



UPSC & STATE PCS CURRENT AFFAIRS · UJIYARI.COM

EDITORIAL ANALYSIS

The Fires We Permit: On Urban Governance and Accountability

 **BUSINESS STANDARD**

12 June 2026

POLITY**SOCIAL ISSUES****GS2****GS4**

CURATED & WRITTEN BY

**Bharat Choudhary**

UPSC Educator & Content Creator

 [linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)**ALSO FROM THE CREATOR****BharatNotes**Free UPSC notes, MCQs, PYQ analysis. **100% Free.**bharatnotes.com →**ADVERTISE****Advertise with Ujiyari**

Reach thousands of UPSC aspirants daily.

 epicbharat@gmail.com

The Fires We Permit: On Urban Governance and Accountability

 Business Standard

12 June 2026

GS2

GS4

 Source: ujjyari.com — Free UPSC & State PCS Current Affairs


INTERVIEW ANGLE

"A guesthouse fire that kills dozens is called an accident, but the illegal construction and missing clearances were known. Where does accountability lie in urban governance?"

 Source: [Original editorial](#)

Business Standard



Every fact web-verified against primary sources

HOW

WHY THIS MATTERS NOW

Each recurring **urban fire tragedy**, a guesthouse, a coaching centre, a basement, that kills people exposes a deeper failure: **corruption and weak regulation in municipal governance**. For an aspirant, this is a strong **GS2 (governance, urban administration)** and **GS4 (accountability, integrity) lead**. The hard truth: these are not accidents but **permitted** dangers, the predictable result of violations that were known and ignored.

THE CRUX IN 60 WORDS

Recurring **urban fires** trace to known violations, illegal construction, missing fire clearances, blocked exits, that were **permitted or ignored**. **Municipal bodies** are under-capacitated, under-funded and prone to corruption, so enforcement is weak. Crucially, **no one is held accountable**, so the failures recur. Safe cities need stronger municipal capacity, strict enforcement, real **accountability**, and an end to the licence-and-look-away culture.

THE ISSUE, DECODED

ELEMENT	WHAT IT IS	WHY IT MATTERS
Known violations	Illegal construction, missing clearances	The avoidable cause
Municipal capacity	Staff, funds, inspectors	Often weak, prone to corruption
Enforcement gap	Codes exist but are not applied	The implementation failure
Accountability	Holding officials responsible	Its absence lets failures recur

THE ANALYSIS: WHY “ACCIDENT” IS THE WRONG WORD

- ❶ **The violations were known.** Illegal construction and missing clearances are recurring, identifiable causes.
- ❷ **Municipal bodies are weak.** Under-capacity, under-funding and corruption undermine enforcement.
- ❸ **Codes are not enforced.** Building and fire-safety norms exist but are applied weakly and selectively.
- ❹ **Impunity perpetuates it.** Without accountability for lapses, the incentives to look away survive.

DATA AND INSTITUTIONS VAULT

the 74th Constitutional Amendment (1992) on urban local bodies; the 12th Schedule functions of municipalities; the role of municipal corporations. Safety: the National Building Code (NBC); state fire-safety rules; fire services as a State subject; NDMA guidelines. Accountability: Article 21 (right to life and a safe environment); the duty of care; “responsibility without accountability.” Concepts: unplanned urbanisation; the regulatory state; corruption and “rent-seeking”; ethics of public trust. Linkage: urban governance, disaster management and integrity in administration.

THE DEBATE

Argument on constraints: The scale of unplanned urbanisation and limited resources make perfect enforcement impossible; some tragedies are a cost of rapid growth.

Argument on accountability: Most of these deaths are preventable with basic compliance; the failure is one of corruption and missing accountability, not just resources.

The balanced verdict: Constraints are real but cannot excuse impunity. The answer is to **strengthen capacity and enforce accountability** together, so that violations are caught and officials who certify or ignore them are held responsible.

HOW TO THINK ABOUT THIS (TRANSFERABLE SKILL)

A weak answer accepts the language of misfortune. The strong answer asks whether the harm was foreseeable and permitted, and if it was, locates the decision, the signed clearance, the waved-through inspection, that allowed it. The move is from sympathy to accountability. The same lens applies to building collapses, stampedes and road deaths.

DIAGRAM-IN-WORDS

Known violations (illegal construction, missing clearances, blocked exits) + weak municipal capacity + corruption -> "accidents" waiting to happen. The perpetrator: no accountability after the headlines -> failures recur. The fix: municipal capacity + strict enforcement + clear official accountability + anti-corruption -> safe cities.

THE WAY FORWARD

- 1 **Strengthen municipal capacity and finances**, including trained inspectors.
- 2 **Enforce building and fire-safety codes** strictly and transparently.
- 3 **Fix clear accountability** for officials who certify or ignore violations.
- 4 **Empower fire services** and attack the corruption behind illegal construction.

THE TAKEAWAY BOX

“Recurring urban fire tragedies are failures of governance and accountability, not accidents.” Examine the gaps in municipal regulation and the reforms needed. (250 words)

“A fire that known violations made inevitable is not an accident but a permission; safe cities begin where impunity ends.”

