Opening Roads in Military Cantonments

What is the issue?

\n\n

\n
- Government recently ordered the opening of all roads in military cantonments.
\n
- Families of Army officers and retired Army personnel are increasingly opposing this move.
\n

\n\n

What are military cantonments?

\n\n

\n
- Cantonments are designed as places of residence of both civilians and military personnel.
\n
- There are nearly 6o cantonments across the country.
\n
- Cantonment Boards are elected bodies.
\n
- They run schools, hospitals, and vocational training centres.
\n
- They cater to a civilian population of more than 21 lakh.
\n
- Moreover, cantonments are notified in the gazette and governed by an Act of Parliament.
\n
- Any change in the governance of cantonments needs an amendment to the Act by Parliament.
\n
- This includes barring civilians from using the roads within them.
\n

\n\n

What was the problem?

\n\n

\n
- Some cantonment roads are closed for the general public.
\n

\n\n

\n
- There were instances in which places of worship could not be reached due to closure of these routes.
\n
- Other incidents highlighted the cemetery becoming inaccessible due to these restrictions.
\n
- Some roads were closed by the local military authorities without following the existing procedure.
\n

\n\n

What is the government's decision?

\n\n

\n
- A government order for opening all roads in cantonments was issued.
\n
- Also, a procedure for closing any road was also formally given by the Defence Ministry.
\n
- It will be based on intelligence inputs and for security considerations.
\n
- The Ministry proposes to undertake a review of the state of roads in cantonments soon.
\n

\n\n

What are the concerns?

\n\n

\n
- The major objection to the opening of roads is related to the security of military installations.
\n
- Also, the families of Army personnel staying inside the cantonments.
\n
- There is also a fear that the land mafia might try to encroach on defence land

in the cantonments.
\n
- Retired officers complain that the decision was taken without consulting the Army.
\n
- The issue has suggested a deterioration of civil-military relations.
\n

\n\n

What is the government's response?

\n\n

\n
- The order was issued only after a litany of complaints to the Ministry.
\n
- The government argues that its orders do not affect the security posture.
\n
- This is because they do not deal with military stations but only with cantonments.
\n

\n\n

\n\n

Source: Indian Express

\n

