International Relations · GS - II

Examine the strategic significance of the Horn of Africa for India and discuss how India can strengthen its engagement with Ethiopia amid regional tensions.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 13/10/2026	GS - II	International Relations

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Horn of Africa, India–Ethiopia Relations, Ethiopia–Somaliland Port Deal, Somalia's Sovereignty, Maritime Connectivity, Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Trade and Investment, Development Cooperation, Regional Stability, Diplomacy, Global South.

Model Answer

1. Introduction

The Horn of Africa is strategically located near the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, which are vital for global maritime trade. India and Ethiopia elevated their relations to a **Strategic Partnership in December 2025**, creating opportunities for deeper economic and diplomatic cooperation.

2. Ethiopia–Somaliland Port Deal: Why Is Somalia Angry?

- **Background:** In January 2024, Ethiopia signed a memorandum of understanding with Somaliland concerning access to the port of Berbera.
- **Somalia’s Objection:** Somalia considers Somaliland part of its sovereign territory and views the agreement as a violation of its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

- **Regional Implications:** The dispute may intensify regional rivalries and threaten stability around the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden.
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3. India–Ethiopia Trade and Strategic Interests

- **Trade:** India is one of Ethiopia's leading trading partners. Bilateral trade reached approximately **US$550 million in 2024–25**.
- **Investment:** Indian companies have invested in manufacturing, pharmaceuticals and other sectors.
- **Development Cooperation:** Agriculture, digital technology, education, capacity-building and infrastructure offer opportunities for deeper engagement.
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4. Way Forward

India should expand trade and investment, strengthen development cooperation and encourage peaceful dialogue among regional stakeholders. Engagement with the African Union can support regional stability while respecting sovereignty and territorial integrity.

5. Conclusion

India should adopt a balanced approach that combines economic diplomacy, strategic cooperation and respect for international norms to strengthen ties with Ethiopia and promote peace in the Horn of Africa.

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