THE CAVALIER

SSB Weekly

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Week of 19 – 25 October 2026 · Current affairs for your SSB board

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THE WEEK

Five stories the board may ask about

1 DEFENCE · DOCTRINE

The Army gets a new Land Warfare Doctrine

Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh released the **Land Warfare Doctrine** on 23 Oct at the Army Commanders' Conference in New Delhi, the Army's apex twice-a-year forum (21–23 Oct). He asked commanders to plan 20–30 years ahead, cited **Operation Sindoor** as proof of synergy and modern weaponry, and said ground forces stay indispensable even as air, sea, space and cyber grow.

WHY IT MATTERS

A doctrine is how an army thinks before it fights. It shapes training, buying and jointness. The stress now is on multi-domain, joint operations, drones and AI.

YOUR BALANCED VIEW

Technology changes how wars are fought, not who holds the ground. Marrying boots with drones is the right call.

IO MAY ASK

If drones and missiles carried Operation Sindoor, why does India still need a large army?

Source: PIB, MoD, 21 & 23 Oct

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2 DEFENCE TECH · NAVY

Home-grown submarine AIP crosses a key milestone

DRDO's Naval Materials Research Laboratory has built an **Air Independent Propulsion (AIP)** energy module. Its 'Setting to Work Phase-2' began at L&T Hazira, Gujarat, on 24 Oct. After power trials it goes to Mazagon Dock for fitting on a **Kalvari-class** submarine in early 2027.

WHY IT MATTERS

A diesel-electric submarine must come up to snorkel and recharge, and that is when it is easiest to find. AIP cuts its need for outside air, so it stays hidden far longer.

YOUR BALANCED VIEW

Only a handful of countries have built their own AIP. The real test is whether it reaches the fleet on time.

IO MAY ASK

Why not build only nuclear submarines instead of upgrading diesel ones?

Source: PIB, MoD, 24 Oct

3 INTERNATIONAL · SCO

At the SCO, India says: no double standards on terror

At the 25th SCO Council of Heads of Government in **Dushanbe, Tajikistan** (20 Oct), Rajnath Singh asked members to dismantle the 'entire ecosystem' of terrorism: its financiers, supporters and safe havens. He said connectivity must respect sovereignty and territorial integrity, and backed the **INSTC** and **Chabahar Port** as routes to Central Asia.

WHY IT MATTERS

The SCO is the one table where India sits with both China and Pakistan. The sovereignty line is India's standing objection to CPEC, which runs through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

YOUR BALANCED VIEW

Stay in and speak plainly. The SCO gives India a voice in Central Asia it should not leave to China.

IO MAY ASK

Is the SCO useful for India when China and Pakistan are members?

Source: PIB, MoD, 20 Oct

4 NEIGHBOURHOOD · MALDIVES

Navy's training squadron calls at Malé

The Navy's **First Training Squadron** (INS Tir, INS Sujata and Coast Guard ship Sarathi) made a three-day port call at Malé (21–24 Oct).

It trained with the Maldives National Defence Force and ended with a passage exercise with Maldivian Coast Guard ship *Imaduddin*. The visit was framed under India's **MAHASAGAR** vision.

WHY IT MATTERS

The Maldives sits beside major Indian Ocean sea lanes. Ties dipped after the 2023 'India Out' campaign. Training, aid and people-to-people visits rebuild trust.

YOUR BALANCED VIEW

In the neighbourhood, steady presence beats pressure. Being the first to help earns more than lectures.

IO MAY ASK

Why should India care so much about a country of about half a million people?

Source: PIB, MoD, 22 & 25 Oct

5 NATIONAL · INTERNAL SECURITY

Police Commemoration Day, and a Naxal-free year

On **Police Commemoration Day** (21 Oct) the Home Minister said India became free of armed Naxalism on **31 March 2026**. He added that the three old hotspots, Kashmir, the North-East and Left-Wing Extremism, are now on the path of peace. The **Rashtriya Ekta Diwas** parade (31 Oct, Ekta Nagar) will celebrate the end of armed Naxalism.

WHY IT MATTERS

21 Oct marks the 1959 Hot Springs (Ladakh) ambush, where ten policemen were killed by Chinese troops. Strong internal security frees the Army for its main job: the borders.

