

# PrepAlpine

**The Next-Generation UPSC Institution**

Where Research Meets Mentorship & Precision



**Research-  
Grade  
Content**

**Expert  
Mentorship**

**AI  
Precision  
Engine**

**Preparation Meets Precision**

A Next-Generation Learning Institution

## **Copyright © 2025 PrepAlpine**

All Rights Reserved

No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means—whether photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods—without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain non-commercial uses permitted by copyright law.

For permission requests, please write to:

**PrepAlpine**

Email: [info@PrepAlpine.com](mailto:info@PrepAlpine.com)

Website: PrepAlpine.com

## **Disclaimer**

The information contained in this book has been prepared solely for educational purposes. While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, PrepAlpine makes no representations or warranties of any kind and accepts no liability for any errors or omissions. The use of any content is solely at the reader's discretion and risk.

## DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS DATED 22.03.2026

### GS Paper II: Current Affairs

#### 1. Paid Maternity Leave for Adoptive Mothers: A Constitutional Expansion of Care and Equality

##### a. Introduction

The Supreme Court's judgment on maternity leave for adoptive mothers marks an important evolution in Indian constitutional thinking. By removing the age-based restriction on adopted children, the Court has moved beyond a narrow, biological understanding of motherhood toward a more inclusive and child-centric approach.

This decision reflects the changing nature of families in India and highlights the need for laws to align with social realities, dignity, and equality.



##### b. The Legal Issue and Its Context

The issue arose from a provision in the Social Security Code, 2020, which allowed adoptive mothers to receive 12 weeks of maternity leave only if the child was below three months of age.

##### Problem with the Provision

- Adoption procedures in India are lengthy and regulated
- Most children are adopted after crossing the three-month age limit
- As a result, many adoptive mothers were effectively excluded

##### Core Constitutional Question

- Whether this restriction violated equality and the purpose of maternity benefits

This led the Court to examine whether the law was realistic, fair, and aligned with constitutional values.

### **c. Why the Supreme Court Found the Provision Unconstitutional**

#### **Violation of Equality (Article 14)**

- The law created an artificial distinction between adoptive mothers
- Both categories perform the same caregiving role
- No rational basis existed for differential treatment

#### **Disconnection from Ground Realities**

- Adoption involves legal safeguards and waiting periods
- Most adoptions occur after three months
- The benefit became largely theoretical, not practical

#### **Impact on Child Welfare**

- Adopted children, especially from institutions, need emotional support
- Bonding and adjustment are crucial for psychological development
- Denial of leave harms the child's integration into the family

#### **Misunderstanding the Purpose of Maternity Leave**

- Not just about physical recovery after childbirth
- Also about bonding, childcare, and emotional security
- These needs are equally strong—or stronger—in adoption cases

Thus, the Court expanded the understanding of maternity benefits beyond biology to caregiving.

### **d. Reconceptualising Motherhood under the Constitution**

#### **From Biological to Social Understanding**

- Motherhood is not limited to childbirth
- It includes care, responsibility, and emotional commitment

#### **Link to Constitutional Values**

- Right to dignity
- Personal autonomy — choice to form a family
- Equality in recognition of different family forms

This interpretation ensures that constitutional rights evolve with societal change.

### **e. Reaffirming the Purpose of Maternity Benefits**

#### **Multiple Objectives of Maternity Leave**

- Physical recovery (biological mothers)
- Emotional bonding
- Child development and adjustment

#### **Special Importance in Adoption Cases**

- Children must adapt to a new environment
- Trust-building requires time and care
- Older children may need even more support

Therefore, denying leave defeats the very purpose of the law.

## **f. Outcome of the Judgment**

### **Key Decision**

- The three-month age restriction was struck down

### **New Entitlement**

- 12 weeks of paid maternity leave for all adoptive mothers
- Applicable regardless of the child's age
- Leave begins from the date the child is handed over

This ensures practical and meaningful access to maternity benefits.

