International Relations · GS - II

The normalisation of India–Pakistan relations requires sustained efforts to address both political differences and security concerns. Discuss the role of confidence-building measures in this context.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
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MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Simla Agreement, Lahore Declaration, cross-border terrorism, cultural diplomacy, people-to-people contacts, institutional dialogue, trust deficit, regional stability.

Model Answer

Introduction

India–Pakistan relations have remained constrained by unresolved disputes, cross-border terrorism and a persistent trust deficit. Confidence-building measures (CBMs) can facilitate communication, reduce misperceptions and create conditions for constructive engagement.

Role of Confidence-Building Measures

1. **Political dialogue:** Regular diplomatic engagement provides channels to address disagreements and prevent escalation.
2. **Security cooperation:** Communication mechanisms, military hotlines and agreed protocols can reduce the risk of unintended confrontation.

3. **Cultural diplomacy:** Exchanges in literature, cinema, sports and education can promote mutual understanding beyond official political relations.
4. **Economic engagement:** Trade and regional connectivity can create shared economic interests and strengthen incentives for stability.
5. **Institutional mechanisms:** Existing arrangements, including the Permanent Indus Commission, demonstrate the importance of structured bilateral engagement.

Limitations

CBMs cannot independently resolve territorial disputes or overcome fundamental security concerns. Terrorism, political mistrust, domestic pressures and interruptions in diplomatic engagement continue to constrain their effectiveness.

Way Forward

India's engagement should remain guided by its security interests and established bilateral commitments. Any sustainable dialogue requires credible action against terrorism, reciprocal confidence-building, institutional continuity and respect for sovereignty.

Conclusion

Confidence-building measures cannot substitute substantive political solutions, but they can create an enabling environment for peace. A stable bilateral relationship is also important for regional cooperation and South Asian development.

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