International Relations · GS - II

Development assistance, infrastructure connectivity and energy cooperation have become important instruments of India's neighbourhood diplomacy. Analyse their significance in strengthening India-Nepal relations, while highlighting the challenges in implementing cross-border projects.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
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MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Development partnership, post-disaster reconstruction, hydropower cooperation, railway connectivity, trade and transit, people-to-people ties, project implementation, local participation, strategic trust

Model Answer

Introduction

India and Nepal share deep historical, cultural and geographical ties. Their bilateral relationship increasingly incorporates development cooperation, infrastructure connectivity and energy partnerships. India's announced NPR 24,000-crore assistance package, as reported in the news, reflects the importance of reconstruction and long-term development in bilateral engagement.

Significance of Development Cooperation

1. **Post-disaster reconstruction:** Financial and technical assistance can support the restoration of infrastructure, housing and essential services in disaster-affected areas, while strengthening Nepal's resilience.

2. **Energy security:** Hydropower generation and cross-border electricity trade can help Nepal utilise its renewable energy potential and contribute to India's growing demand for cleaner electricity.

3. **Regional connectivity:** Railway, road and border infrastructure projects can reduce transportation costs, facilitate trade and improve Nepal's access to regional and international markets.

4. **Economic integration:** Improved connectivity can encourage investment, tourism, employment and cross-border business activities, creating shared economic opportunities.

5. **People-to-people relations:** Religious, cultural and educational exchanges strengthen societal links and complement formal diplomatic engagement.

Challenges in Implementation

1. **Execution delays:** Difficult terrain, land acquisition, financing constraints and administrative procedures can slow infrastructure projects.

2. **Environmental concerns:** Hydropower and transport projects require careful assessment of ecological impacts and disaster risks, particularly in the Himalayan region.

3. **Political sensitivities:** Changes in governments and perceptions regarding sovereignty can affect project continuity and public acceptance.

4. **Unequal benefits:** Development projects must ensure that local communities receive adequate economic and social benefits.

Way Forward

1. Establish transparent timelines, regular monitoring and effective coordination mechanisms.
2. Prioritise environmentally sustainable infrastructure and disaster-resilient construction.
3. Strengthen local consultation and equitable benefit-sharing.
4. Expand energy trade and multimodal connectivity through mutually agreed frameworks.

Conclusion

India-Nepal cooperation can transform geographical proximity into shared prosperity. Its long-term success will depend on timely implementation, mutual respect, environmental sustainability and sensitivity towards Nepal's development priorities.

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