Current Affairs · GS - II

Examine the strategic significance of Japan’s growing engagement with Bangladesh and the Bay of Bengal region. How can India benefit from regional connectivity initiatives in this area?

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Answer Hint

Indo-Pacific, India–Japan strategic partnership, Bangladesh, Bay of Bengal, Northeast connectivity, Act East Policy, infrastructure development, trade facilitation, China’s regional influence, BIMSTEC, regional cooperation.

Model Answer

Introduction

The Bay of Bengal is an important strategic and economic region linking South Asia with Southeast Asia. Japan’s engagement with Bangladesh reflects its interest in regional connectivity, infrastructure development and a stable Indo-Pacific.

Main Body

Strategic Significance

1. Economic integration: Infrastructure investment can improve transport, trade and supply-chain connectivity across the region.

2. Regional stability: Stronger economic partnerships can support cooperation among South Asian and Southeast Asian countries.
3. Geopolitical balance: Japan's engagement provides regional countries with additional development and investment partnerships amid China's growing influence.

Benefits for India

1. Northeast connectivity: Improved transport links through Bangladesh can reduce logistical constraints for India's northeastern states.
2. Act East Policy: Better connectivity can strengthen India's engagement with Southeast Asian markets.
3. Trade and investment: Regional infrastructure can promote cross-border commerce and industrial development.
4. Strategic cooperation: Coordination with Japan and Bangladesh can support maritime security and regional development.

However, India must address infrastructure gaps, cross-border coordination challenges and environmental concerns.

Conclusion

Japan's regional engagement offers opportunities to deepen connectivity and economic cooperation in the Bay of Bengal. India can maximise these benefits through coordinated infrastructure planning, diplomatic engagement and sustainable regional partnerships.

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