THE CAVALIER

SSB Weekly

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Week of 12 – 18 October 2026 · Current affairs for your SSB board

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THE WEEK

Five stories the board may ask about

1 DEFENCE · NAVY

The Navy's first warship from a private shipyard

On 16 Oct the Navy commissioned **INS Samarthak** at Karwar, the first of its Multi-Purpose Vessel class. Built by **Larsen & Toubro** near Chennai, it is the first major warship from an Indian private shipyard, with over 75% indigenous content. Its main job is unusual: it is a **trials ship** that tests new Indian sensors and weapons at sea.

WHY IT MATTERS

Warships have so far come only from public-sector yards like Mazagon Dock and GRSE. A second source adds capacity and competition, and spares frontline ships from trial duty.

YOUR BALANCED VIEW

Private yards building warships is overdue. Competition should cut cost and delay, but every yard must meet the same naval standard.

IO MAY ASK

Should defence production be left to private companies, or must the state keep control?

Source: PIB, MoD, 16 Oct

2 DEFENCE · SECURITY

From condemning terror to striking its source

At a Defence Conclave on 15 Oct, Rajnath Singh said the **surgical strikes**, **Balakot** and **Operation Sindoor** marked a shift from diplomatic condemnation to hitting terror at its source, and warned that any terror act from Pakistan would invite a stronger response. He flagged newer dangers: **lone-wolf attacks**, "white-collar terrorism" and a "5D" threat: disinformation, destabilisation, disruption, deception, destruction.

WHY IT MATTERS

Each strike answered an attack: Uri (2016), Pulwama (2019), Pahalgam (2025). The newer threats are harder to spot: radicalised individuals, often recruited online.

YOUR BALANCED VIEW

Deterrence works only if the enemy believes it. But a lone radical is stopped by alert citizens and good intelligence, not missiles.

IO MAY ASK

What can an ordinary citizen do to help fight terrorism?

Source: PIB, MoD, 15 Oct

3 NEIGHBOURHOOD · BIMSTEC

BIMSTEC's Home Ministers meet for the first time

The first **BIMSTEC Home Ministers' Meeting**, chaired by Amit Shah in New Delhi on 13 Oct, adopted the **Delhi Declaration**. The seven members called the Bay of Bengal a **common security space**, condemned cross-border terrorism and pledged joint action on drugs, human trafficking, cybercrime and money laundering. The meeting was first decided at the 2018 Kathmandu summit.

WHY IT MATTERS

SAARC has not held a summit since 2014, frozen by India–Pakistan hostility. BIMSTEC has no Pakistan and links South Asia to South-East Asia, fitting India's Act East policy.

YOUR BALANCED VIEW

BIMSTEC is useful because it works, not because it is perfect. Eight years from decision to first meeting shows it still moves slowly.

IO MAY ASK

Has India given up on SAARC, and is that wise?

Source: Cavalier daily, 13 Oct

4 NATIONAL · BORDER DEVELOPMENT

₹3,350 cr of projects for Ladakh

On 15 Oct the PM opened five Ladakh projects worth about **₹3,350 cr**. The biggest is the ₹2,500 cr **Nimmu–Padum–Darcha road**, which cuts a 12-hour journey to 3 hours. Others: a bigger Leh airport terminal, the **Hanu hydro project**, 40 reservoirs and India's

first petroglyph park. Ladakh's roads have grown from 1,800 km to over 4,000 km since 2019.

WHY IT MATTERS

The road gives Ladakh a third link, via Zanskar to Darcha in Himachal. Ladakh faces China and Pakistan; roads move troops faster and keep border villages lived in (**Vibrant Villages**).

YOUR BALANCED VIEW

Border roads serve both the soldier and the shepherd. They must also respect Ladakh's fragile mountains and local culture.

IO MAY ASK

Why should a remote region with a small population get such large spending?

Source: PIB, PMO, 15 Oct

5 SPORT · ASIAN GAMES

85 medals, and women won 38 of them

Meeting the **Asian Games 2026** team on 15 Oct, the PM hailed India's **85 medals**; women won 38, including 11 golds. Both hockey teams won gold, the women ending a 44-year wait; both kabaddi teams won gold; archers took five golds. There were first-ever medals in mixed martial arts and soft tennis. He credited **TOPS** and **Khelo India**.

WHY IT MATTERS

Medals follow years of funding, coaching and competition. India hosts the 2030 Commonwealth Games and wants the 2036 Olympics, so the pipeline matters now.

