



VAJIRAM & RAVI
Institute for IAS Examination

The Analyst

CURRENT AFFAIRS Handout

2nd September 2026



2nd September 2026

CONTEXT: Geological hazards are increasingly interacting with climatic risks, creating a 'Hazard constellation' and amplifying the disaster risk in the region.

Exceptional Vulnerability

A. Natural/Physical Vulnerability

- Young and tectonically active mountains
- Steep relief accelerates disaster propagation
- Cryosphere is becoming increasingly unstable and acts as a risk multiplier
- Extreme rainfall acts as a major trigger

B. Emerging Nature of Himalayan Disasters

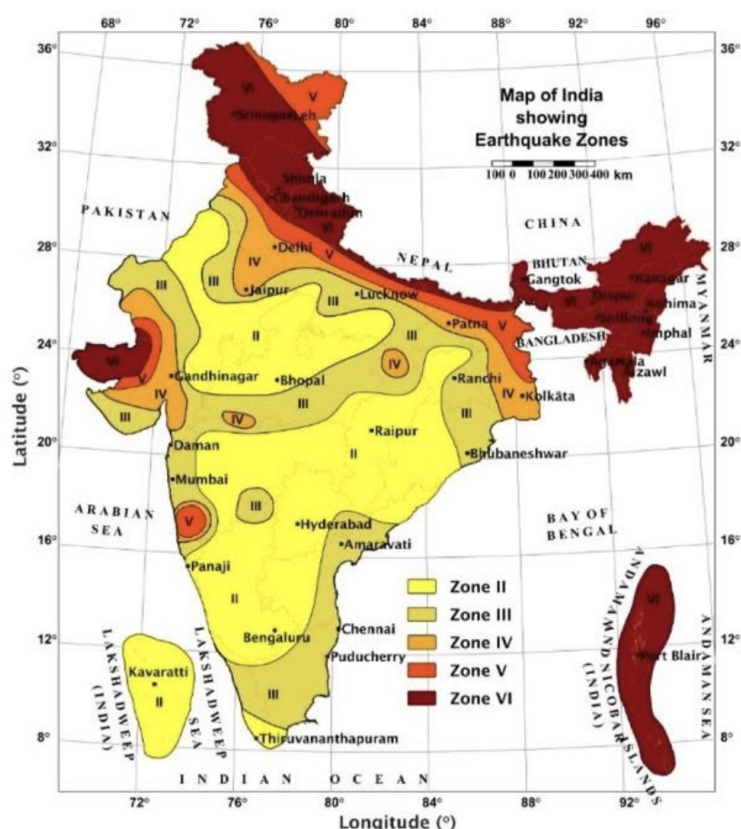
- From single hazards to "hazard constellations"

C. Human-Induced Vulnerability

- Infrastructure concentrated inside hazardous valleys
- Tourism and urbanisation increase exposure

Difficulty in monitoring

- "Needle in a haystack" problem
- Severe data sparsity
- Satellite monitoring cannot provide the entire answer
- Hazards can develop between observation cycles
- Cascading hazards defeat conventional models
- Extremely short warning lead-time
- Sparse and difficult-to-maintain ground networks
- Fragmented institutional architecture
- Inadequate integration of Local knowledge
- Transboundary character of Himalayan hazards



Himalayan Disaster Risk Monitoring

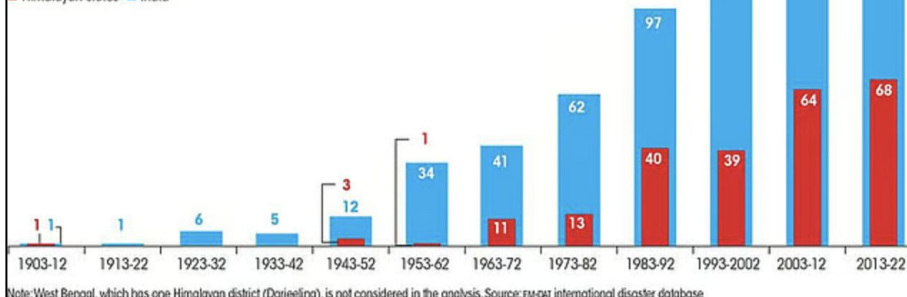
2nd September 2026

CONTEXT: Geological hazards are increasingly interacting with climatic risks, creating a 'Hazard constellation' and amplifying the disaster risk in the region.

