Polity & Governance · GS - II

Examine the constitutional distribution of powers governing India's foreign relations. How can the Union Government balance national diplomatic interests with the cultural and economic interests of States in cross-border engagements?

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 14/11/2026	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Union List, Article 246, Article 253, foreign affairs, federalism, MEA clearance, national security, cultural diplomacy, border States, cooperative federalism, diplomatic coordination.

Model Answer

Introduction

India's foreign policy is formulated and implemented primarily by the Union Government. However, States increasingly engage with foreign countries through trade, culture, tourism and people-to-people exchanges.

Constitutional Framework

- **Union List:** Foreign affairs and relations with foreign countries fall within Parliament's legislative domain under Article 246.
- **Article 253:** Parliament can legislate to implement international treaties and agreements, including on matters otherwise within the State List.
- **Executive responsibility:** The Union Government coordinates diplomatic relations and represents India internationally.

Balancing National and State Interests

States can promote cultural diplomacy, tourism, trade and regional cooperation, particularly in border areas. However, such engagements must remain consistent with national security and foreign-policy objectives.

Way Forward

The Union Government should establish transparent clearance procedures, consult affected State Governments and facilitate structured cultural and economic exchanges. Institutional coordination between the MEA and State authorities can strengthen cooperative federalism.

Conclusion

A coordinated approach can preserve India's unified diplomatic position while allowing States to contribute meaningfully to international engagement and regional development.

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