International Relations · GS - II

Examine the significance of India's participation in multilateral forums such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation amid strained bilateral relations with neighbouring countries.

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MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Multilateral diplomacy, SCO, regional cooperation, India-Pakistan tensions, confidence-building, strategic autonomy, cultural diplomacy, counterterrorism, connectivity, diplomatic engagement.

Model Answer

Introduction

Multilateral organisations provide platforms for dialogue and cooperation even when bilateral relations between member states remain strained. The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) offers India an important avenue for regional engagement.

Significance for India

India can use the SCO to strengthen regional security cooperation, counterterrorism efforts, economic connectivity and cultural exchanges. Its participation also enables engagement with Central Asian countries, China, Russia and Pakistan within a common institutional framework.

Challenges

Persistent geopolitical rivalries, cross-border terrorism, competing strategic interests and limited mutual trust constrain cooperation. Multilateral participation does not automatically resolve bilateral disputes, while political

disagreements can affect institutional effectiveness.

Way Forward

India should prioritise issue-based cooperation, constructive dialogue and regional economic engagement. Cultural exchanges and people-to-people contacts can support confidence-building, while security concerns must remain central to diplomatic discussions.

Conclusion

Multilateral diplomacy complements bilateral engagement by preserving communication channels and advancing shared interests. India should use platforms such as the SCO to pursue regional stability without compromising its national security priorities.

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