

**NEXT IAS**

**DAILY EDITORIAL  
ANALYSIS**

**TOPIC**

---

**India's Defence Diplomacy**

---

[www.nextias.com](http://www.nextias.com)

## INDIA'S DEFENCE DIPLOMACY

### In News

India will send Defence Attachés (DA) to a number of its missions in Africa for the first time in a sign of expanding focus on military diplomacy.

#### Do you know ?

- The readjustment in the post of DA in multiple regions is part of India's evolving requirements that stretch from defence production and cooperation, to dealing with crisis situations that hinge on urgent mobilisation.
  - ◆ The crises in Gaza and Ukraine have both highlighted the need for finding a more effective management of the DA in East Europe and Eurasia and in the East African region that is crucial for guarding Indian interests in the Red Sea and the western Indian Ocean.

### About defence diplomacy

- The discipline of defence diplomacy picked up salience as an important component of foreign policy with most major militaries by the end of the Cold War.
- In conceptual terms, defence diplomacy has received considerable attention, at home and abroad. It seeks to increase stability and security, by changing attitudes and perceptions.

### Importance

- Defence diplomacy plays a powerful role in shaping the strategic environment.
  - ◆ Military engagement, defence dialogue, joint exercises, information exchanges, logistics and infrastructure sharing, arrangements augment defence capabilities.
- Defence diplomacy is an instrument for forging defence cooperation.
- It is an integral part of the country's overall diplomatic effort to secure its national interests, contribute to peace and stability in the neighbourhood, various regions of the world and globally.

### India's Approach

- India's defence cooperation is multifaceted and substantial.
  - ◆ India's defence diplomacy covers a wide range of activities including defence dialogues, military exchanges, training, capacity building, information sharing, HADR, staff level talks, defence industrial co-operation, arms trade, peacekeeping, trade fairs, skill development, etc.
- India is also gradually evolving as a **security provider** for many countries particularly in **South Asia**, Africa, Indian Ocean, South-East Asia etc.
- India's SAGAR, neighbourhood first, Act-East policy, doctrines include defence cooperation.
  - ◆ Besides the US, other countries also reached out to India for closer defence cooperation e.g. France, Israel, UK, Japan, Australia even as India's defence cooperation with Russia continued.
- India has helped Sri Lanka, Mauritius, Maldives, Bhutan, and Nepal in defence capacity building.
- It has a substantial presence in **UN Peacekeeping Forces**.
- The Indian Navy has been pursuing active collaboration with the leading navies of the world in the Indo-Pacific region.
  - ◆ **Malabar exercises** are an example
- A significant part of India's defence diplomacy is geared towards **enhancing maritime domain awareness** to curb illegal activities on the seas like illegal fighting, trafficking of drug and human, maritime pollution etc.
- India holds signature exercises like **MILAN regularly**.
- **India trains several hundred military officers** in its military academies and institutions from various countries every year.

### Concern and Challenges

- Instability in India's neighbourhood has had a direct impact on India's security.
- Pakistan and China remain critical for India's security
- China's military modernization in terms of anti-satellite tests, stealth fighters, carrier killer missiles and ICBMs have multiplied concerns for India.
- Emerging technologies like cyber, space, quantum, AI, ML etc have thrown up new security challenges.
- India faces the pressure of **illegal migrants, drug and human trafficking** and cross border terrorism

### Conclusion and Way Ahead

- Diversification of defence agreement has strengthened India's diplomatic options.
  - ◆ It has led to diversification of sources of defence equipment and technologies.
- India's defence industry is also growing. India is looking forward to becoming self-reliant in defence manufacturing and emerging as an exporter of defence cooperation play an important role in the endeavours.
- In conclusion, while India is unlikely to join any military alliances, it will continue to diversify its defence cooperation programme. This will play an important role in shaping the regional and global security environment.
- Defence diplomacy will also play an important role in strengthening defence manufacturing in India and also making India a net security provider.
- Emergence of India as a major defence manufacturer and exporters of equipment will have a global impact.

#### Daily Mains Practice Question

**[Q]** What are the key drivers of India's defence diplomacy? How defence diplomacy can help India achieve its geostrategic ambitions?

Source:TH