Daily News Analysis

The Hindu Important News Articles & Editorial For UPSC CSE

Thursday, 11 Sep, 2025

Edition: InternationalTable of Contents

The construction of a 10-foot wall blocking access to Dalit settlements in Valangaiman, Tiruvarur district, Tamil Nadu, has sparked allegations of caste-based discrimination and denial of basic rights. While the wall is officially claimed to be on private land, local activists describe it as an "untouchability wall," highlighting the deep-rooted caste barriers that persist in Indian society despite constitutional safeguards.

Current Affairs Context

1. **Incident (2024–25):**
   o A 200-metre-long wall was erected three years ago, blocking a common pathway for Dalit families in Kovilpathu and Pathiripuram.
   o Over **1,000 Dalit families** and more than **800 school-going children** directly affected.
   o Daily commute to schools, hospitals, and workplaces lengthened by an additional kilometre.

2. **Socio-Economic Impact:**
   o Residents, largely daily wage workers, report increased time and financial burden.
   o Allegations that dominant caste groups support the wall to restrict Dalit mobility and protect land/property values.

3. **Official Response:**
   o **Peace committee meeting (Sept 2024)** acknowledged existence of a common wooden footbridge before wall construction.
   o District authorities ordered surveys, but implementation remains pending.
   o Local police downplayed allegations, terming it a "property dispute," not untouchability.

Dalit residents allege 'untouchability wall' blocking access in Tamil Nadu

M. Nacchinarkkiniyan
TIRUVARUR

A 200-metre-long wall blocking a common pathway in Valangaiman town panchayat of Tamil Nadu's Tiruvarur district has triggered allegations of caste discrimination.

The wall, nearly 10 feet high, was erected three years ago at Kovilpathu in Valangaiman, bordering Pathiripuram in Virupachipuram panchayat. Kovilpathu and Pathiripuram house over 1,000 Dalit families, which say the closure of the pathway has forced them to walk an additional kilometre via the main road for daily needs.

The road was a two-km stretch connecting their settlements to Valangaiman's primary and higher secondary schools, rice mills, government hospital, and police station. More than 800 school-going children have been directly affected.

Most residents are daily wage workers and they say the longer route adds both time and costs to their already strained lives.

"For household errands and shops, this was the shortest path. Now, we are forced to take detours," said Manimegalai R., an elderly resident.

According to local activists, dominant caste groups tacitly support the wall. "There is fear that if Dalits have free access, then property rates in the new layout will drop. We see this as an untouchability wall in all but name," said Murali K., district president of the Tamil Nadu Untouchability Eradication Front.

Plot developer J. Jekabar Ali, however, denied the charge. "This is patta land belonging to me, not a common pathway. There is a conspiracy to defame me. There are other walls around the Dalit settle-ment - not just mine," he told *The Hindu*.

Official response
A peace committee meeting was held on September 26, 2024 by the then Valangaiman Tahsildar. The meeting recorded that a wooden footbridge existed for public use before the wall was built. Resolutions called for a PWD survey to verify encroachment. However, they remain unimplemented.

Tahsildar K. Om Sivakumar said he wrote to the Special Tahsildar (Adi Dravidar Welfare) to inspect the land and take steps if found to be an encroachment. District Revenue Officer B. Kalaivani said she would inquire into the matter and take necessary steps.

"This appears to be a personal property dispute. No complaint regarding untouchability has reached us," said P. Tamilmaran, DSP, Nannilam.

The wall, nearly 10 feet high, was erected about three years ago at Valangaiman in Tamil Nadu's Tiruvarur district. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Static Background

- **Constitutional Provisions:**
  o **Article 17:** Abolition of Untouchability.
  o **Article 15(2):** Prohibits discrimination in access to public spaces.
  o **Article 21:** Protection of life and personal liberty includes right to free movement.
- **Legal Safeguards:**
  o **Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955.**

- o **Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989.**
- **Tamil Nadu Context:**
  - o State has a history of "caste walls" (e.g., *Uthapuram Wall* in Madurai, 2008) being demolished after public outrage.
- **Institutions:**
  - o **National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC)** empowered to investigate complaints.

Prelims Pointers

- **Article 17:** Abolition of Untouchability.
- **Relevant Acts:** PCR Act (1955), SC/ST Act (1989).
- **Case Study:** *Uthapuram Caste Wall,* Tamil Nadu (2008).
- **Difference:** Private property dispute vs. public pathway rights.

Mains Analysis

1. **Caste Discrimination in Contemporary India:**
   - o Despite constitutional safeguards, **spatial segregation** through physical barriers continues.
   - o Walls restricting Dalit mobility reflect **structural untouchability** beyond symbolic gestures.
2. **Governance & Administrative Response:**
   - o Delay in implementation of peace committee resolutions highlights **administrative inertia**.
   - o Police dismissing allegations as "personal dispute" undermines constitutional morality.
   - o Role of **local bodies, PWD surveys, and district authorities** crucial in conflict resolution.
3. **Rights & Development Impact:**
   - o Affects **Right to Education (Article 21A)** with 800+ children forced to walk longer routes.
   - o Impacts livelihoods of daily wage workers due to increased travel time and cost.
   - o Restriction of access to essential services (schools, hospitals, shops) is a form of **social exclusion**.
4. **Symbolism & Political Message:**
   - o Opposition parties and activists frame it as a symbolic reminder of **caste apartheid**.
   - o Raises questions on **equitable urban planning** and **social justice in land development policies**.