## **g. Paternity Leave and Shared Parenting**

### **Court's Recommendation**

- Introduce a comprehensive paternity leave framework

### **Significance**

- Caregiving is not only a woman's responsibility
- Encourages shared parenting
- Reduces gender inequality in family roles

This marks a shift toward more balanced and modern family norms.

## **h. Broader Significance of the Judgment**

### **Advancing Substantive Equality**

- Goes beyond formal equality
- Recognises real-life disadvantages
- Ensures fairness in outcomes

### **Strengthening a Child-Centric Approach**

- Focus on emotional and developmental needs of children
- Places child welfare at the centre of law

### **Recognising Diverse Family Structures**

- Accepts both biological and adoptive families
- Reflects changing social realities

### **Protecting Women's Economic Stability**

- Prevents career disruption
- Supports work-life balance
- Enhances workforce participation

### **Encouraging Gender Equality in Care Work**

- Promotes shared responsibilities
- Challenges traditional gender roles

Thus, the judgment has implications beyond maternity leave—it reshapes social norms.

### **Conclusion**

The Supreme Court's decision represents a progressive alignment of labour law with constitutional values and social realities. By extending maternity benefits to all adoptive mothers, it reinforces the idea that motherhood is defined by care and nurturing, not merely biology.

More broadly, the judgment signals that laws must evolve to reflect human dignity, equality, and changing family structures—thereby contributing to a more inclusive and compassionate society.

