International Relations · GS - II

Discuss the significance of cultural diplomacy and civilisational dialogue in strengthening India's engagement with the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 20/10/2026	GS - II	International Relations

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

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Answer Hint

Soft power, cultural exchange, people-to-people relations, regional cooperation, mutual understanding, shared heritage, strategic trust, cultural diversity.

Model Answer

Introduction

Cultural diplomacy uses heritage, language, arts and traditions to strengthen relations between countries. The proposed SCO Civilisation Dialogue Forum provides India with an opportunity to complement its security and economic engagement through cultural cooperation.

Significance

1. **Strengthening soft power:** India can showcase its diverse traditions, philosophical heritage, yoga, literature and artistic achievements.

2. **Building mutual understanding:** Cultural exchanges encourage dialogue among societies and can reduce stereotypes and mistrust.

3. **Promoting regional cooperation:** The SCO brings together countries with diverse histories and political systems. Civilisational dialogue can create additional avenues for cooperation beyond formal diplomacy.

4. **Enhancing people-to-people ties:** Academic exchanges, cultural festivals, tourism and youth programmes can build long-term relationships.

Challenges and Way Forward

Geopolitical tensions, competing historical narratives and cultural differences may constrain dialogue. India should promote inclusive participation, academic collaboration and respectful discussions while avoiding the politicisation of cultural heritage.

Conclusion

Cultural diplomacy cannot replace strategic negotiations, but it can complement them by building trust and strengthening regional relationships. India can use the forum to encourage constructive engagement across Eurasia.

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