International Relations · GS - II

India and Nepal share deep historical, cultural and geographical ties, yet their bilateral relationship faces recurring challenges. Examine the opportunities and constraints in strengthening India–Nepal relations, with reference to the proposed high-level visit of Nepal's Prime Minister to India.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 20/11/2026	GS - II	International Relations

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Historical and cultural ties, open border, hydropower cooperation, trade and connectivity, neighbourhood-first policy, political sensitivities, border disputes, China factor, energy security, institutional dialogue.

Model Answer

Introduction

India and Nepal share a unique relationship shaped by geography, history, culture, economic interdependence and people-to-people ties. Nepal's Prime Minister Balendra Shah's proposed visit to India provides an opportunity to strengthen this partnership.

Opportunities for Cooperation

- **Energy partnership:** Nepal's hydropower potential can support India's clean-energy transition through electricity trade and cross-border transmission infrastructure.
- **Connectivity:** Railways, roads, integrated check posts and inland waterways can improve regional trade and mobility.
- **Economic cooperation:** Business engagement and investment can expand cooperation in tourism, agriculture, manufacturing and infrastructure.
- **Strategic partnership:** Stable relations strengthen India's neighbourhood-first policy and Himalayan regional security.
- **People-to-people ties:** The open border, educational exchanges and religious tourism provide a strong foundation for bilateral cooperation.

Key Constraints

- **Border disputes:** Differences concerning Kalapani, Lipulekh and Limpiyadhura periodically create diplomatic tensions.
- **Political sensitivities:** Perceptions of interference and unequal treatment can generate mistrust in Nepal.
- **External influence:** China's growing economic and infrastructure engagement in Nepal adds a strategic dimension to bilateral relations.
- **Implementation gaps:** Delays in completing connectivity and hydropower projects weaken public confidence.

Way Forward

Both countries should institutionalise regular dialogue, resolve boundary issues through diplomatic mechanisms, ensure timely project implementation and promote transparent, mutually beneficial economic cooperation.

Conclusion

India–Nepal relations must evolve from traditional ties towards a forward-looking partnership based on sovereign equality, mutual trust and shared prosperity. High-level engagement can provide fresh momentum to this relationship.