International Relations · GS - II

Examine how cross-border infrastructure and multimodal connectivity can strengthen India's relations with Nepal. What institutional, geographical and environmental challenges need to be addressed for sustainable implementation of such projects?

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 23/11/2026	GS - II	International Relations

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Cross-border bridges, railway connectivity, trade facilitation, hydropower transmission, open border, Himalayan geography, disaster resilience, environmental safeguards, bilateral coordination

Model Answer

Introduction

India and Nepal share an extensive open border, deep socio-cultural ties and significant economic interdependence. Cross-border infrastructure, including bridges, railways, roads and electricity transmission networks, can convert this geographical proximity into stronger economic and strategic cooperation.

Significance of Connectivity

1. **Trade facilitation:** Improved roads, bridges and integrated check posts can reduce transportation costs, improve logistics and facilitate bilateral trade.

2. **Religious and cultural tourism:** Railway connectivity between Ayodhya and Janakpur can strengthen the Ramayana circuit, encourage pilgrimage and promote people-to-people exchanges.

3. **Energy cooperation:** Cross-border transmission lines enable electricity trade, support Nepal's hydropower exports and contribute to India's clean-energy transition.

4. **Regional integration:** Better transport networks can improve Nepal's access to Indian ports and wider regional markets, strengthening economic integration.

5. **Disaster management:** Cross-border infrastructure and institutional cooperation can facilitate emergency evacuation, relief supplies and coordinated responses to floods and earthquakes.

Major Challenges

1. **Geographical constraints:** The Himalayan terrain, river systems and difficult weather conditions increase construction costs and implementation time.

2. **Environmental vulnerability:** Unplanned infrastructure can cause deforestation, habitat fragmentation, erosion and greater disaster risks.

3. **Institutional coordination:** Differences in administrative procedures, technical standards, land acquisition and project approvals can delay implementation.

4. **Political and local concerns:** Sovereignty sensitivities, changing political priorities and inadequate community consultation may affect public acceptance.

Way Forward

1. Establish joint monitoring mechanisms with clearly defined project timelines.
2. Adopt climate-resilient engineering and rigorous environmental impact assessments.
3. Strengthen border management and customs coordination without undermining legitimate cross-border movement.

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4. Ensure local participation and equitable distribution of project benefits.

Conclusion

Connectivity is not merely a transport or infrastructure issue; it is an instrument of economic integration, regional stability and mutual trust. Sustainable India-Nepal cooperation requires projects that are timely, environmentally responsible and responsive to the priorities of both countries.

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