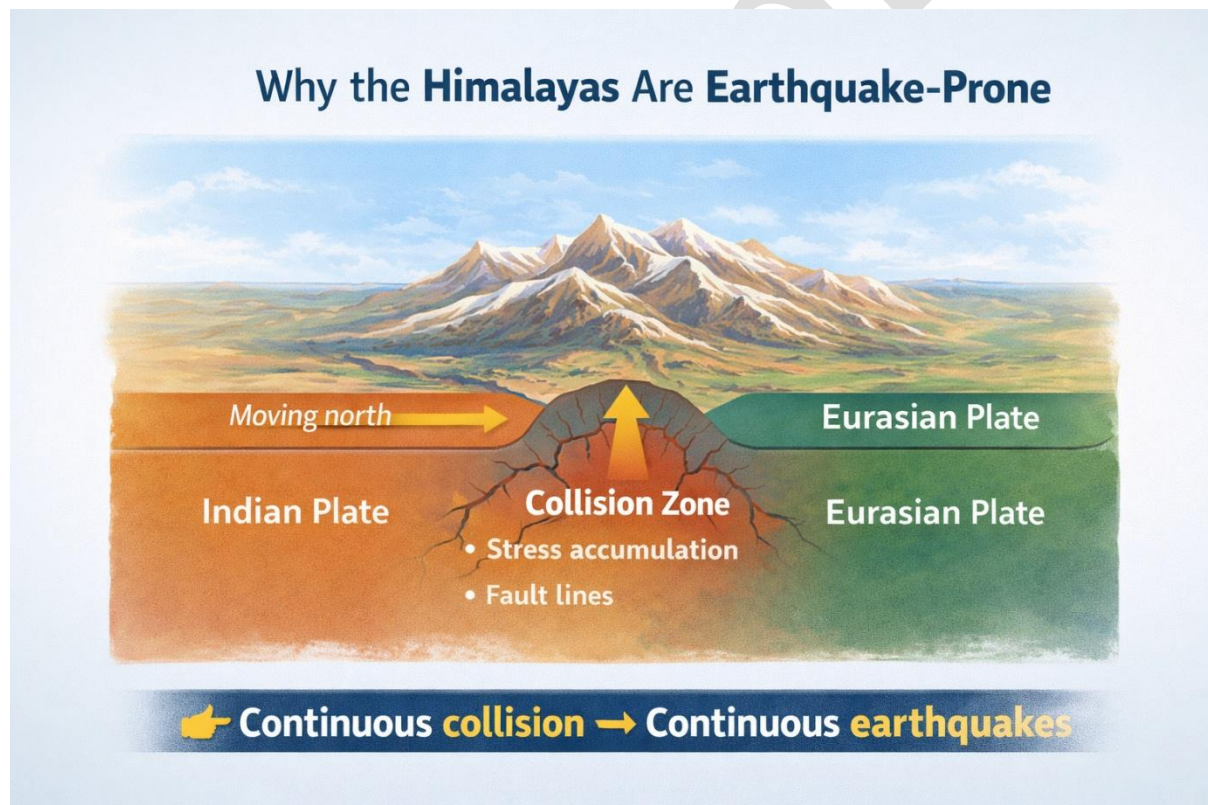
## GS Paper III: Disaster Management

### 2. Earthquake Risk in the Himalayas and Building Safety in India

#### a. Introduction

India's Himalayan and northeastern regions lie among the most earthquake-prone zones in the world. Yet, a growing concern is that the actual level of seismic risk may be significantly higher than what current building standards assume. This creates a critical policy dilemma: how to ensure safe and resilient infrastructure without imposing unsustainable economic costs.

The issue, therefore, is not only scientific but also developmental, involving a balance between safety, affordability, and long-term sustainability.



#### b. Why the Himalayas Are Highly Earthquake-Prone

##### Geological Basis of Vulnerability

- The Himalayan region is geologically young, meaning the rocks and landforms are still unstable and evolving.
- It was formed due to the collision of the Indian Plate (moving northward) and the Eurasian Plate.
- This collision is still ongoing, causing continuous accumulation of stress beneath the earth's surface.

## **Earthquake Generation Mechanism**

- Over time, stress builds along fault lines — cracks in the earth’s crust.
- When this stress exceeds the strength of rocks, it is suddenly released as seismic energy.
- This release results in earthquakes, often of very high magnitude, sometimes above 8.

Thus, earthquakes in the Himalayas are not rare anomalies but a natural and recurring outcome of plate tectonics.

## **c. Understanding Earthquake Risk in Simple Terms**

### **Two Key Determinants of Damage**

- **Intensity of ground shaking** – how strongly the earth moves.
- **Strength of structures** – how well buildings can resist that movement.

### **Peak Ground Acceleration (PGA)**

- PGA measures how fast the ground accelerates during shaking.
- Higher PGA means stronger forces acting on buildings.
- Weak structures collapse under high PGA, while well-designed ones absorb the shock.

In simple terms, earthquakes do not kill people—unsafe buildings do.

## **d. The Problem of Underestimation**

### **Limitations of Current Seismic Zoning**

- India’s seismic zones are largely based on past earthquake records.
- They do not fully capture hidden tectonic stresses or future possibilities.
- Variations in local soil conditions (soft soil vs hard rock) are often ignored.

### **Emerging Scientific Concerns**

- Recent studies suggest stronger ground shaking is possible in the Himalayas.
- There is potential for large “locked zones” (areas storing stress) to produce major earthquakes.
- Existing building codes may therefore be based on conservative (lower) estimates.

This creates a situation where infrastructure may appear safe on paper but remain vulnerable in reality.

## **e. Why Stronger Building Codes Face Resistance**

### **Economic Constraints**

- Earthquake-resistant buildings require better materials — steel, reinforced concrete.
- They need skilled engineering and supervision.
- All of this increases construction costs significantly.

### **Impact on Stakeholders**

- Governments may reduce infrastructure projects due to higher costs.
- Individuals, especially low-income groups, may avoid compliance.
- Developers may cut corners to maximise profits.

Thus, affordability often becomes a barrier to safety.

## **f. Scientific and Practical Need for Stronger Standards**

### **Evidence from Past Disasters**

- Most deaths in earthquakes occur due to building collapse, not ground shaking itself.
- Poorly constructed buildings are the primary cause of casualties.

### **Global Best Practices**

- Countries like Japan and the USA follow strict seismic codes.
- Even strong earthquakes there result in fewer deaths.
- Engineering innovation helps structures bend rather than break.

### **Long-Term Cost Perspective**

- Weak construction may appear cheap initially.
- However, it leads to huge losses in reconstruction and lives.
- Investment in safety reduces future disaster costs.

