Mains PYQs - GS-II (2026) (Q. 19, 20)

19. "India's global diaspora acts as a living bridge, as a critical economic factor and knowledge network in transforming cultural heritage into geopolitical influence and strategic leverage worldwide." Critically examine this statement. (15 marks, 250 words)

Direction: Intro----- Diaspora as a living bridge, economic factor and knowledge network + Critically examine-----Conclusion.

Introduction:

Start with the Indian diaspora with some statistics.

Main Body

Diaspora as a living bridge, economic factor and knowledge network

- Living bridge – Foster cultural integration via yoga, Ayurveda, Indian cuisine, classical dance, music and festivals, etc. and people-to-people connections.
- Maintain civilizational connection with Indian-origin communities in countries such as Mauritius, Fiji, Guyana, Suriname, etc.
- Economic force – India consistently ranks as the world's top recipient of remittances, securing over $100 billion annually, concentration of Indian-origin CEOs leading global tech titans, trade facilitation, even political domination, etc.
- Knowledge network – Facilitate technology transfer, Indian-origin legislators, professionals, strengthen public support for bilateral cooperation, etc.

Critical examination

- Limits/challenges – Divergent interests, host-country constraints like immigration rules, political pressure, etc., brain drain, limited policy influence and unequal benefits.
- Recent restrictions and uncertainty surrounding skilled-worker immigration in the United States illustrate how host-country policies can affect Indian professionals and technology-sector linkages.
- Thus, diaspora influence is an enabling asset, not a substitute for India's economic strength, diplomatic credibility or domestic policy performance.

Conclusion:

Give a balanced and positive conclusion.

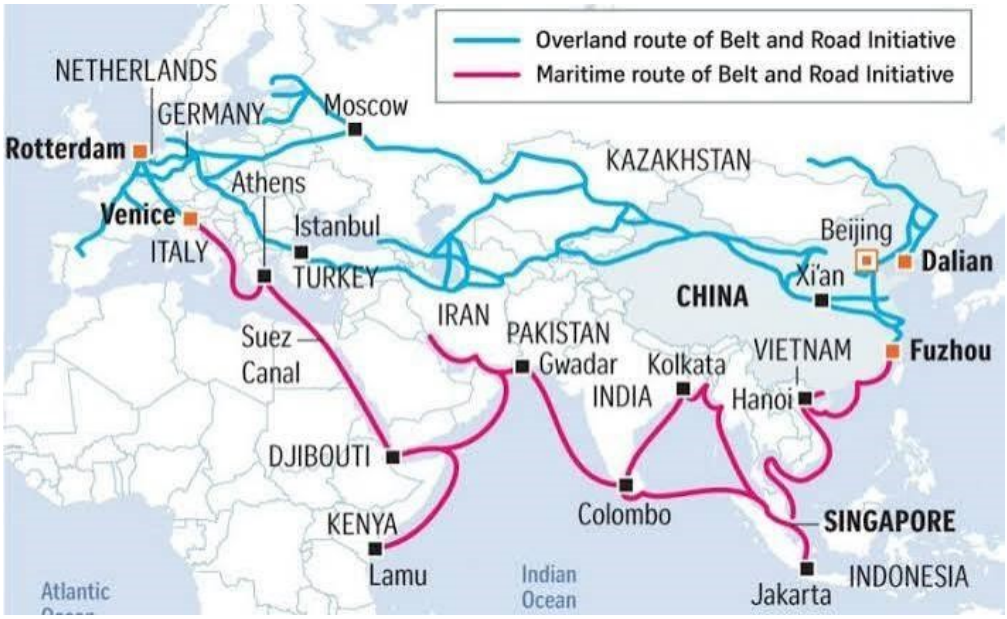
India's diaspora is a valuable instrument of soft power, economic resilience and knowledge diplomacy.

20. "China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has transformed South Asia from a regional space into a theatre of great power competition." Analyse the strategic implications of the BRI for India's security and regional influence in South Asia. (15 marks, 250 words)

Direction: Intro---- strategic implications for India's security and regional influence------ Conclusion.

Introduction:

Describe the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) (or) start with India's influence in South Asia.



Main Body

Strategic implication for India

Implication on Security

- Territorial Sovereignty – China-Pakistan Economic Corridor passes through PoK.
- Maritime Encirclement ("String of Pearls") – Key ports like Gwadar (Pakistan), Hambantota (Sri Lanka), and Kyaukpyu (Myanmar).
- Two-front security challenge – BRI-reinforced infrastructure and connectivity could increase pressure on India along its northern and western borders.

Implication on regional influence

- Erosion of traditional influence – China's finance offers neighbouring countries

alternative sources of investment, reducing India's relative economic leverage (chequebook diplomacy).
- Strategic competition in smaller states – Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and the Maldives can diversify partnerships.
- Economic and connectivity competition – Chinese-backed infrastructure may redirect trade and transport networks towards China, reducing India's centrality in regional connectivity.
- Debt and political risks – Concerns over debt sustainability, project viability and dependence on external finance can create long-term vulnerabilities for recipient countries.

India’s counter response

- Strengthen regional connectivity by alternate corridors
- Enhance maritime partnership with neighbours
- Promote multilateral cooperation by strengthening BIMSTEC, the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and subregional initiatives.

Conclusion:

Give a balanced and positive conclusion.