Conclusion

The Valangaiman "untouchability wall" controversy is not just a local land dispute but a reflection of India's continuing caste-based barriers. While the state machinery has initiated inquiries, the delay in action underscores the gap between constitutional ideals and ground realities. For India's democratic and developmental vision—*Viksit Bharat 2047*—to be meaningful, dismantling both physical and invisible caste walls remains essential.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Ques: Consider the following provisions of the Indian Constitution:

1. Article 15(2) prohibits discrimination in access to shops, restaurants, and public places.

2. Article 17 abolishes untouchability and forbids its practice in any form.

3. Article 23 provides for the protection of life and personal liberty.

Which of the above are directly relevant to the issue of blocking Dalits' access to a public pathway?

(a) 1 and 2 only

(b) 2 and 3 only

(c) 1, 2 and 3

(d) 1 only

Ans: (a)

UPSC Mains Practice Question : Social Issues & Indian Polity

Ques: The right to equality and prohibition of untouchability remain cornerstone ideals of the Indian Constitution. Critically examine the role of local governance and state machinery in upholding these rights in the context of caste-based exclusionary practices. **(250 Words)**

UPSC Mains Practice Question : Social Justice

Ques: Physical barriers like caste walls not only symbolize social discrimination but also undermine inclusive development and human rights. Analyze this statement in light of the constitutional provisions and legal safeguards for Scheduled Castes in India. **(250 Words)**

Tirumal Classes

Geetha Hospital, Street No:5, Chaitanyapuri Main Rd, above Dmart Pick-up Point, opp. to Genius Grammar School, Chaitanyapuri, Hyderabad, Telangana 500060
Contact:- 082477 38641   Website:- www.tirumalclassesiasinstitute.com

The Indian Navy's recent training deployment in the southwest Indian Ocean Region marks a significant step in strengthening India's maritime diplomacy. With concurrent port calls in **Réunion (France)** and **Mauritius**, and joint exercises with the Italian Navy, India demonstrated its growing naval outreach, operational interoperability, and commitment to regional stability under its **MAHASAGAR vision**.

Current Affairs Context

1. **Deployment (Sept 2025):**
   o **INS Tir** and **ICGS Sarathi** reached Réunion island (French territory).
   o **INS Shardul** reached Port Louis, Mauritius.
   o **INS Surat** conducted a passage exercise with Italian Navy ship *ITS Caio Duilio* in the north Arabian Sea.
2. **India–France Maritime Cooperation:**
   o Welcomed by French Navy ship **FS Nivose** with a **passage exercise (PASSEX)**.
   o Activities: cross-training, joint diving exercises, sports fixtures.
   o Senior Indian Navy officers engaged with French commanders on regional security and future joint cooperation.
3. **India–Mauritius Engagement:**
   o Joint patrolling and **EEZ surveillance** with **MCGS Victory** and a Mauritius Coast Guard Dornier.
   o High-level interactions reaffirmed trust and cooperation in maritime security.
4. **India–Italy Naval Interaction:**
   o INS Surat and ITS Caio Duilio carried out advanced PASSEX with tactical manoeuvres, seamanship drills, aircraft tracking, and cross-deck helicopter operations.
   o Concluded with a ceremonial steampast.

Static Background

- **India's Naval Diplomacy:**
  o Indian Navy acts as a **net security provider** in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).
  o Key initiatives: **SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region)**, **MAHASAGAR vision**, **Mission SAGAR humanitarian assistance**, and **IOR coastal surveillance radar chain**.
- **Strategic Geography:**
  o **Réunion Island (France):** Key base in the southwest Indian Ocean.

Navy strengthens maritime ties with France, Mauritius through joint exercises

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Ships of the Indian Navy's first training squadron (1TS), *INS Tir* and *ICGS Sarathi*, arrived at Réunion island, while *INS Shardul* reached Port Louis, Mauritius, on September 8, as part of their training deployment in the southwest Indian Ocean Region.

At Réunion island, the ships were welcomed by French Navy ship *FS Nivose* with a 'passage exercise'. The visit features professional interactions, including cross-training visits, joint diving exercises, and sports fixtures, furthering the India-France naval partnership. The senior officer of the 1TS, also called on the French Naval Base Commander and the Commandant Supérieur des FAZSOI, with discussions centred on regional security, future joint exercises, and maritime cooperation.

The *INS Shardul* conducted joint patrolling and Exclusive Economic Zone surveillance with *MCGS Victory* and a Mauritius Coast Guard Dornier, before arriving at Port Louis. During the port call, the

Commanding Officer of *INS Shardul* met the senior Mauritian leadership, reaffirming the strong bonds of trust and professional cooperation between India and Mauritius, the Indian Navy said.

The concurrent port of calls of the 1TS highlight India's commitment to "maritime collaboration, and regional stability, aligned with the vision of MAHASAGAR", and the Indian Navy's enduring role in building bridges of friendship across the Indian Ocean Region, the Navy said in a statement.

The *INS Surat*, the In-

dian Navy's latest indigenous guided missile destroyer, mission deployed in the north Arabian Sea, participated in a passage exercise with *ITS Caio Duilio*, an Andrea Doria class destroyer of the Italian Navy, on September 7.

The exercise featured complex tactical manoeuvres, aircraft tracking, seamanship evolutions, communication drills, and flying operations, including cross-deck helicopter landings. The PASSEX concluded with a ceremonial steampast, where the two navies exchanged traditional courtesies at sea.

INS Shardul, a landing ship tank of the Indian Navy, arrives at Port Louis in Mauritius. X/@INDIANNAVY

Tirumal Classes

Geetha Hospital, Street No:5, Chaitanyapuri Main Rd, above Dmart Pick-up Point, opp. to Genius Grammar School, Chaitanyapuri, Hyderabad, Telangana 500060
Contact:- 082477 38641   Website:- www.tirumalclassesiasinstitute.com

- o **Mauritius:** India's closest maritime partner; vital in **Agalega Island project** (India developing airstrip & facilities).
- **Naval Exercises:**
    - o **PASSEX:** Short exercise during port visits for interoperability.
    - o **VARUNA:** India–France bilateral naval exercise.
    - o **CORPAT:** Coordinated Patrols with IOR states (e.g., Mauritius, Seychelles, Maldives).