ON THE RISE

The Himalayan states experienced over 40 per cent of India's disasters in 2013-22

Number of disaster events in
■ Himalayan states ■ India



Note: West Bengal, which has one Himalayan district (Darjeeling), is not considered in the analysis. Source: EM-DAT international disaster database

Initiative / Mechanism

What India is Doing

National Landslide Susceptibility Mapping

GSI is mapping landslide-prone terrain to identify vulnerable zones and create a scientific baseline for planning.

National Landslide Forecasting Centre (NLFC)

GSI integrates rainfall, slope conditions, remote sensing and spatial datasets for landslide forecasting.

Glacial-lake monitoring by CWC

CWC uses remote sensing to monitor potentially vulnerable Himalayan glacial lakes and water bodies.

National GLOF Risk Mitigation Programme

Combines hazard assessment, monitoring/EWS, mitigation works and community capacity-building.

Indigenous glacial monitoring technology

C-DAC developed an autonomous glacial-lake monitoring and risk-assessment technology suite.

InSAR-based slope monitoring

MoRTH is using **Interferometric Synthetic Aperture Radar (InSAR)** to track minute ground deformation along vulnerable mountain roads.

Way ahead

- A three-layer monitoring network - Remote sensing - "eyes from space" > Fixed stations - "eyes on the mountain" > Communities - "eyes on the ground"
- Institutionalisation of community-based monitoring
- Multi-hazard rather than silo-based early warning system

- From broad zonation to micro-level risk mapping
- Convert forecasts into automatic action protocols
- Establish robust Himalayan transboundary warning protocols
- Integrate scientific agencies through one operational platform



Himalayan Disaster Risk Monitoring



CONTEXT: Geological hazards are increasingly interacting with climatic risks, creating a 'Hazard constellation' and amplifying the disaster risk in the region.

Mains Practice Question

Despite significant advances in satellite observation and hazard mapping, prediction of Himalayan disasters remains inherently difficult. Discuss the reasons and suggest a framework for more effective risk monitoring and early warning.

(250 word / 15 Marks)



Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and India

2nd September 2026

CONTEXT: The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) “must dismantle” the entire ecosystem of terrorism and send a strong message to countries that practise terrorism as a state policy.

Shanghai Cooperation Organisation

The Council of Heads of State	- This is the highest decision-making body of the SCO and comprises the heads of state of all member countries. - It meets annually to set the overall strategic direction for the organisation.
The Council of Heads of Government	- Second-highest council in the organisation. - Holds annual summits, at which time members discuss issues of multilateral cooperation.
The Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs	Comprises the foreign ministers of all member countries and is responsible for coordinating the organisation's foreign policy.
The Council of National Coordinators	- Key body coordinating and managing the SCO's current activities. - Conducts the necessary preparations for the meetings of the Council of Heads of State, the Council of Heads of Government, and the Council of Foreign Ministers.
The Secretariat	- It is the administrative arm of the SCO, responsible for coordinating and implementing the decisions of the organisation. - Based in Beijing, it is the main permanent executive body. - The Secretariat is headed by the Secretary-General and he is nominated by the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and approved by the Heads of State Council.
The Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS)	- RATS is responsible for coordinating efforts among member countries to combat terrorism, separatism, and extremism. - RATS is headquartered in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.
The SCO Business Council	Comprises representatives from the business communities of all member countries and is responsible for promoting economic cooperation and investment among member countries.
The SCO Interbank Consortium	A network of major development/commercial banks, responsible for promoting financial cooperation among member countries.



CHINA



KAZAKHSTAN



KYRGYZSTAN



RUSSIA



TAJIKISTAN



UZBEKISTAN



INDIA



PAKISTAN



IRAN



BELARUS

The SCO members account for
23%
of global GDP

along with
43%
of the world's population



CONTEXT: The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) “must dismantle” the entire ecosystem of terrorism and send a strong message to countries that practise terrorism as a state policy.

