International Relations · GS - II

Examine how civilian honours and national awards can serve as instruments of public diplomacy and the projection of national values.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 25/11/2026	GS - II	International Relations

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Soft power, national identity, international recognition, public diplomacy, political symbolism, institutional credibility

Model Answer

Civilian honours are not merely instruments of domestic recognition; they can also communicate a country's national identity, priorities and international relationships.

Diplomatic significance

1. **Soft power projection:** Honouring foreign personalities can strengthen a country's cultural appeal and international goodwill.
2. **Recognition of shared contributions:** Awards to individuals from other countries may acknowledge contributions to peace, science, culture or bilateral relations.
3. **Diplomatic signalling:** The choice of recipients can indicate strategic partnerships, ideological affinities or areas of international cooperation.
4. **National identity:** Honours such as the Presidential Medal of Freedom communicate the values and achievements that a country chooses to celebrate.

Concerns surrounding political symbolism

1. **Partisan perceptions:** Awards involving politically influential individuals may generate debate over whether recognition reflects public service or political relationships.

2. **Institutional credibility:** Perceived inconsistency in selection criteria can weaken the moral authority of national honours.
3. **International interpretation:** The selection of controversial recipients may affect diplomatic perceptions, even when the award is primarily domestic.

Institutional safeguards

Transparent eligibility criteria, credible selection processes and recognition of demonstrable contributions can strengthen the legitimacy of civilian honours.

Ultimately, national awards can reinforce public diplomacy when their recipients and selection processes command broad credibility. Their influence depends not only on the prestige of the honour but also on the values and institutional integrity it represents.

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