Defence & Security · GS - III

Examine the significance of carrier-based fighter aircraft in strengthening India’s maritime security and power projection.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 22/10/2026	GS - III	Defence & Security

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Naval modernisation, aircraft carriers, maritime domain awareness, air defence, Indo-Pacific, India–France defence cooperation, Aatmanirbhar Bharat.

Model Answer

Introduction:

Carrier-based fighter aircraft extend a navy’s operational reach by providing air power far from its home bases. Their integration is important for protecting maritime interests.

Main Body:

Strategic Significance

1. Fleet protection: Fighters provide air defence against hostile aircraft and aerial threats.
2. Maritime strike: They can target hostile naval assets and support operations at sea.
3. Power projection: Carrier aviation enables India to respond to emerging contingencies across the Indian Ocean.
4. Strategic partnerships: The Rafale-M programme strengthens India–France defence cooperation.
5. Operational readiness: Commonality with the Indian Air Force’s Rafale fleet may support training and logistics efficiencies.

Challenges: High acquisition and maintenance costs, pilot training, carrier-deck constraints and dependence on foreign technology require attention. Indigenous aircraft development and domestic maintenance capabilities can help address these concerns.

Conclusion:

Rafale-M integration can strengthen India’s carrier-based combat capability. Its long-term effectiveness will depend on operational integration, sustained logistics support and greater domestic defence-industrial capacity.

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