## **g. The Core Dilemma: Safety versus Affordability**

### **Nature of the Trade-off**

- Strong safety norms → higher construction costs.
- Weak norms → higher disaster risk and losses.

### **Why It Is a False Binary**

- Safety and affordability are not mutually exclusive.
- Smart planning and innovation can achieve both.
- The real challenge is designing cost-effective resilience.

## **h. Structural Issues in India's Building Safety Framework**

### **Weak Enforcement**

- Building codes exist but are poorly implemented.
- Regulatory oversight is limited, especially in smaller towns.

### **Informal Construction Practices**

- Large number of buildings are constructed without engineers.
- Basic safety norms are often ignored.

### **Urbanisation and Environmental Stress**

- Expansion into fragile hill slopes increases vulnerability.
- Unplanned development worsens disaster impact.

### **Lack of Awareness**

- People prioritise short-term savings over long-term safety.
- Limited knowledge about earthquake-resistant techniques.

## **i. Towards a Balanced and Practical Approach**

### **Scientific Upgradation**

- Revise seismic hazard maps based on latest research.

- Incorporate local soil and geological variations.

#### **Phased Policy Implementation**

- Introduce stricter codes gradually.
- Allow time for adaptation and cost adjustment.

#### **Priority-Based Safety**

- Focus on critical infrastructure: hospitals, schools, bridges.
- Ensure zero tolerance for safety violations in these sectors.

#### **Affordable Safety Solutions**

- Promote low-cost earthquake-resistant designs.
- Use local materials with improved techniques.

#### **Retrofitting Existing Structures**

- Strengthen old buildings instead of rebuilding.
- Cost-effective and faster approach to risk reduction.

#### **Institutional Strengthening**

- Improve enforcement and monitoring systems.
- Train engineers, architects, and masons.
- Conduct public awareness campaigns.

### **j. A Shift in Disaster Management Approach**

#### **From Response to Prevention**

- Earlier focus: relief and rehabilitation after disasters.
- Current focus: risk reduction before disasters occur.

#### **Importance of Preparedness**

- Better planning and design reduce vulnerability.
- Early investment saves lives and economic losses.

This shift marks the transition from reactive governance to proactive resilience-building.

#### **Conclusion**

India's Himalayan region faces a significant—and possibly underestimated—earthquake risk. While strengthening building standards may increase costs in the short term, ignoring scientific evidence can lead to far greater human and economic losses.

The way forward lies not in choosing between safety and development, but in integrating both through careful planning, phased reforms, effective enforcement, and innovative solutions. Safe construction should be viewed not as an expense, but as a long-term investment in resilience, sustainability, and human security.

## Reader's Note — About This Current Affairs Compilation

Dear Aspirant,

This document is part of the PrepAlpine Current Affairs Series — designed to bring clarity, structure, and precision to your daily UPSC learning.

While every effort has been made to balance depth with brevity, please keep the following in mind:

### 1. Orientation & Purpose

This compilation is curated primarily from the UPSC Mains perspective — with emphasis on conceptual clarity, analytical depth, and interlinkages across GS papers.

However, the PrepAlpine team is simultaneously developing a dedicated Prelims-focused Current Affairs Series, designed for:

- factual coverage
- data recall
- Prelims-style MCQs
- objective pattern analysis

This Prelims Edition will be released separately as a standalone publication.

### 2. Content Length

Some sections may feel shorter or longer depending on topic relevance and news density. To fit your personal preference, you may freely resize or summarize sections using any LLM tool (ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, etc.) at your convenience.

### 3. Format Flexibility

The formatting combines:

- paragraphs
- lists
- tables
- visual cues

—all optimised for retention.

If you prefer a specific style (lists → paras, paras → tables, etc.), feel free to convert using any free LLM.

### 4. Monthly Current Affairs Release

The complete Monthly Current Affairs Module will be released soon, optimized to a compact 100–150 pages — comprehensive yet concise, exam-ready, and revision-efficient.

PrepAlpine