SCO and relevance India

A. SECURITY

- Counter-terrorism – directly addresses India's core security concern
- Afghanistan – preventing a security vacuum in India's extended neighbourhood
- New security threats require continental cooperation

B. CONNECTIVITY

- SCO provides India an institutional gateway to Central Asia
- Chabahar gives India an alternative route to continental Eurasia
- Connectivity allows India to assert a rules-based alternative to BRI

C. OPPORTUNITY

- Economic diversification in a fragmented global economy
- Energy security – access to resource-rich Eurasia
- Technology and start-ups can move SCO beyond traditional geopolitics

D. GEOPOLITICAL RELEVANCE

- SCO strengthens India's strategic autonomy
- A platform for engaging China despite bilateral tensions
- Preserving India's presence in an increasingly China-centric Eurasia
- Engagement with Russia in a changing global order

Key Challenges

- Terrorism paradox – consensus without common threat perception
- India-China strategic distrust
- China-centric economic architecture
- Pakistan blocks India's direct continental connectivity
- Expansion has increased diversity but reduced cohesion
- Declarations often exceed implementation
- Risk of being perceived as an anti-Western bloc
- Internal geopolitical contradictions

Way Forward

- Treat SCO as a platform of functional cooperation, not an alliance
- Strengthen RATS from information-sharing to actionable cooperation
- Build connectivity without compromising sovereignty
- Put Central Asia at the centre, not at the periphery, of India's SCO policy
- Shift from grand declarations to project-based cooperation
- Develop a coordinated regional approach towards Afghanistan
- Make the “Opportunity” pillar people-centric



Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and India



CONTEXT: The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) “must dismantle” the entire ecosystem of terrorism and send a strong message to countries that practise terrorism as a state policy.

Mains Practice Question

“The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation is simultaneously an instrument of India's strategic autonomy and a platform constrained by geopolitical contradictions.”
Examine the contemporary relevance of the SCO for India and the challenges limiting its effectiveness.

(250 word / 15 Marks)



Newspaper : The Hindu Page Number : 09

Gig Workers & e-Shram

- **e-Shram Portal:** conceived as an **Aadhaar-seeded National Database of Unorganised Workers (NDUW)**.
- **Gig workers:** Officially recognised/defined under the **Code on Social Security, 2020**.
- **Budget 2025-26:** Announced **healthcare coverage for gig workers registered on e-Shram**; expected to benefit **over 1 crore workers**.
- **Registration gap:** Only **8.58 lakh gig workers** were registered
- **NITI Aayog Report:** *India's Booming Gig and Platform Economy* - released in **June 2022**.
- **Share in workforce:** Gig workers constitute roughly **2% of India's workforce**; PLFS 2025 cited total workforce at **61.6 crore**.

- **State-wise anomaly:** Highly urbanised States such as **Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Kerala** are not among the top 10 States in gig-worker registrations
- **Major sectors:** NITI Aayog identified **21 sectors** employing gig workers; e-Shram registrations are concentrated in **food-related activities, transportation, and domestic/household work**.
- e-Shram data may not reflect the actual geographical distribution of gig work.

CHART 3: The 10 States with the highest number of gig workers registered on the e-Shram portal as of January 2026

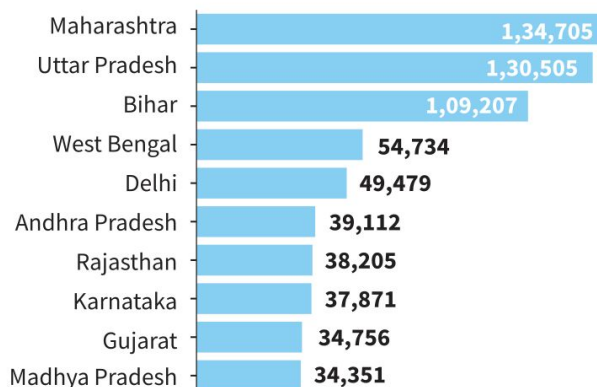


CHART 4: The five sectors that employed the highest share of gig workers, based on registrations on e-Shram