Prelims Pointers

- **INS Tir:** Lead ship of the Navy's First Training Squadron.
- **INS Shardul:** Landing Ship Tank (LST), amphibious warfare ship.
- **INS Surat:** Latest indigenous **Project 15B guided-missile destroyer**.
- **PASSEX:** Passage Exercise to improve interoperability.
- **Agalega Island (Mauritius):** India developing strategic facilities.
- **Vision SAGAR vs MAHASAGAR:** SAGAR = regional security, MAHASAGAR = extended maritime partnership & stability.

Mains Analysis

1. **Strengthening Strategic Partnerships:**
    - o Engagement with **France** deepens India's partnership with a major resident power in the Indian Ocean.
    - o Cooperation with **Mauritius** highlights India's role as a trusted maritime security partner for island nations.
    - o Interaction with **Italy** signals growing outreach with European navies beyond traditional partners.
2. **Maritime Security & Regional Stability:**
    - o Joint patrolling and EEZ surveillance in Mauritius enhances **blue economy protection** and counters IUU (illegal, unreported, unregulated) fishing.
    - o Enhances capability for anti-piracy, anti-smuggling, and disaster relief operations in the IOR.
3. **Geopolitical Significance:**
    - o Counters growing **Chinese naval presence** in the Indian Ocean (Djibouti base, Gwadar, Hambantota).
    - o Strengthens India's **maritime domain awareness** through joint exercises and surveillance.
4. **Indigenisation & Self-Reliance:**
    - o Participation of **INS Surat**, a state-of-the-art indigenous destroyer, showcases India's defence manufacturing capabilities under **Atmanirbhar Bharat**.

Conclusion

The Indian Navy's simultaneous engagements with **France, Mauritius, and Italy** highlight its evolving role as a key player in regional and global maritime security. By combining training deployments, EEZ patrols, and advanced PASSEX drills, India demonstrates both **strategic intent** and **operational readiness**. These exercises not only reinforce diplomatic ties but also cement India's position as a **net security provider** in the Indian Ocean, aligning with its long-term vision of **SAGAR & MAHASAGAR**.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Ques: **With reference to India's maritime vision, consider the following statements:**

1. SAGAR stands for Security and Growth for All in the Region.

2. MAHASAGAR is India's extended maritime partnership vision for the Indian Ocean Region.

3. Both SAGAR and MAHASAGAR explicitly mention military alliances as their foundation.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

(a) 1 only

(b) 1 and 2 only

(c) 2 and 3 only

(d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (b)

UPSC Mains Practice Question : International Relations

Ques: "The Indian Ocean has become the new arena of great power competition." In this context, discuss how India's recent naval exercises with France, Mauritius, and Italy reinforce its strategic and diplomatic role in the region. **(150 Words)**

UPSC Mains Practice Question : Security

Ques: India is positioning itself as a "net security provider" in the Indian Ocean. Critically examine how initiatives like SAGAR, MAHASAGAR, and naval outreach programs contribute to maritime security and regional stability. **(150 Words)**

Tirumal Classes

Geetha Hospital, Street No:5, Chaitanyapuri Main Rd, above Dmart Pick-up Point,
opp. to Genius Grammar School, Chaitanyapuri, Hyderabad, Telangana 500060
Contact:- 082477 38641   Website:- www.tirumalclassesiasinstitute.com

Page : 05: GS 2 : Indian Polity / Prelims

The Election Commission of India (ECI) has convened a national conference of Chief Electoral Officers (CEOs) to assess preparations for a **nationwide Special Intensive Revision (SIR)** of electoral rolls. The exercise is significant in ensuring an **error-free, inclusive, and transparent voter list** ahead of upcoming elections, thereby reinforcing the credibility of India's democratic process.

Current Affairs Context

1. **Conference Details (Sept 2025):**
   o Chaired by **Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar**, along with Election Commissioners **Sukhbir Singh Sandhu** and **Vivek Joshi**.
   o CEOs of all States and Union Territories participated.
2. **Focus Areas:**
   o Preparedness for nationwide SIR on a **single schedule**.
   o Presentations on number of electors, digitisation of electoral rolls, and best practices from previous SIRs.
   o Rationalisation of polling stations to ensure **no polling station exceeds 1,200 electors**.
3. **Bihar Experience:**
   o Bihar was the **first State to roll out SIR**.
   o Shared strategies, constraints, and best practices.
   o Issue of **11 indicative documents** (for voter verification) led to controversy.
4. **Supreme Court Intervention:**
   o Directed EC to add **Aadhaar as the 12th document** for Bihar SIR.
   o EC sources indicated list may be made more inclusive nationwide.
5. **Administrative Preparedness:**
   o Review of appointment & training of **District Electoral Officers, EROs, AEROs, Booth-Level Officers, and Booth-Level Agents**.
   o Mapping of electors with previous SIR records for consistency.

Static Background

EC holds CEO conference; reviews readiness ahead of nationwide SIR

Sreeparna Chakrabarty
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission (EC) on Wednesday held a conference of Chief Electoral Officers (CEOs) of all States and Union Territories to assess the preparedness for rolling out a nationwide special intensive revision (SIR) of voter lists.

The commission was planning to roll out the SIR across the country with a single schedule, as of now, sources in the EC said.

The conference was inaugurated by Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar in the presence of Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi. It assessed the preparedness of the offices of the CEOs of all States and Union Territories for the nationwide SIR exercise, an official statement said.

At the beginning of the conference, Bihar CEO Vinod Singh Gunjiyal made a presentation on the strategies, constraints, and best practices adopted in his State, which was the first to roll out the SIR.

