International Relations · GS - II

“Humanitarian confidence-building measures can sustain diplomatic engagement even when political negotiations fail to produce a comprehensive settlement.” Examine the significance of prisoner-of-war exchanges in contemporary armed conflicts.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 11/11/202	GS - II	International Relations

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Geneva Conventions, international humanitarian law, prisoner protection, humanitarian diplomacy, confidence-building measures, third-party mediation, ICRC, trust deficit, conflict resolution, civilian protection.

Model Answer

Introduction

Armed conflicts often create severe humanitarian consequences, while political negotiations may remain deadlocked. Prisoner-of-war exchanges provide an avenue for humanitarian cooperation despite continuing hostilities.

Significance of Prisoner Exchanges

- **Humanitarian protection:** Exchanges facilitate the return of detained combatants and uphold obligations under the Geneva Conventions.
- **Confidence-building:** Limited agreements can create communication channels between adversaries.
- **Diplomatic engagement:** Third-party mediation can facilitate negotiations where direct bilateral engagement is difficult.

- **International law:** Such arrangements reinforce respect for international humanitarian law and humane treatment of detainees.
- **Negotiating opportunities:** Humanitarian cooperation may help sustain dialogue on wider issues, although it does not guarantee political settlement.

Challenges

Mutual distrust, disputes over detainee lists, verification difficulties and the use of prisoners as bargaining instruments can delay exchanges.

Way Forward

Neutral monitoring, ICRC facilitation, transparent procedures and sustained diplomatic engagement are necessary to protect detainees.

Conclusion

Prisoner exchanges cannot independently resolve armed conflicts, but they preserve humanitarian principles and create limited opportunities for diplomatic engagement.

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