



PANEX-21

Why in News

Recently, a **Curtain Raiser Event** for PANEX-21 for the member nations of [Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation \(BIMSTEC\)](#) countries was held recently.

- The exercise is **planned to be conducted later this year (2021)**.

Key Points

▪ About:

- It is a **Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief exercise**.
- It will be participated by **subject matter experts and delegates** from India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand.
- A **Multi-Agency Exercise (MAE)** comprising a static display showcasing [Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief \(HDR\)](#) equipment employed by the Indian Armed Forces and various civil agencies will also take place.

▪ Aim:

- To **foster joint planning and build regional cooperation** for responding to [natural disasters](#).
 - **Natural disasters** are **sudden ecological disruptions or threats** that exceed the adjustment capacity of the affected community and require external assistance.
 - Natural disasters can be **broadly classified into categories** including geophysical such as [earthquakes](#) and [volcanic eruptions](#), hydrological such as [floods](#), meteorological such as hurricanes; climatological such as heat and cold waves and droughts; and biological such as epidemics.

▪ Importance of the Exercise:

- [Covid-19 pandemic](#) along with other natural disasters have **brought out new lessons** which involve a change in drills and procedures for carrying out disaster mitigation and management of disaster.
 - The exercise is **being conducted keeping in mind these changes** and the challenges after the pandemic.

BIMSTEC

- It is a **regional organization which** comprises **seven countries**.
- **Five** of these seven countries- India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bhutan and Bangladesh- are **from South Asia** while the remaining **two**, Thailand and Myanmar, are from **Southeast Asia**.
- The group remained dormant for many years till it was revived a few years ago as an alternative to the [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation \(SAARC\)](#), which despite having the potential, has not been able to move forward due to friction between India and Pakistan.
- With a focus on intra-regional cooperation, the BIMSTEC has also formed a platform with the

- SAARC** and the **Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)** member countries.
- **Secretariat:** Dhaka, Bangladesh.

BIMSTEC

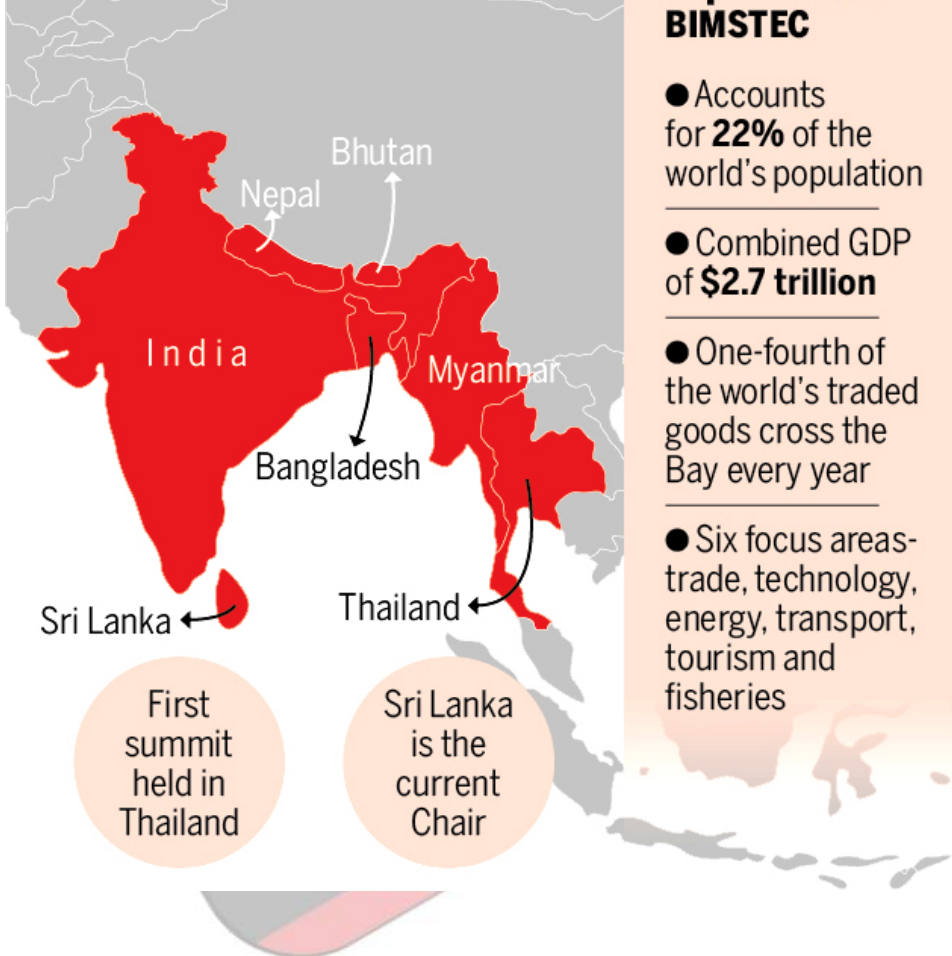
WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW



Stands for **The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation**

Founded in 1997 through **Bangkok Declaration**

7 MEMBER COUNTRIES



Importance of BIMSTEC

- Accounts for **22%** of the world's population
- Combined GDP of **\$2.7 trillion**
- One-fourth of the world's traded goods cross the Bay every year
- Six focus areas—trade, technology, energy, transport, tourism and fisheries

Source: PIB