International Relations · GS - II

The Manila summits reflect India's growing emphasis on minilateral and ASEAN-led multilateral cooperation in the Indo-Pacific. Examine how the Quad, ASEAN-India partnership and East Asia Summit complement one another in advancing India's regional interests.

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MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

ASEAN centrality, Act East Policy, Indo-Pacific vision, minilateralism, maritime domain awareness, disaster management, critical supply chains, digital connectivity, cyber security, strategic autonomy, regional stability.

Model Answer

Introduction

India's engagement with the Quad, ASEAN-India framework and East Asia Summit reflects a multi-layered approach to Indo-Pacific cooperation. These platforms address different but interconnected regional priorities.

Complementary Roles

1. **Quad – Strategic and Functional Cooperation:** India, the US, Japan and Australia cooperate on maritime domain awareness, cybersecurity, critical supply chains and emerging technologies. The Manila initiatives, including maritime surveillance collaboration, the 2027 exercise and cable resilience, strengthen practical cooperation without creating a formal military alliance.

2. **ASEAN-India – Regional Connectivity and Development:** The partnership supports India's Act East Policy through maritime cooperation, disaster management, Coast Guard coordination, critical minerals, tourism and people-to-people exchanges. Proposed free e-visas can further strengthen regional mobility.

3. **East Asia Summit – Inclusive Regional Dialogue:** As an ASEAN-led leaders' forum, it provides a wider platform for discussing international law, regional security, supply-chain resilience and transnational challenges such as cybercrime.

Significance for India

- **Maritime security:** Enhances cooperation across vital sea lanes and strengthens freedom of navigation.
- **Economic resilience:** Diversifies supply chains and improves connectivity.
- **Non-traditional security:** Promotes disaster response, cybersecurity and protection of critical infrastructure.
- **Strategic autonomy:** Allows India to cooperate with different partners without exclusive alignment with any power bloc.

Challenges

Geopolitical rivalries, divergent national interests, implementation gaps and limited institutional coordination can constrain outcomes.

Conclusion

These platforms are complementary rather than competing. Their coordinated functioning can strengthen India's regional influence while supporting an open, inclusive and rules-based Indo-Pacific with ASEAN centrality.