All other CEOs provided detailed presentations on the number of electors and the qualifying date of the previous SIRs and electoral rolls in their respective States or Union Territories, according to the previous completed SIR. They also presented the status of digitisation and uploading of the electoral roll after the previous SIR on the website of the State and Union Territory CEO.

The officers also provided suggested documents to ensure no eligible citizen was left out of the electoral roll, and no ineligible person was included in it.

The issue assumes importance in light of the controversy surrounding the list of 11 indicative documents, which the EC had sought as part of the SIR exercise in Bihar. However, the Supreme Court had on Monday asked the poll body to add Aadhaar as the 12th document in the Bihar SIR.

EC sources said that though the SIR order of June 24 holds for the entire country, the list of documents could be made more inclusive when the schedule is announced.

The CEOs also provided the status of mapping of current electors with the electors as per the previous SIR, in the State or Union Territory, the statement said.

To ensure the uniform implementation of the Commission's initiative of having no polling station with over 1,200 electors, the status of rationalisation of polling stations was also reviewed.

The Commission also reviewed the status of appointment and training of District Electoral Officers, Electoral Registration Officers, Assistant Electoral Registration Officers, Booth-Level Officers, and Booth-Level Agents.

Gearing up: Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar with Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi. PTI

Tirumal Classes

Geetha Hospital, Street No:5, Chaitanyapuri Main Rd, above Dmart Pick-up Point, opp. to Genius Grammar School, Chaitanyapuri, Hyderabad, Telangana 500060
Contact:- 082477 38641   Website:- www.tirumalclassesiasinstitute.com

- **Constitutional Basis:**
  - **Article 324:** Superintendence, direction, and control of elections vested in the Election Commission.
  - **Article 325:** No person to be ineligible for inclusion in electoral rolls on grounds of religion, race, caste, or sex.
  - **Article 326:** Elections to the Lok Sabha and State legislatures to be on the basis of adult suffrage.
- **Electoral Rolls:**
  - Governed by **Representation of the People Act, 1950**.
  - SIR = periodic revision to ensure addition of new voters (18+), deletion of ineligible names, and correction of errors.
- **Booth-Level Officers (BLOs):** Act as grassroots agents for roll verification.
- **Digitisation:** Part of **ECI's e-Roll project** ensuring transparency and easy access.

Prelims Pointers

- **Article 324–326**: Powers & provisions related to elections.
- **RPA 1950**: Governs preparation of electoral rolls.
- **SIR (Special Intensive Revision):** Annual voter list update exercise.
- **Document Issue:** Aadhaar inclusion mandated by SC.
- **Polling Station Norm:** Not more than 1,200 electors per station.

Mains Analysis

1. **Significance of SIR:**
   - Ensures **purity and inclusiveness** of electoral rolls.
   - Prevents voter exclusion, duplication, and impersonation.
   - Enhances trust in electoral democracy.
2. **Challenges Highlighted:**
   - Document controversy (privacy & Aadhaar linkage concerns).
   - Administrative burden on CEOs, BLOs, and EROs across States.
   - Resistance in some areas due to migration, urban slums, and lack of proper documentation.
3. **Judicial Oversight:**
   - SC's directive to include Aadhaar underscores **balance between inclusivity & authenticity**.
   - Raises debate on **privacy vs electoral integrity**.
4. **Electoral Reforms Dimension:**
   - Rationalisation of polling stations = greater voter convenience & accessibility.
   - Digital electoral rolls enhance **transparency & accountability**.
   - Strengthens India's status as the **largest democracy** by improving participation.
5. **Political & Democratic Implications:**
   - Clean and credible rolls prevent **bogus voting & electoral malpractice**.
   - Ensures **level playing field** for all political parties.
   - Reinforces voter confidence, a cornerstone of **electoral legitimacy**.

Conclusion

The Election Commission's move to conduct a **nationwide SIR** is a vital step towards ensuring free, fair, and transparent elections. While the inclusion of Aadhaar and rationalisation of polling stations reflect progressive reforms, challenges remain in

Tirumal Classes

Geetha Hospital, Street No:5, Chaitanyapuri Main Rd, above Dmart Pick-up Point, opp. to Genius Grammar School, Chaitanyapuri, Hyderabad, Telangana 500060
Contact:- 082477 38641   Website:- www.tirumalclassesiasinstitute.com

balancing **inclusivity, privacy, and administrative efficiency**. The exercise, if implemented effectively, will further consolidate India's democratic credentials and citizen participation in governance.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Ques : With reference to the Election Commission of India (ECI), consider the following statements:

1. The Election Commission is a multi-member body from its inception in 1950.

2. Article 324 of the Constitution vests the superintendence, direction, and control of elections in the Election Commission.

3. Preparation of electoral rolls is governed by the Representation of the People Act, 1950.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only

(b) 2 and 3 only

(c) 1 and 3 only

(d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans : b)

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Ques: "A clean and error-free electoral roll is the foundation of free and fair elections." Critically examine the challenges in updating electoral rolls in India, with reference to documentation, migration, and privacy concerns. **(150 Words)**

Page 07 : GS 3 : Environment & Ecology/ Prelims

The **Hindu Kush–Himalayan region**, often termed the "Third Pole," is witnessing an alarming rise in disasters such as floods, landslides, and glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs). While these events are frequently attributed solely to climate change, increasing evidence shows that **unregulated development, deforestation, and unsustainable infrastructure projects** are major drivers pushing the fragile Himalayan ecosystem toward collapse.

Current Affairs Context

1. **Recent Disasters (Aug–Sept 2025):**
   o Punjab faced its **worst floods since 1988** due to overflowing rivers (Sutlej, Beas, Ravi).
   o **34 deaths** in Kashmir and Pakistan after intense rainfall.
   o Dharali village (Uttarkashi, Uttarakhand) washed away in a landslide-triggered deluge.
   o Reminders of **Kedarnath floods (2013)** and **Chamoli disaster (2021)**.

