets in Antalya, Türkiye, in November.

FOR

- They put most of the carbon now in the air. The polluter pays.
- Their wealth was built on cheap coal and oil.
- Small islands and poor nations suffer first and can least afford to adapt.
- Without money and technology, poorer nations cannot switch to clean energy.

AGAINST

- Today’s big emitters include China and India; the atmosphere does not care who is rich.
- Waiting for money becomes an excuse to delay action.
- Pledges are hard to enforce; every country must build its own resilience.
- Developing nations can help too: India offers its space and coastal know-how to Pacific islands.

HOW TO CONCLUDE

Rich nations should pay the larger share, as history demands, but every country must cut emissions and adapt. Responsibility can be shared unequally, but it must be shared.

GD guide for the SSB →

OUR SSB FACULTY

Train with officers who sat on the board



Col Manoj Batra (Retd)



Col Vijayant Thakur (Retd)

Got your SSB date?

Train for the interview, GTO and psych tests with ex-SSB officers · Rajouri Garden, Delhi

See the SSB course →

All weekly issues	SSB interview tips
Personal interview guide	GTO series
WAT examples	TAT practice pictures
WhatsApp us	Telegram channel
Instagram	+91 98186 32779

The Cavalier · Serving defence aspirants since 2001 · www.cavalier.in
Facts from PIB press releases of the week. Views are framed for discussion practice.