



## 3rd ASEAN Digital Ministers Meeting

**For Prelims:** Artificial Intelligence, India-ASEAN Digital Work Plan 2023, ASEAN Declaration, Look East Policy, ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA), Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement, ASEAN India Friendship Year, ASEAN-India Green Fund.

**For Mains:** India-ASEAN Relations, Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement.

### Why in News?

The 3<sup>rd</sup> **ASEAN Digital Ministers (ADGMIN) meeting** was held recently .

- The theme of the meeting was "**Synergy Towards a Sustainable Digital Future**".

### What are the Major Highlights of the Meeting?

- The meeting focused on **enhancing the relationship between India and ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations)** in the area of **Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)**.
- India emphasised its reforms to promote fair competition, and **increase broadband and telecom connectivity**.
  - The **significance of digital transformation** was also highlighted as a means of creating an **inclusive and equitable society**, promoting sustainable development, and empowering citizens through digital means.
- **India-ASEAN Digital Work Plan 2023** was approved, which includes initiatives for **capacity building and knowledge sharing** in areas such as **Artificial Intelligence in Cybersecurity, IoT and AI in Next Generation Smart Cities**, and the **role of ICTs in implementing digital health and security**.

### What is ASEAN Grouping?

- **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.
- **Members:**

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# ASEAN GROUPING



## How is India's Relations with ASEAN?

### ▪ About:

- India and ASEAN have a long-standing and multi-faceted relationship that encompasses **political, economic, cultural, and security dimensions**.

### ▪ Evolution of Bilateral Relations:

- **India-ASEAN bilateral relationship** started evolving since India introduced '[Look East Policy](#)' in **1990s**.
  - This initiative was further transformed to '[Act East Policy](#)' in **2014** mainly to develop **economic and strategic relations** with the nations of Southeast Asian countries.
- In **1992**, India emerged as a **Sectoral Partner of ASEAN** followed by **Dialogue Partner** in **1996** and a **Summit-level Partner** in **2002**.
- In **2009**, The [ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement \(AITIGA\)](#) was signed and entered into force on **1 January 2010**.
  - **Also**, India has a [Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement \(CECA\)](#) with various countries of the ASEAN region (**Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand**) which has resulted in concessional trade and a rise in investments.
- In **2015**, India also set up a **separate Mission to ASEAN** and the [East Asia Summit in Jakarta](#) in **2015** to strengthen engagement with ASEAN countries.
- In **2022**, the [ASEAN India Friendship Year](#) was observed to commemorate the **30-year milestone of the establishment of dialogue relations** between ASEAN and India, leading to the elevation of their **Strategic Partnership to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP)**.

### ▪ Other Areas of Engagement:

#### ◦ Financial Assistance:

- **India offers financial support to ASEAN countries** through various channels such as the **ASEAN-India Cooperation Fund**, the **ASEAN-India Science and Technology Development Fund**, and the [ASEAN-India Green Fund](#).

◦ **Connectivity:**

- India has been implementing several connectivity initiatives, such as the [India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway](#) and the [Kaladan Multimodal Project](#).
- Additionally, India is working towards establishing a **Maritime Transportation Agreement with ASEAN** and has plans for a railway connection between **New Delhi, India and Hanoi, Vietnam**.

## UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

### **Prelims**

**Q1. 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)**

**Q2. 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)**

**Q3. 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)**

### **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**

PDF Refernece URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/printpdf/3rd-asean-digital-ministers-meeting>