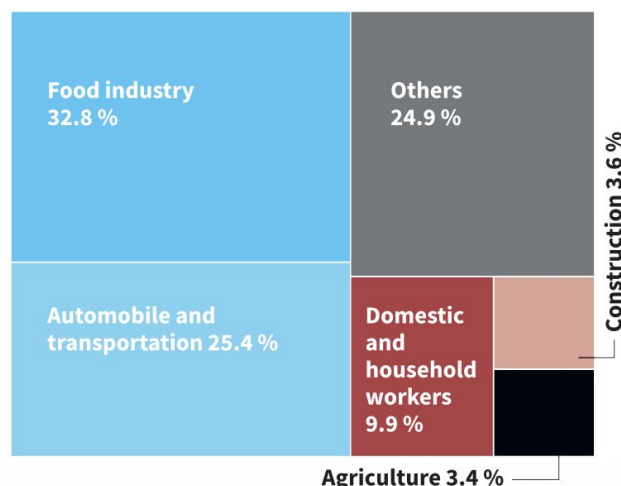
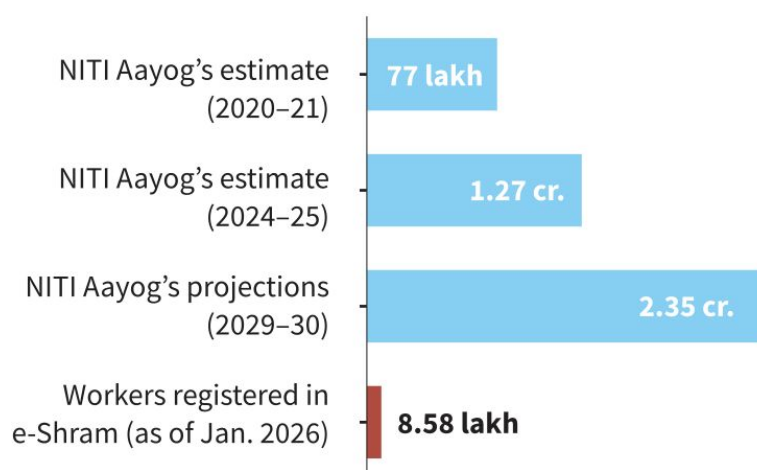


CHART 1: India's estimated number of platform workers and those registered on the e-Shram portal



Mettur & Mullaperiyar Dam



SYLLABUS : PRELIMS : Reservoirs and Rivers in News
Newspaper : The Hindu **Page Number :** 4/6

About Mettur Dam

- Mettur, Salem District, in Tamil Nadu.
- Largest dam in Tamilnadu.
- It is constructed in a gorge, where the Cauvery River enters the plains.
- Built in 1934 - supervised by the then Governor of Madras, Sir George Stanley
- It has the contribution to produce 240 MW of hydroelectricity.
- It provides irrigation facilities to parts of Salem, the Erode, Namakkal, Karur, Tiruchirappalli, and Thanjavur districts for 271,000 acres of farmland

Mullaperiyar dam

- Situated at the confluence of the Mullayar and Periyar rivers.
- Located entirely in Keralam.
- It was built in the late 1800s in the princely state of Travancore and given to British-ruled Madras Presidency on a 999-year lease in 1886.
- The agreement granted full rights to the Tamil Nadu to construct irrigation projects on the land.
- The dam was built to divert eastwards a part of the west-flowing Periyar river, to feed the arid areas of Tamil Nadu.
- Post independence (1970) - Tamil Nadu was given rights to the land and the water from the dam as well as the authority to develop hydro-power projects at the site.
- Kerala received rent in return



Water Hyacinth in Vembanad Lake

2nd September 2026

SYLLABUS : PRELIMS : Environment ; Invasive species
Newspaper : The Hindu **Page Number :** 6

About Water Hyacinth

- It is a **free-floating, aquatic plant in the pickerelweed family.**
- **Scientific Name:** Eichhornia crassipes
- It is native to **tropical regions of South America**
- Grows in tropical, subtropical, and warm temperate climates.
- It grows best in still or slow-flowing fresh water with high nutrient levels.
- Under favourable conditions it can double its mass every 5 days.
- It can form **dense mats that reduce the water quality, change water flows, and increase sediment.**
- It crowds out native aquatic plants and animals, altering ecosystems, destroying habitats, and blocking irrigation systems.
- They have **showy lavender flowers**, and the **leaves are rounded and leathery.**