2. **Expert Observations:**
   o ICIMOD: Disasters are a mix of **climate variability + unregulated development**.
   o Supreme Court: Warned Himachal Pradesh could "vanish" if reckless construction continues.
   o Concerns raised over **hydropower expansion, road widening, and tourism infrastructure**.

3. **Scale of Development Pressure:**
   o **Himachal Pradesh:** 1,144 hydropower plants (180 commissioned, 53 under construction).
   o **Uttarakhand:** 40 operational hydro plants, 87 more in planning/construction.
   o NHAI projects: 14 tunnels between Chandigarh–Manali labelled "death traps" during heavy rains.

4. **Environmental Risks:**
   o Deforestation (esp. of native **deodar trees**) increases erosion and landslides.
   o Glacial melting → 25,000+ lakes identified (2018), raising **GLOF risk**.
   o Tree-logs flowing in floods = indicator of rampant logging.

Static Background

- **Geology:** Himalayas = world's **youngest fold mountains**, highly unstable, prone to seismic & rainfall-induced hazards.
- **Disaster Types:** Landslides, cloudbursts, flash floods, GLOFs, earthquakes.
- **Key Concepts:**

- o **GLOF:** Sudden release of water from glacial lake due to barrier collapse.
- o **Carrying Capacity Assessment:** Evaluating how much population/infrastructure a region can sustain without ecological degradation.
- o **Nature-based Solutions (NbS):** Afforestation, eco-sensitive tourism, slope stabilisation through bio-engineering.
- **Institutional Framework:**
  - o **National Disaster Management Act (2005).**
  - o **National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC).**
  - o **State Action Plans on Climate Change (SAPCCs)** for Himalayan states.

Prelims Pointers

- **Kedarnath Disaster (2013):** Glacial lake overflow + unplanned construction.
- **Chamoli Disaster (2021):** Flash flood, glacial/landslide origins.
- **ICIMOD:** International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (HQ: Kathmandu).
- **GLOF:** Glacial Lake Outburst Flood.
- **Article 21 (Right to Life):** Expanded by SC to include **right to a healthy environment**.
- **Supreme Court July 2024 remarks:** Himachal risks vanishing if reckless development continues.

Mains Analysis

1. **Drivers of Himalayan Disasters:**
   - o **Climate Change:** Faster warming in Himalayas, altered rainfall patterns, increased snow/glacier melt.
   - o **Unregulated Development:** Roads, tunnels, hydropower plants built without proper EIAs.
   - o **Deforestation:** Native trees removed for tourism & construction → soil destabilisation.
   - o **Urbanisation & Tourism Pressure:** Hotels, homestays, infrastructure in ecologically fragile zones.
2. **Judicial & Expert Warnings:**
   - o SC cautioned against revenue generation at cost of ecology.
   - o Experts call for **carrying capacity studies** before sanctioning projects.
   - o Need for **independent disaster & social impact assessments** with public participation.
3. **Governance & Policy Gaps:**
   - o Weak enforcement of **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)** norms.
   - o Lack of **climate-resilient infrastructure standards** in Himalayas.
   - o Poor coordination among **MoEFCC, NHAI, state governments, and local bodies**.
4. **Way Forward – Balancing Development & Ecology:**
   - o **Nature-based solutions:** afforestation, slope stabilisation, river rejuvenation.
   - o **Resilient infrastructure planning:** Avoid tunnels/bridges in fragile terrain without geological safety studies.
   - o **Community involvement:** Build **climate literacy** and empower local governance.
   - o **Eco-tourism models:** Limit unregulated hotel/road construction.
   - o **Critical infrastructure safety:** Schools & hospitals must not be built in hazard-prone areas.

Conclusion

The Himalayan disasters of 2025 are not isolated "acts of God" but outcomes of **reckless human intervention** amplifying climate risks. The Himalayas, already fragile, are at a **tipping point**, where unchecked development could cause irreversible ecological collapse. A shift towards **sustainable development, strict environmental governance, and community-based**

Tirumal Classes

Geetha Hospital, Street No:5, Chaitanyapuri Main Rd, above Dmart Pick-up Point,
opp. to Genius Grammar School, Chaitanyapuri, Hyderabad, Telangana 500060
Contact:- 082477 38641   Website:- www.tirumalclassesiasinstitute.com

adaptation is essential if India is to balance its developmental aspirations with the survival of one of its most vital ecological frontiers

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Ques: Consider the following statements with reference to the Himalayan region:

1. The Himalayas are geologically the youngest mountain ranges in the world.

2. They are highly prone to landslides, floods, and glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs).

3. Deforestation of native trees like Deodar increases the risk of soil erosion and floods.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only

(b) 2 and 3 only

(c) 1 and 3 only

(d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans : d)

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Ques: Most disasters in the Himalayas are not natural but man-made. Critically analyse this statement in the context of recent floods and landslides in Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Jammu & Kashmir. **(250 words)**

Tirumal Classes

Geetha Hospital, Street No:5, Chaitanyapuri Main Rd, above Dmart Pick-up Point,
opp. to Genius Grammar School, Chaitanyapuri, Hyderabad, Telangana 500060
Contact:- 082477 38641   Website:- www.tirumalclassesiasinstitute.com

In conflict-affected tribal regions of India, particularly the Maoist-affected *Red Corridor* (Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, parts of Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh), the construction of roads is more than a developmental project. It represents the **physical manifestation of the state's presence** in areas long dominated by insurgents and marginalisation. The article highlights how road connectivity is tied to governance, security, legitimacy, and peace-building.

