7th ASEAN-India Ministerial Meeting

For Prelims: ASEAN, India's Act East Policy

For Mains: Groupings & Agreements Involving India and/or Affecting India's Interests

Why in News?

Recently, the **7th ASEAN-India Ministerial Meeting (AIMMAF)** on Agriculture and Forestry was held virtually.

What are the Highlights of the Meeting?

- **India's Vision of keeping ASEAN:**
  - India **reiterated its vision of keeping Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)** at the center of **India's Act East Policy**.
  - It also **emphasized mutually close regional cooperation with ASEAN to ensure sustainable** and inclusive growth for agricultural development in the region.
- **Steps towards Millets Production:**
  - Referring to the importance of millet (nutritional-cereals) as a nutritious food and the **international nutritional-cereal year 2023,** India **urged the ASEAN member countries to support the efforts of India in increasing the production,** processing, value addition and consumption of millets.
    - **India will promote nutritious cereal products for the health and nutrition** of the people.
    - Nutritious cereals help in the creation of nutrients with low resource requirements and more efficient agri-food systems.
- **Implementation of Various Programs:**
  - The progress in **implementation of various programs and activities under the** Medium Term Action Plan of ASEAN-India Cooperation **(Year 2021-2025)** was reviewed.
- **Cooperation in Agriculture:**
  - The **commitment to ASEAN-India cooperation in agriculture** and forestry was reaffirmed.
- **Covid-19 Pandemic:**
  - In order to **mitigate the unprecedented impact of the** Covid-19 pandemic by ensuring a seamless flow of safe and nutritious agricultural products to ASEAN and India, **it is necessary to take continuous measures under ASEAN-India cooperation** for the implementation of post-pandemic recovery.
  - India ensured the **commitment to enhance India's cooperation with ASEAN** in **food security**, nutrition, **climate change** adaptation, digital farming, nature-friendly agriculture, food processing, value chain, agricultural marketing and capacity building.

What is the Association of Southeast Asian Nations?

- **About:**

- It is a **regional grouping that promotes economic,** political, and security cooperation.
- It was **established in August 1967 in Bangkok,** Thailand with the signing of the ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration) by the founding fathers of ASEAN, namely Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.
- Its **chairmanship rotates annually,** based on the alphabetical order of the English names of Member States.
- ASEAN countries have a total population of 650 million people and a combined **Gross Domestic Product (GDP)** of USD 2.8 trillion.
- Commodity trade between India and ASEAN region has reached 98.39 billion in the period April 2021- February 2022.India's main trading ties are with Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam and Thailand.

- **Members:**
  - ASEAN brings together ten Southeast Asian states – Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam – into one organisation.

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Image: ASEAN

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. Consider the following countries: (2018)

1. Australia
2. Canada
3. China
4. India

5. Japan
6. USA

Which of the above are among the ‘free-trade partners’ of ASEAN?

(a) 1, 2, 4 and 5

(b) 3, 4, 5 and 6

(c) 1, 3, 4 and 5

(d) 2, 3, 4 and 6

Ans: (c)

Exp:

- Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has free trade agreements with six partners, namely the People’s Republic of China, Republic of Korea, Japan, India as well as Australia and New Zealand. Hence, 1, 3, 4 and 5 are correct.
- **Therefore, option (c) is the correct answer.**

Q. The term ‘Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership’ often appears in the news in the context of the affairs of a group of countries known as (2016)

(a) G20

(b) ASEAN

(c) SCO

(d) SAARC

Ans: (b)

Exp:

- Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) is a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between the ten member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the five countries (Australia, China, Japan, South Korea and New Zealand) with which ASEAN has existing FTAs.
- **Therefore, option (b) is the correct answer.**

Q. In the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation, an initiative of six countries, which of the following is/are not a participant/ participants? (2015)

1. Bangladesh
2. Cambodia
3. China
4. Myanmar
5. Thailand

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

(a) 1 only

(b) 2, 3 and 4

(c) 1 and 3

(d) 1, 2 and 5

Ans: (c)

Exp:

- The Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC) is an initiative by six countries – India and five ASEAN countries, namely, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam for cooperation in tourism, culture, education, as well as transport and communications. It was launched in 2000 in Vientiane, Lao PDR.
- Both the Ganga and the Mekong are civilizational rivers and the MGC initiative aims to facilitate closer contacts among the people inhabiting these two major river basins.
- The MGC is also indicative of the cultural and commercial linkages among the member countries of the MGC down the centuries.
- **Therefore, option (c) is the correct answer.**

Mains

Q. Evaluate the economic and strategic dimensions of India's Look East Policy in the context of the post-Cold War international scenario. (2016)

Source: PIB

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