Uses:

- The plant has been used as a **biofertilizer in some organic agriculture practices.**
- The plant produces beautiful **purple flowers that have high aesthetic value.**
- It is rich in fibrous stems that can be processed into a wide array of handbags, interior decorative material, table mats, baskets, and other products.
- **Phytoremediation species** - It has the ability to trap and remove toxic metabolites and harmful heavy metals from water

About Vembanad Lake

- It is the largest lake in Kerala and the longest lake in India.
- It is also known as Vembanad Kayal, Vembanad Kol, Punnamada Lake, and Kochi Lake.
- **Source in four rivers:** Meenachil, Achankovil, Pampa, and Manimala.
- Most of the Vembanad Lake is fresh water
- It is flanked by coconut palms and extensive paddy fields that are below mean sea level.
- **Vallam Kali (i.e Nehru Trophy Boat Race)** - Snake Boat Race held every year in the month of August
- In 2002, it was designated as a **Ramsar site.**
- The Government of India - under the **National Wetlands Conservation Programme.**
- **The Kumarakom Bird Sanctuary** is located on the east coast of the lake.
- It is home to numerous migratory birds that travel all the way from Siberia and the Himalayas



INS Nipun

2nd September 2026

SYLLABUS : PRELIMS : Defence Technology
Newspaper : Indian Express **Page Number : 15**

INS NIPUN

- It is the second **Diving Support Vessel (DSV)**
- **Built** - Hindustan Shipyard Limited.
- **Name** - 'One who is adept, capable, and well versed in a particular discipline'.
- **Purpose** - Primarily for **deep-sea diving and underwater operations**.
- It is capable of **supporting saturation, air and heliox diving**
- Equipped with **remotely operated underwater systems** - inspection and intervention.
- It is equipped with **advanced dynamic positioning systems**, submarine rescue machinery, and deep-sea intervention tools.
- It would also serve as the **Mother Ship for the Deep Submergence Rescue Vessel (DSRV)**, to evacuate personnel in case of an emergency in a submarine.
- It has nearly 75 percent Indigenous Content



2nd September 2026

SYLLABUS : PRELIMS : Places in News
Newspaper : Indian Express **Page Number : 11**



Q1. Consider the following statements regarding gig workers in India:

1. Gig workers are officially recognised under the Code on Social Security, 2020.
2. The e-Shram portal was conceived as an Aadhaar-seeded National Database of Unorganised Workers.
3. As per e-Shram data (January 2026), Maharashtra recorded the highest number of registered gig workers, followed by Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

How many of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) Only One
- b) Only Two
- c) All Three
- d) None

Answer: c

Q2. Consider the following statements regarding the Mettur Dam:

1. It is built across the Cauvery River at the point where it enters the plains.
2. It is the largest dam in Tamil Nadu.
3. It was commissioned during the tenure of Governor-General Lord Curzon.

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

Answer: a

Q3. With reference to the Mullaperiyar Dam, consider the following statements:

1. It is located entirely within the state of Kerala.
2. It was built to divert the west-flowing Periyar river eastward to irrigate arid parts of Tamil Nadu.
3. Post-independence, in 1970, Kerala was granted the authority to develop hydroelectric power projects at the dam site.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- a) 1 and 3 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 2 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: c

Q4. With reference to INS Nipun, consider the following statements:

1. It is India's first indigenously built Diving Support Vessel (DSV).
2. It is equipped to support saturation, air, and heliox diving.
3. It will serve as the mother ship for the Deep Submergence Rescue Vessel (DSRV).

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

Answer: b

Q5. Consider the following statements regarding Central Asian water bodies:

1. The Aral Sea lies at the border of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan.
2. Sarygamys is a lake shared between Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: b





VAJIRAM & RAVI

Institute for IAS Examination

A unit of Vajiram & Ravi IAS Study Centre LLP

9-B, Bada Bazar Marg, Old Rajinder Nagar,
New Delhi - 110060 • Ph.: 41007400, 41007500

New No. 62, P Block, 6th Avenue, Anna Nagar,
Chennai - 600040 • Ph.: 044-4330-2121

Visit us at : www.vajiramandravi.com