Current Affairs Context

1. **Road Development in Conflict Zones**
   - In Maoist-affected tribal areas of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha ("Red Corridor"), rural roads strongly correlate with electricity access, employment, security, and governance presence.
   - Roads act as the **first visible sign of the state** in marginalized areas.
2. **Governance vs. Insurgent Authority**
   - Insurgents often step in to fill governance gaps: run informal courts, levy taxes, even provide rudimentary healthcare.
   - However, such "services" are **coercive and strategic**, aimed at gaining legitimacy, not welfare.
   - Example: Jan adalats issuing punishments without due process.
3. **Research Insights**
   - **Jain & Biswas (2023):** Road connectivity reduces crime, increases service access.
   - **Prieto-Curiel & Menezes (2020):** Violence higher in poorly connected areas worldwide.
   - International parallels: Sicilian Mafia, African insurgent governance, etc.
4. **Policy Example – Chhattisgarh**
   - Under B.V.R. Subrahmanyam (later CEO, NITI Aayog), infrastructure-first governance strategy was adopted: **roads → schools → clinics → policing**.
   - Each road symbolized the **permanence of the state**.

To build roads is to build peace

In India's tribal hinterlands, especially those affected by Maoist insurgency, roads are not just a matter of transport. They are emissaries of the state, carving a path not only through forests and hills but also through histories of marginalisation and neglect. In regions where formal institutions are barely visible, a newly built road often marks the first arrival of governance itself.

A growing body of research shows that road development in conflict-affected areas has a stabilising effect. In Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Odisha, core States in the "Red Corridor," the presence of rural roads is strongly associated with improvements in electricity access, employment opportunities, and security. Roads help reclaim governance from non-state actors who thrive in isolation. When the state is absent, insurgent groups often step in with slogans and systems. Across conflict zones, insurgents have set up parallel institutions that mimic state functions. Diego Gambetta's classic study of the Sicilian Mafia illustrates this: extralegal actors assume roles such as conflict resolution and taxation when the state withdraws. In India, Maoist insurgents have attempted to fill governance gaps in remote areas by running informal courts and levying their own "taxes." The demand and supply logic applies to governance. An undersupply of formal governance leads to opportunistic entrepreneurship seeking to pick up the slack in supply.

In some tribal regions, it is reported that extralegal outfits have even dispensed rudimentary medical aid where clinics are absent – an act that blurs the line between care and coercion. Research by Alpa Shah (2018) and Human Rights Watch (2009) notes that the Naxalite presence in villages often includes some health services and welfare activities, though always underwritten by the threat of violence. As scholar Zachariah

Pavan Mamidi
is Director, Centre for Social and Behavior Change (CSBC), Ashoka University

Mampilly (2011) observed in other insurgent contexts, such services are not charitable - they are strategic. The aim is not just survival but legitimacy.

Legitimacy cannot rest on coercion alone. Extralegal governance, while sometimes filling the gaps left by the state, is not bound by constitutional safeguards or democratic principles. Its forms of justice are often opaque, arbitrary, and punitive. In several Maoist-affected areas, there are reports of kangaroo courts (*jan adalats*) that have issued summary punishments, including executions, without due process. This is justice without appeal, correction, or accountability-more terror than tribunal.

This is why infrastructure matters. It is the physical precondition for the presence of lawful authority. Jain and Biswas (2023) have shown that road connectivity correlates with a decline in crime and increased service access in rural India. Internationally, Rafael Prieto-Curiel and Ronaldo Menezes (2020) demonstrate that violence is higher in poorly connected areas, whether in cities or rural zones. Infrastructure, they argue, is not merely functional; it is political.

Formal state institutions, though imperfect, operate within a framework of laws shaped by democratic consensus. These laws are debated, refined, and subject to public scrutiny. When schools, police stations, clinics and courts are introduced in conflict-prone areas through road development, they bring not only services but a system that is, at least in principle, accountable to citizens. It is the rule of law, not rule by fiat.

This contrast is critical. While formal institutions are subject to electoral oversight, bureaucratic accountability, and legal restraint, informal justice systems are not. They more often reflect entrenched power hierarchies and patriarchal norms, leading to practices such as vigilante justice

and collective punishment. In the absence of courts, entire communities can be targeted. Accusations of collaboration with security forces have, in some cases, led to mob reprisals under the guise of justice.

The Indian state has recognised this. In Chhattisgarh, former top official and current NITI Aayog CEO B.V.R. Subrahmanyam led a thoughtful strategy that placed infrastructure at the heart of governance renewal. Roads came first, followed by schools, clinics, and law enforcement. Each road had a message: that the state has come in, and is here to stay.

Safeguards are needed too
But infrastructure alone cannot resolve conflict. Roads can carry relief or repression. Without institutional safeguards such as justice mechanisms, health-care access, and community consultation, they risk becoming symbols of control rather than inclusion. A road should not simply be laid through a village but built with the village as this is essential to legitimacy. Moreover, we must be mindful that informal social norms, even outside insurgent control, can be just as exclusionary. It is said that in some parts of rural India, *khap* panchayats and caste councils operate alongside or in place of formal institutions. These bodies often enforced rigid social codes through shame or violence. While they may have provided swift resolution, they did so without the protections of equity or legality. Development, therefore, must aim not only to replace insurgent authority but also to integrate pluralistic, rights-based governance rooted in India's constitutional values.

As India invests in its tribal heartlands, especially in regions like southern Chhattisgarh, road development must be part of a broader effort to extend justice, dignity, and opportunity. The goal is not merely movement but belonging. To build roads, then, is to build peace.

Roads help reclaim governance from non-state actors who thrive in isolation

Static Background

- **Maoist Insurgency (Left-Wing Extremism):**
  - Rooted in socio-economic marginalisation, land alienation, lack of governance.
  - "Red Corridor" includes ~90 districts (spread across 11 states), but intensity varies.
- **Role of Infrastructure:**
  - PMGSY & other rural road schemes often prioritized for tribal/insurgency areas.
  - Infrastructure = integration with markets, administration, and democratic institutions.

