International Relations · GS - II

Examine the significance of defence cooperation between the United States and ASEAN for peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific. What are the implications for India?

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 28/10/2026	GS - II	International Relations

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

ASEAN centrality; maritime domain awareness; joint exercises and interoperability; freedom of navigation; strategic competition; India’s Act East Policy and maritime partnerships

Model Answer

Introduction

The Indo-Pacific is strategically important because of its major shipping routes, economic networks and maritime security challenges. Defence cooperation between the United States and ASEAN can contribute to regional stability.

Significance of defence cooperation

Enhanced maritime domain awareness can improve information-sharing, identify suspicious maritime activity and strengthen responses to piracy, illegal fishing and other transnational threats. Joint training and operational coordination can build interoperability and improve disaster-response capabilities.

However, regional defence initiatives must remain consistent with international law and respect ASEAN's diverse strategic interests. Excessive militarisation or perceptions of bloc-based confrontation could intensify great-power competition.

Implications for India

India has a direct interest in secure sea lanes, freedom of navigation and a stable Indo-Pacific. Cooperation with ASEAN and the United States complements India's Act East Policy, Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative and maritime partnerships. India can contribute through naval exercises, capacity-building, information-sharing and humanitarian assistance.

Conclusion

Inclusive, transparent and rules-based defence cooperation can strengthen Indo-Pacific security. India should support ASEAN centrality while maintaining strategic autonomy and constructive engagement with regional partners.

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