International Relations · GS - II

In the context of the proposed SCO Civilisations Dialogue Forum in New Delhi, examine the role of cultural diplomacy in sustaining regional cooperation amid strained bilateral relations.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 19/11/2026	GS - II	International Relations

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Cultural diplomacy, SCO framework, India-Pakistan relations, people-to-people contact, regional stability, diplomatic engagement, limitations of dialogue

Model Answer

Introduction

Cultural diplomacy uses shared heritage, civilisational links and people-to-people exchanges to build mutual understanding. The proposed SCO Civilisations Dialogue Forum in New Delhi, with Pakistan's participation, highlights its relevance amid strained bilateral relations.

Significance of Cultural Diplomacy

- **Maintaining communication:** Multilateral cultural platforms provide opportunities for engagement even when bilateral political dialogue remains limited.
- **Building mutual understanding:** Exchanges in literature, art, heritage and education can reduce stereotypes and strengthen social connections.
- **Regional cooperation:** Such initiatives reinforce the SCO's broader objectives of promoting trust, stability and cooperation among member states.
- **Diplomatic signalling:** Participation by officials can indicate willingness to maintain institutional engagement despite political differences.

Challenges and Limitations

- Persistent security concerns and political mistrust can restrict meaningful engagement.
- Cultural exchanges may remain symbolic without sustained institutional support.
- Political controversies can undermine the atmosphere required for constructive dialogue.

Way Forward

India should support issue-based engagement through multilateral institutions while maintaining its security interests. Academic exchanges, cultural festivals and professional interactions can strengthen regional understanding. However, cultural diplomacy must complement, not replace, substantive diplomatic negotiations.

Conclusion

Cultural diplomacy cannot independently resolve deep-rooted political disputes, but it can preserve channels of communication, build trust and create a more conducive environment for regional cooperation.

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