- **Constitutional Values:**
  - Rule of law (Articles 14, 21).
  - Directive Principles: reducing inequalities, improving rural life (Articles 38, 39).

Prelims Pointers

- **Schemes/Policies:**
  - **PMGSY (Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana):** Rural connectivity.
  - **Aspirational Districts Programme (NITI Aayog):** Focus on LWE-affected regions.
- **Keywords:**
  - Red Corridor, Jan Adalat, Khap Panchayats.
- **Fact:** VP Radhakrishnan (from earlier context) and B.V.R. Subrahmanyam both highlight state-led governance renewal.

Mains Analysis

1. **Governance Renewal through Roads**
   - Roads = physical foundation for governance institutions (schools, police, courts).
   - Transform "absent state" perception → "visible state."
2. **Countering Parallel Governance**
   - Insurgents thrive in isolated zones by filling service gaps.
   - Roads break isolation → reduce dependence on extralegal actors.
3. **Infrastructure as Political Symbol**
   - Roads are not neutral—they signal sovereignty, legitimacy, and belonging.
   - International research shows poor connectivity correlates with higher violence.
4. **Risks and Safeguards**
   - Without community consultation, roads may be seen as tools of control.
   - Infrastructure must be combined with **justice, healthcare, education, rights-based governance**.
5. **Broader Democratic Implications**
   - Rule of law vs. arbitrary justice of informal institutions.
   - Development should dismantle both insurgent control and regressive local norms (e.g., caste panchayats).

Conclusion

"To build roads is to build peace" — in India's tribal and insurgency-hit regions, roads are more than transport infrastructure. They are political instruments that bring the state, justice, and opportunity into previously neglected spaces. However, for roads to foster **legitimate peace**, they must be complemented by inclusive governance, constitutional safeguards, and participatory development.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Ques: Consider the following statements regarding Left-Wing Extremism (LWE) in India:

1. The "Red Corridor" is confined only to the States of Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand.

2. Jan Adalats are informal courts conducted by Maoist groups in some insurgency-affected areas.

3. PMGSY (Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana) is the flagship scheme for rural road connectivity in India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only

(b) 2 and 3 only

(c) 3 only

(d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: b)

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Ques: Left Wing Extremism remains the biggest internal security challenge. Discuss the role of infrastructure development, particularly roads, in addressing the problem. **(150 Words)**

Tirumal Classes

Geetha Hospital, Street No:5, Chaitanyapuri Main Rd, above Dmart Pick-up Point,
opp. to Genius Grammar School, Chaitanyapuri, Hyderabad, Telangana 500060
Contact:- 082477 38641   Website:- www.tirumalclassesiasinstitute.com

A joint and new journey along the SCO pathway

Last week, I was privileged to welcome Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Tianjin, China, for the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit, and attend the meeting between China's President Xi Jinping and Mr. Modi. This is a summit of solidarity and friendship. After 24 years of development, the SCO has grown into the world's largest regional organisation. The SCO Tianjin Summit has been the largest since the organisation's establishment. Leaders or the representatives of 23 countries, Mr. Modi included, and 10 heads of international organisations gathered to renew friendship, explore cooperation, seek common development, and advance the SCO into a new stage of high-quality development.

A high-yielding summit

There were fruitful outcomes. The Tianjin Declaration announced the establishment of "four security centres", including the SCO Universal Center for Countering Security Challenges and Threats and the SCO Anti-drug Center, and decided to set up the SCO Development Bank. Member-states of the SCO issued statements which expressed a fair stance in support of the multilateral trading system, and a just voice for defending the achievements of the victory in the Second World War.

This was a summit that focused on development. The leaders adopted the SCO's development strategy for the next decade. Against this backdrop, Mr. Xi announced that China would establish three major platforms for China-SCO cooperation in energy, green industry, and the digital economy, and set up three major cooperation centres for scientific and technological innovation, higher education and also vocational and technical education. These initiatives are open to all member-states, providing the organisation with new opportunities and empowering the region's sustainable development.

It was a summit leading global governance. In response to the governance deficit facing today's

Xu Feihong

is China's Ambassador to India

China stands ready to work with India in enhancing cooperation under the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)

world, Mr. Xi put forth the Global Governance Initiative, calling for adhering to sovereign equality, abiding by international rule of law, practising multilateralism, advocating a people-centered approach, and focusing on taking real actions, which became the biggest highlight of this summit.

Since joining the SCO in 2017, India has played an important role in advancing the SCO's development. China deeply appreciates Mr. Modi's and India's full support for China's SCO presidency. China stands ready to work with India to enhance cooperation under the framework of SCO in various areas such as security, financing, energy, green industry and the digital economy, to better improve the well-being of their people.

The diamond jubilee of ties

This year marks the 75th anniversary of China-India diplomatic ties. In Tianjin, Mr. Xi and Mr. Modi reached new, important and common understandings on growing China-India relations further. Mr. Xi pointed out that it should be the right choice for China and India to be good-neighbourly friends and partners who help each other succeed, and have the dragon and the elephant dance together. Mr. Modi also stated that India and China are partners, not rivals. Their consensus far outweighs their disagreement. India is ready to view and develop the bilateral ties from a long-term perspective.

We should uphold the important and common understandings reached by the two leaders as guidance, and push bilateral relations forward for more practical progress.

First, we should further consolidate strategic mutual trust. We should earnestly draw the lessons from the past 75 years, strengthen correct strategic perception, explore right ways for neighbouring major countries to get along with each other, which are characterised by mutual respect and trust, peaceful coexistence, pursuit of common development, and win-win cooperation, and gradually resume various

mechanisms for dialogue and exchange between the two governments.