YOUR BALANCED VIEW

Ending armed Naxalism is a real achievement. Keeping it ended needs roads, schools, jobs and trust in the old red corridor.

IO MAY ASK

What really caused Naxalism, and how do we stop it from coming back?

Source: PIB, MHA, 21 Oct

QUICK-FIRE

Know these cold

AUSTRAHIND (5th)	India–Australia armies · Thiruvananthapuram · 19 Oct–1 Nov · Garhwal Rifles · New Zealand observers for the first time
SIMBEX (33rd)	India–Singapore navies · Visakhapatnam · 21–26 Oct · began in 1994 as 'Lion King'
INDRA 2026	India–Russia navies · ended at Vladivostok · INS Sahyadri
IBSAMAR IX	India–Brazil–South Africa navies · ended at Simon's Town, 20 Oct · INS Tarkash
LLLR-I radar	₹770 cr contract with BEL · tracks fighters and mini/micro drones
IAF drone roadmap	Unmanned & Autonomous Systems Roadmap shared with ~100 drone firms, 21 Oct

Defence production	FY 2025-26: record ₹1.78 lakh cr · exports ≈ ₹38,000 cr
Who's who	CDS Gen NS Raja Subramani · COAS Gen Dhiraj Seth · CAS Air Chief Marshal AP Singh
NCC	CAS flew a Kiran sortie with NCC Air Wing cadet Jakkula Tejasvi Reddy at AFA Dundigal
Dates	21 Oct Police Commemoration Day · 31 Oct Rashtriya Ekta Diwas (Sardar Patel's birth anniversary)

TALKING POINT

Russia, Australia, Singapore, Brazil and South Africa, all in one week. That is **strategic autonomy**: India trains with partners across camps without joining any single camp.

PRACTICE

Speak it

LECTURETTE OF THE WEEK

Drones in Modern Warfare

Why now: This week the IAF briefed about 100 drone firms on its unmanned-systems roadmap, the Army signed for ₹770 cr of counter-drone radars, and the Defence Minister singled out drones in the Army's restructuring.

OPEN · 30S

"The next war may be decided by the cheapest drone, not the biggest tank." Today I will speak on drones in modern warfare.

POINT 1 · 40S

What changed. Drones are cheap, expendable eyes and weapons: surveillance, precision strikes, loitering munitions and swarms. The Russia–Ukraine war made this mainstream.

POINT 2 · 40S

India's response. The IAF Unmanned & Autonomous Systems Roadmap (Sep 2026), counter-drone radars like the LLLR-I, and Army restructuring with a focus on drones. The push is for indigenous engines, software and GPS-proof navigation.

POINT 3 · 40S

The flip side. Every drone needs a counter-drone. Operators need training, and on the Punjab border drones already drop drugs and arms.

CLOSE · 30S

Drones do not replace soldiers; they extend them. The country that builds its own drones, and its own defences against them, will hold the edge.

Quote one number (₹770 cr) and one example (Ukraine). Practise aloud against a 3-minute timer.

How to give a lecturette → 110 lecturette topics →

GROUP DISCUSSION OF THE WEEK

“Drug abuse among youth is a public-health problem, not just a law-and-order problem”

On 23 Oct the NCB's **Operation Trident** hit 38 locations across Assam, Mizoram and Manipur: ₹100 cr in hawala traced, 1,424 bank accounts frozen, 500 detonators seized, 18 arrested. The government's target is a drug-free India by 31 Dec 2029.

FOR

- Addiction is a disease, and jail rarely cures it.
- Users are victims; peddlers are criminals. The NDPS Act (Sec 64A) protects addicts who come forward for treatment.
- Stigma stops families from seeking help. Counselling, schools and sport work.
- Cut demand and the cartels lose their money.

AGAINST

- Supply is organised crime: cross-border cartels via Myanmar and Bangladesh.
- Narco-money funds violence. Trident also seized 500 detonators.
- If supply is not choked, rehab becomes a revolving door.
- Hawala and frozen accounts show this needs police and intelligence.

HOW TO CONCLUDE

Both. Enforcement breaks the supply network; health, family and schools break the demand. Treat the user, hunt the trafficker.

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.