Defence & Security · GS - III

The rising cost of advanced military platforms poses significant challenges to defence modernisation and fiscal sustainability. Discuss in the context of naval shipbuilding programmes.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 22/11/2026	GS - III	Defence & Security

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Capital-intensive defence platforms, life-cycle costs, operational expenditure, fleet readiness, budgetary constraints, legislative oversight, indigenous shipbuilding, fiscal sustainability.

Model Answer

Introduction

Modern naval platforms require substantial investment in advanced technology, nuclear propulsion, weapons systems and specialised infrastructure. The reported cost concerns surrounding the proposed US Trump-class battleships highlight the financial challenges of ambitious naval modernisation.

Challenges

1. **High capital expenditure:** Expensive platforms can absorb a disproportionate share of defence budgets, limiting investment in other capabilities.
2. **Life-cycle costs:** Maintenance, upgrades, fuel, personnel and decommissioning add significantly to initial procurement costs.
3. **Operational readiness:** Extended deployments increase equipment wear and may delay essential maintenance.

4. **Opportunity costs:** Concentrating resources on large platforms can constrain spending on submarines, surveillance, drones and logistics.
5. **Fiscal pressures:** Rising project costs invite legislative scrutiny and may delay procurement schedules.

Way Forward

- Adopt rigorous life-cycle cost assessment before approving major acquisitions.
- Strengthen parliamentary oversight and transparent procurement.
- Prioritise operational requirements over prestige-driven acquisitions.
- Promote indigenous shipbuilding and domestic defence supply chains.
- Maintain balanced investment in platforms, maintenance and emerging technologies.

Conclusion

Naval modernisation must balance technological superiority with affordability and operational readiness. Sustainable defence planning requires prioritising capability, cost-effectiveness and long-term strategic needs.

BECOME IAS
AI POWERED UPSC PREP