Second, we should further expand exchanges and cooperation. We should focus on development, which is the biggest common denominator of the two countries, and promote mutual support and success, and better facilitate trade and investment flows. The Chinese side is ready to strengthen cooperation with the Indian side in technology, education, culture, tourism and poverty alleviation, and promote exchanges and communications between political parties, think-tanks, media and the youth, so as to expand the convergence of interests and promote people-to-people bonds.

Third, we should further enhance good-neighbourliness and friendship. We should continue to uphold the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence initiated by the older generation of Chinese and Indian leaders, truly respect each other's core interests and major concerns, and combine our strength to maintain peace and tranquillity in the border areas. We should not allow the boundary question that was left over from the past to define current China-India relations, nor let specific differences affect bilateral cooperation, so as to ensure the sound and stable development of China-India relations.

The road ahead

As the world's two most populous major developing countries and important members of the Global South, China and India share common interests in pursuing development and revitalisation, maintaining world peace and stability, and promoting global governance. India and China will successively assume the BRICS presidency in the next two years. China stands ready to work with India to support each other's presidency, deepen and strengthen greater BRICS cooperation, jointly implement the Global Governance Initiative, resolutely oppose bullying and hegemony, defend international fairness and justice, and join hands to build a community with a shared future for humanity.

GS. Paper 02 –International Relations

UPSC Mains Practice Question: Discuss the significance of India's engagement in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in enhancing regional security and economic cooperation.(150 Words)

Tirumal Classes

Geetha Hospital, Street No:5, Chaitanyapuri Main Rd, above Dmart Pick-up Point, opp. to Genius Grammar School, Chaitanyapuri, Hyderabad, Telangana 500060
Contact:- 082477 38641   Website:- www.tirumalclassesiasinstitute.com

Context :

The **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit** in Tianjin, China, highlighted India's growing engagement with regional multilateralism and global governance. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's participation, alongside China's President Xi Jinping, emphasized **strategic cooperation, development partnerships, and stability in the Eurasian region**. This summit is significant not only for India-China bilateral ties but also for India's role in **SCO-led regional security and economic frameworks**.

Current Affairs Context

- **SCO Summit Highlights (Tianjin, 2025):**
    - Largest SCO summit to date, with **23 countries and 10 international organizations** participating.
    - **Tianjin Declaration**:
        - Establishment of *four security centres* (e.g., SCO Universal Center for Countering Security Challenges and Threats, Anti-drug Center).
        - Decision to set up the **SCO Development Bank**.
    - SCO adopted a **10-year development strategy**; China announced **platforms for energy, green industry, and digital economy** cooperation, and centres for **education and technology innovation**.
    - Global Governance Initiative: calls for **sovereign equality, multilateralism, rule of law, people-centered development, and actionable cooperation**.
- **India-China Bilateral Context:**
    - 2025 marks the **75th anniversary of diplomatic ties**.
    - Leaders emphasized **strategic mutual trust, development cooperation, and border peace**, stating India and China are **partners, not rivals**.
    - Focus areas: trade, investment, technology, education, culture, tourism, poverty alleviation, and people-to-people contacts.
    - Both countries will **successively assume BRICS presidency**, promoting Global Governance Initiative and opposing hegemonism.

Static Background

- **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO):**
    - Established in 2001, headquartered in Beijing, China.
    - Core objectives: regional security, counter-terrorism, economic cooperation, and multilateral collaboration.
    - Membership: China, Russia, India, Pakistan, Central Asian states; observer states and dialogue partners also participate.
- **India's role in SCO:**
    - Member since **2017**.
    - Active in **security, counter-terrorism, and regional connectivity initiatives**.
- **BRICS Context:**
    - India and China as **major developing economies**, collaborating on **global governance, financial stability, and sustainable development**.

Mains-Oriented Analysis

Tirumal Classes

Geetha Hospital, Street No:5, Chaitanyapuri Main Rd, above Dmart Pick-up Point, opp. to Genius Grammar School, Chaitanyapuri, Hyderabad, Telangana 500060
Contact:- 082477 38641   Website:- www.tirumalclassesiasinstitute.com

1. Strengthening Regional Multilateralism

- SCO provides India a platform for **strategic engagement with Central Asia, Russia, and China**, complementing India's **Act East and Neighbourhood First policies**.
- Security centres and anti-drug initiatives enhance **regional counter-terrorism and organized crime cooperation**.

2. India-China Bilateral Stability

- Summit underscores **long-term strategic trust-building**, prioritizing development over rivalry.
- Cooperation frameworks in **energy, green technology, digital economy, and education** align with India's sustainable growth goals.

3. Global Governance and Multilateralism

- India-China support for the **Global Governance Initiative** emphasizes:
  - o Sovereign equality and non-interference
  - o Multilateral solutions to global issues
  - o A collective stance against unilateralism and hegemonism
- This aligns with India's **Global South leadership ambitions** and pursuit of reforms in **UN and international economic institutions**.

4. Development and People-to-People Connectivity

- India-China dialogue promotes **trade, investment, tourism, and cultural exchanges**, crucial for **soft power and regional integration**.
- SCO cooperation enhances **infrastructure, technology, and educational linkages** in Asia.

Conclusion

The Tianjin SCO Summit reflects **India's growing engagement in regional multilateralism, strategic dialogue with China, and global governance initiatives**. By balancing **developmental cooperation, security collaboration, and diplomatic trust-building**, India is leveraging the SCO platform to advance its **economic and strategic interests while contributing to regional peace and stability**. The summit also reinforces the **long-term vision for India-China partnership**, emphasizing that differences over borders need not impede cooperation on shared developmental and global governance goals.

Tirumal Classes

Geetha Hospital, Street No:5, Chaitanyapuri Main Rd, above Dmart Pick-up Point, opp. to Genius Grammar School, Chaitanyapuri, Hyderabad, Telangana 500060
Contact:- 082477 38641   Website:- www.tirumalclassesiasinstitute.com