International Relations · GS - III

Examine the significance of the C-295 aircraft programme for India's defence indigenisation. What challenges must India address to establish itself as a major defence manufacturing hub?

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
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MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Make in India; defence indigenisation; public-private partnership; technology transfer; domestic supply chains; testing and certification; skilled workforce; export potential; strategic autonomy.

Model Answer

Introduction

India's C-295 transport aircraft programme, involving Airbus and Tata, represents a significant step towards expanding private-sector participation in military aviation and strengthening domestic defence manufacturing.

Significance

Defence Indigenisation: Domestic production can reduce dependence on imported platforms and support long-term maintenance and lifecycle management.

Industrial Development: The programme can create skilled employment, strengthen component suppliers and promote capabilities in precision engineering and aerospace manufacturing.

Strategic Autonomy: Greater domestic production capacity can improve supply-chain resilience and reduce vulnerabilities arising from international disruptions.

Challenges

The delay in the first domestically built aircraft's delivery highlights the importance of extensive testing, validation and certification. Other challenges include dependence on imported components, limited access to advanced technologies, high research costs, quality assurance and shortages of specialised skills.

Way Forward

India should strengthen research and development, expand domestic component manufacturing, improve testing infrastructure and develop skilled aerospace personnel. Predictable procurement policies, effective industry–academic collaboration and support for exports can enhance competitiveness.

Conclusion

The C-295 programme can become a foundation for India's aerospace ambitions. Its success will depend not merely on assembly, but on deeper technological capabilities, reliable delivery and a competitive domestic supply chain.

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