International Relations · GS - II

Examine how cross-border connectivity projects between India and Nepal can strengthen bilateral relations by promoting economic integration, religious tourism and people-to-people ties.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
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MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

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Answer Hint

Connectivity infrastructure, India–Nepal relations, religious tourism, cultural diplomacy, border-region development, economic integration, implementation challenges.

Model Answer

Introduction

India and Nepal share deep historical, cultural and geographical ties. Cross-border rail connectivity, such as the proposed Ayodhya–Janakpur service, can transform these traditional links into stronger economic and institutional partnerships.

Significance of Cross-Border Connectivity

1. **Religious and cultural diplomacy:** Connectivity between Ayodhya and Janakpur strengthens the Ramayana circuit and facilitates pilgrimage, cultural exchange and people-to-people contact.

2. **Economic integration:** Improved transport can promote trade, tourism-related employment, local enterprises and economic opportunities in border regions.

3. **Regional development:** Rail infrastructure improves accessibility for remote areas and supports investment in transport, hospitality and allied services.

4. **Strategic partnership:** Connectivity projects reinforce mutual interdependence and strengthen India's neighbourhood-first approach.

Challenges

- Delays in infrastructure development and coordination.
- Differences in technical, customs and regulatory procedures.
- Need for efficient passenger security and border management.
- Unequal distribution of economic benefits in border regions.

Way Forward

India and Nepal should ensure timely project implementation, coordinated customs procedures, affordable passenger services and integrated tourism planning. Local communities and businesses must be actively involved to make connectivity inclusive and sustainable.

Conclusion

Cross-border railways are more than transport infrastructure; they are instruments of economic cooperation and cultural diplomacy. Their effective utilisation can deepen India–Nepal relations and strengthen regional integration.

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