International Relations · GS - II

India's engagement with ASEAN, the East Asia Summit and the QUAD reflects its multi-layered approach to the Indo-Pacific. Analyse how these platforms complement India's strategic, maritime and economic interests in the region.

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15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Act East Policy, ASEAN centrality, Indo-Pacific, maritime security, freedom of navigation, QUAD, East Asia Summit, AITIGA, defence exports, supply-chain resilience, strategic autonomy, regional connectivity.

Model Answer

Introduction

India's Indo-Pacific engagement combines economic integration, maritime cooperation and strategic partnerships. ASEAN, the East Asia Summit (EAS) and the QUAD provide complementary platforms for advancing these interests.

Contribution of Major Platforms

1. ASEAN: Economic and Regional Integration

- ASEAN is central to India's Act East Policy and Indo-Pacific vision.
- The review of the ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA) can improve market access and address trade imbalances.
- Connectivity and supply-chain cooperation strengthen regional economic integration.

2. East Asia Summit: Strategic Dialogue

- Provides a platform for India to engage major Indo-Pacific powers on regional security and economic issues.
- Supports an inclusive, rules-based regional order.

3. QUAD: Maritime and Strategic Cooperation

- Promotes maritime domain awareness, freedom of navigation and a rules-based Indo-Pacific.
- Cooperation in critical technologies, infrastructure and resilient supply chains strengthens regional security.

India's Strategic and Defence Interests

Bilateral engagement with the Philippines expands defence cooperation, including opportunities for BrahMos exports. It also strengthens India's maritime partnerships in the strategically important South China Sea region.

Challenges and Way Forward

India must address trade barriers, connectivity gaps, geopolitical tensions and differences among regional partners. It should strengthen ASEAN centrality, accelerate AITIGA negotiations and expand defence and maritime cooperation while maintaining strategic autonomy.

Conclusion

These platforms enable India to pursue economic integration and strategic stability simultaneously. Their effective coordination is essential for advancing a free, open, inclusive and rules-based Indo-Pacific.

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