International Relations · GS - II

Assess the role of shared religious and cultural heritage in strengthening India-Nepal relations. How can cultural diplomacy complement economic and strategic cooperation between the two countries?

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

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Civilisational ties, Ramayana circuit, Buddhist heritage, Pashupatinath, Janakpur, religious tourism, people-to-people contacts, cultural diplomacy, regional connectivity

Model Answer

Introduction

India and Nepal share deep civilisational, religious and cultural connections rooted in Hinduism, Buddhism, historical interactions and cross-border communities. Symbolic exchanges such as the presentation of Gangajal, Rudraksh and Chandan reflect the continuing importance of these shared traditions in bilateral diplomacy.

Role of Cultural Heritage in Bilateral Relations

1. **Civilisational connections:** Sacred sites such as Pashupatinath, Janakpur, Ayodhya and Lumbini connect communities across national boundaries.

2. **People-to-people relations:** Religious pilgrimages, festivals, cultural exchanges and family ties strengthen social interaction and mutual understanding.

3. **Tourism and local economies:** Buddhist and Ramayana circuits can promote religious tourism, employment and economic opportunities in border regions.

4. **Diplomatic goodwill:** Cultural gestures create an atmosphere of trust and reinforce the historical foundation of bilateral engagement.

Complementing Economic and Strategic Cooperation

1. **Connectivity:** Improved railway, road and air links can facilitate pilgrimage, trade and tourism, including connections between Ayodhya and Janakpur.

2. **Economic cooperation:** Cultural tourism can support hospitality, transport, handicrafts and small businesses on both sides of the border.

3. **Regional diplomacy:** Shared Buddhist and Hindu heritage can provide platforms for wider regional cultural cooperation.

4. **Strategic trust:** Strong social and cultural relationships can help sustain dialogue during political disagreements and bilateral challenges.

Challenges and Way Forward

1. Political differences and border-related disputes should be addressed through institutional dialogue.
2. Heritage conservation and sustainable tourism require coordinated planning.
3. Cultural exchanges should remain inclusive and respect the diversity of both societies.
4. Joint promotion of pilgrimage circuits, educational exchanges and cultural festivals can deepen cooperation.

Conclusion

Shared heritage is an important foundation of India-Nepal relations, but it must be translated into sustained cooperation. Cultural diplomacy, supported by connectivity and economic engagement, can strengthen mutual trust and regional stability.

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