Geography · GS - III

Strategic railway infrastructure in the Himalayan region can transform regional connectivity while strengthening national integration. Examine the engineering, economic and strategic significance of projects such as the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
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MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Himalayan terrain, USBRL project, Chenab arch bridge, Anji Khad cable-stayed bridge, engineering challenges, all-weather connectivity, tourism and trade, regional development, disaster resilience, strategic mobility, environmental sustainability.

Model Answer

Introduction

Railway infrastructure in the Himalayas is important for overcoming geographical isolation and improving connectivity. The Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) represents a major effort in this direction.

Engineering and Strategic Significance

The project involves complex tunnels, bridges and difficult geological conditions. The Chenab arch bridge and Anji Khad cable-stayed bridge demonstrate advanced engineering capabilities. Improved rail connectivity can facilitate civilian movement, logistics and strategic mobility in a sensitive border region.

Economic and Social Benefits

Reliable railway access can promote tourism, trade, employment and access to education and healthcare. It can strengthen economic integration between the Kashmir Valley and other parts of India while reducing dependence on road transport, which is vulnerable to weather disruptions.

Challenges and Way Forward

Fragile Himalayan ecosystems, landslides, seismic risks and construction costs require careful planning. Continuous structural monitoring, disaster-resilient engineering, environmental safeguards and efficient maintenance are essential.

Conclusion

Strategic railway projects can accelerate regional development and national integration, provided infrastructure expansion remains environmentally sustainable and resilient to Himalayan hazards.

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