International Relations · GS - II

Cross-border connectivity projects between India and Nepal can transform geographical proximity into stronger economic and cultural integration. Examine their strategic significance and the challenges involved.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
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MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Open border, railway connectivity, religious tourism, people-to-people ties, bilateral trade, border management, ecological concerns, regional integration.

Model Answer

Introduction

India and Nepal share deep historical, cultural and economic ties. Cross-border railway connectivity can strengthen this relationship by improving mobility and regional integration.

Strategic and Economic Significance

Projects connecting Ayodhya and Janakpur Dham can promote religious tourism associated with the Ramayana circuit and strengthen people-to-people relations. Improved transport links can facilitate bilateral trade, employment, local entrepreneurship and access to markets. They also reinforce India's neighbourhood-first policy and regional connectivity objectives.

Key Challenges

Differences in railway infrastructure standards, customs procedures, financing and operational coordination can delay implementation. Security concerns, informal cross-border activities and environmental impacts require

careful management. Unequal economic benefits may also create local concerns.

Way Forward

India and Nepal should strengthen joint infrastructure planning, simplify border procedures, improve multimodal connectivity and ensure sustainable tourism management. Local communities should participate in project planning and benefit-sharing.

Conclusion

Cross-border railways can convert shared cultural heritage into practical cooperation, provided connectivity is supported by institutional coordination, inclusive development and mutual trust.

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