74th Constitutional Amendment · 12th Schedule · National Building Code · fire services (State subject) · NDMA · municipal corporations.

A clearance signed without inspection, how should an officer who holds public safety in trust be held to account?

Connects to GS2 PYQs on urban local governance and GS4 on accountability and the ethical use of authority; a probable question is the accident-versus-permission framing above.

static GS2 on urban local bodies (74th Amendment) and GS4 on accountability and public trust; the broader theme of disaster management.

Sources: *Business Standard, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, NDMA*

Source: *The Fires We Permit: On Urban Governance and Accountability — Ujyari.com | Free UPSC & State PCS Editorial Analysis*

● KEY ARGUMENTS AT A GLANCE

Recurring urban fire tragedies are not accidents but the predictable result of corruption, illegal construction and regulatory failure in municipal governance; safe cities require strict enforcement, real accountability and an end to the culture of licensing violations and looking away.

✓ SUPPORTING

- Most such tragedies trace to known violations, illegal construction, missing fire clearances, blocked exits, that were permitted or ignored.
- Municipal bodies are often under-capacitated, under-funded and vulnerable to corruption, weakening enforcement of building and fire-safety norms.

- The absence of accountability, where no official is held responsible, lets the same failures recur.

COUNTER

Some argue that resource constraints and the scale of unplanned urbanisation make perfect enforcement impossible, and that tragedies are an unfortunate cost of rapid growth.

WAY FORWARD

Strengthen municipal capacity and finances, enforce building and fire-safety codes strictly, ensure accountability for violations and lapses, empower fire services, and root out the corruption behind illegal construction.

PRACTICE TODAY'S QUIZ

[Take the 12 June 2026 Quiz →](#)



MAINS ANSWER FRAMEWORK

QUESTION

"Recurring urban fire tragedies are failures of governance and accountability, not accidents." Examine the gaps in municipal regulation and the reforms needed. (250 words)

INTRODUCTION

When a guesthouse or coaching centre burns and people die, the word used is "accident." But an accident implies the unforeseeable, and these tragedies are anything but. The violations were known; the danger was permitted.

BODY

The pattern is grimly familiar across Indian cities: illegal or unauthorised construction, missing or fake fire-safety clearances, blocked or locked exits, flammable materials, and buildings used for purposes they were never sanctioned for. Each tragedy is investigated, each prompts outrage, and yet the next one follows.

The reasons are systemic. Municipal bodies, the front line of urban governance, are frequently under-

capacitated, under-funded and short of trained inspectors, and they are vulnerable to corruption, where a bribe substitutes for a clearance and an inspection is waved through.

Building and fire-safety codes exist, but enforcement is weak and selective. Above all, accountability is missing: after the headlines fade, rarely is an official held responsible for the lapse that allowed the disaster, so the incentives to look away remain intact.

The counter-argument, that the sheer scale of unplanned urbanisation and limited resources make perfect enforcement impossible, is partly true but cannot become an excuse, since most of these deaths are preventable with basic compliance. The way forward is concrete: strengthen municipal capacity and finances, professionalise and empower fire services, enforce codes strictly and transparently, fix clear accountability for officials who certify or ignore violations, and attack the corruption that turns clearances into commodities.

Ethically, those who hold public power over safety hold it in trust, and a clearance signed without inspection is a betrayal of that trust.

CONCLUSION

A fire that known violations made inevitable is not an accident but a permission. Safe cities will be built not by mourning tragedies but by ending the impunity that allows them.

RELATED DAILY ARTICLES

12 Jun [Current Affairs Today, June 12, 2026](#)

12 Jun [World Day Against Child Labour 2026 and India's Legal...](#)

12 Jun [Assam and Nagaland Sign a Historic Oil-and-Gas Pact...](#)

11 Jun [Current Affairs Today, June 11, 2026](#)

← NEWER EDITORIAL

[Who Regulates the Regulators: On the Accountable Regulatory...](#)

OLDER EDITORIAL →

[The Glue of the Union: On Federalism as a Safeguard](#)



CURATED & WRITTEN BY

Bharat Choudhary

UPSC Educator & Content Creator

[linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)[Read Full Article on Ujiyari](#) →<https://ujiyari.com/editorials/2026/06/bs-urban-governance-fire-safety-accountability-2026/>

ALSO FROM THE CREATOR

BharatNotes

Free UPSC study platform — subject-wise notes across all 4 GS papers, Prelims MCQs, Mains answer frameworks, PYQ analysis & progress tracking. **100% Free • No Login Required.**

[Start Preparing](http://bharatnotes.com) → bharatnotes.com

📌 OPPORTUNITY

Advertise with Ujiyari

Reach **thousands of serious UPSC & State PCS aspirants** daily through our PDFs, website, and social channels.

Ideal for: Coaching institutes • EdTech platforms • Book publishers • Exam prep apps

[✉ epicbharat@gmail.com](mailto:epicbharat@gmail.com)

Write to us for rates & media kit

Free UPSC & State PCS Current Affairs · ujiyari.com · bharatnotes.com