YOUR BALANCED VIEW

The women's share is the real headline. The next step is grounds and coaches in small towns, not just support for stars.

IO MAY ASK

Why does a country of 140 crore still win so few Olympic medals?

Source: PIB, PMO, 15 Oct

QUICK-FIRE

Know these cold

KONKAN-26	India–UK navies · off Plymouth · 8–15 Oct · INS Trishul & HMS Sutherland · run by the Royal Navy's FOST
CTF 154	Navy ended its first-ever command of a Combined Maritime Forces task force (training) · Bahrain, 14 Oct · 39 countries took part
GSAT-7C & Varunastra	₹4,106 cr contracts, 15 Oct · IAF satellite from NSIL ₹2,563 cr · torpedoes from BDL ₹1,543 cr
Defence production	Record ₹1.78 lakh cr · exports ₹39,000 cr · 159 of 175 ammunition types now made in India
High-altitude medicine	ICMR–Armed Forces centre at Keylong (Lahaul & Spiti, ~3,080 m) · foundation stone 12 Oct

Military Nursing Service	29 nurses commissioned as Lieutenants, Delhi Cantt, 14 Oct · 101 years of service
Ramsar sites	103 · new: Sukhna (Chandigarh, a man-made lake of 1958) and Sauj Jheel (UP), 15 Oct
Project Seabird	Phase IIA works opened at Karwar naval base, 15 Oct · INHS Patanjali raised to 409 beds
India–Mongolia	14th defence Joint Working Group, Ulaanbaatar, 16 Oct · after exercise Nomadic Elephant
Dates	15 Oct Dr APJ Abdul Kalam's birth anniversary · 16 Oct NSG Raising Day

TALKING POINT

A private-yard warship and home-built torpedoes at home; a coalition command in Bahrain and the Royal Navy's toughest trainers abroad. **Self-reliance** and **partnership** are not rivals: India needs both.

PRACTICE

Speak it

LECTURETTE OF THE WEEK

Fighting at High Altitude

Why now: On 12 Oct work began on an ICMR–Armed Forces centre for high-altitude medicine at Keylong (about 3,080 m), and on 15 Oct the PM opened ₹3,350 cr of Ladakh projects, including a new road through Zanskar.

OPEN · 30S

"In the high Himalaya, the first enemy is the mountain." Today I will speak on fighting at high altitude.

POINT 1 · 40S

The challenge. Air is still 21% oxygen up high, but the pressure is far lower: about 83 mmHg of oxygen pressure on Siachen against about 150 at sea level. This causes mountain sickness and fluid in the lungs (HAPE), which can kill.

POINT 2 · 40S

The cost. Medical reviews of fighting in the Kashmir sector above 5,000 m say about 80% of casualties came from the environment, not the enemy. Siachen (since 1984) and Kargil (1999) taught India this the hard way.

POINT 3 · 40S

The answer. Staged acclimatisation, special clothing and rations, fast evacuation, research by DRDO's DIPAS and now the Keylong centre, and roads that cut supply time to forward posts.

CLOSE · 30S

In the mountains, the side that keeps its soldiers healthy keeps its ground. Medicine and roads are weapons too.

Explain one idea simply (same 21% oxygen, lower pressure). Skip the medical jargon, and practise aloud against a 3-minute timer.

How to give a lecturette → 110 lecturette topics →

GROUP DISCUSSION OF THE WEEK

“Sport should be a compulsory, graded subject in every school”

On 15 Oct the PM met the Asian Games 2026 team: **85 medals**, 38 won by women, many athletes only 15–17 years old. More than ₹36,000 cr has gone to Khelo India and sports federations, and India hosts the 2030 Commonwealth Games.

FOR

- Sport builds fitness, discipline, teamwork and the grit to lose and try again.
- Talent is spread across villages; school is where most children can be spotted early.
- Many medallists were 15–17. Starting young is an advantage.
- A fit youth is a healthier nation, and a bigger pool for the armed forces.

AGAINST

- Many schools lack grounds, equipment and PE teachers; a rule on paper changes little.
- Grading sport adds exam pressure to something meant to be enjoyed.
- Not every child is athletic. A choice of arts, music or NCC may serve better.
- Medals come from coaching, diet and funding at the top, not compulsion at the base.

HOW TO CONCLUDE

Make daily play compulsory, but grade effort and participation, not talent. Build grounds and train PE teachers first, and school sport becomes the base of the medal pipeline.

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.