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1. ASEAN-India Foreign Ministers' Meet (June 16, 2022)

India is hosting the special ASEAN-India Foreign Ministers' Meeting in New Delhi from June 16-17 to mark the 30th anniversary of the dialogue relations. It also marks the 10th anniversary of India's strategic partnership with ASEAN.

- The year 2022 has been designated as the ASEAN-India Friendship Year.
- This is the first time that India is hosting such a special meeting with ASEAN foreign ministers.
- External Affairs Minister, Dr. S. Jaishankar and Vivian Balakrishnan, Foreign Minister of the Republic of Singapore will co-chair the meeting.
- Myanmar's foreign minister is unlikely to attend the 24th ASEAN-India Ministerial Summit.
- Foreign Ministers of other ASEAN Member States and ASEAN Secretary General will participate in the meeting.
- The **theme** of the meeting - **Building Bridges in the Indo-Pacific.**
- **ASEAN-India dialogue**
 - It was initiated in 1992 with the establishment of the Regional Partnership, which evolved into a Full Dialogue in December 1995, a Summit-level Partnership in 2002, and a Strategic Partnership in 2012.
 - At present, the ASEAN-India Strategic Partnership stands on a strong foundation.
 - ASEAN is central to India's Act East Policy and the Comprehensive Indo-Pacific Strategy.
 - This multi-faceted partnership includes several regional dialogue mechanisms and working groups that meet regularly at various levels and include annual summits, ministerial and senior officials' meetings.
 - Ongoing India-ASEAN cooperation is guided by the 2021-2025 Action Plan that was adopted in 2020.
- **About ASEAN**
 - Association of Southeast Asian Nations or ASEAN is an international organisation formed in Bangkok, Thailand in 1967.
 - It promotes economic development, peace, security, social progress and cultural development in the Southeast Asian region.
 - ASEAN Secretariat - Indonesia, Jakarta.
 - General Secretary of ASEAN - Lim Jock Hoi, Brunei
 - Official Languages - Burmese, Filipino, Indonesian, Khmer, Lao, Malay, Mandarin, Tamil, Thai and Vietnamese
 - Working Language - English

- ASEAN Summit is the supreme policy making body of ASEAN.
- ASEAN is third largest market in the world
- It is the sixth largest economy in the world, third in Asia.
- ASEAN has Free-trade agreements (FTAs) with China, Japan, South Korea, India, Australia and New Zealand.
- **ASEAN Member Countries**
 - Indonesia
 - Malaysia
 - Philippines
 - Singapore
 - Thailand
 - Brunei
 - Vietnam
 - Laos
 - Myanmar
 - Cambodia

For more details please visit News of 13 May 2022

2. Indian Naval Ships Sahyadri, Kamorta on 3-day visit to Jakarta (June 16, 2022)

As part of deployment to South East Asia, Indian Naval Ships INS Sahyadri and Kamorta are on a three-day visit to Jakarta.

- During the visit, Indian Navy personnel will participate in interactions with the Indonesian Navy (TNI-AL) towards further enhancing interoperability and mutual cooperation.
- In addition, a number of social and informal exchanges are also planned with an aim to strengthen ties and mutual understanding between the navies.
- The visit of INS ships seeks to enhance maritime cooperation and strengthen India's friendship with Indonesia which will contribute towards security and stability in the region.
- **INS Sahyadri**
 - It is the Shivalik-class advanced, guided-missile frigate warship.
 - It is built by the Mazagon Dock Limited, Mumbai.

- It was launched in 2005.
- It was commissioned along with INS Shivalik (F-47), INS Satpura (F-48) into the Indian Navy on July 21st, 2012.
- It is 468 feet in length and 55 feet in breadth.
- It has a displacement capacity of 6,800 tons.
- It has a massive surface speed of 32 knots.
- **INS Kamorta**
- INS Kamorta is first of the four ASW Stealth Corvettes.
- It was designed by the Navy's in-house organisation, the Directorate of Naval Design (DND), under Project 28.
- With a length of 110 m, width of 14 m and a displacing capacity of 3500 tonnes, it can achieve a speed of 25 knots.
- It is suited with anti-submarine rockets and torpedoes, medium and close-in weapon systems and indigenous surveillance radar Revathi.
- It was commissioned on 23 Aug 2014.

3. Cabinet approves MoA for setting up BIMSTEC tech transfer centre in Colombo (June 15, 2022)

The Union Cabinet has approved a memorandum of association (MoA) by India for the establishment of BIMSTEC Technology Transfer Centre in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

- The MoA was signed by the BIMSTEC member countries at the 5th BIMSTEC Summit held at Colombo, Sri Lanka on 30th March, 2022.
- **Objective of Technology Transfer Centre**
- To strengthen coordination, facilitation and cooperation in technology transfer among BIMSTEC member states.
- Promoting the transfer of technologies, sharing of experiences and capacity building.
- **Priority areas**
- Biotechnology, Nanotechnology, Information and Communication Technology, Space technology applications, Agricultural technology, Food processing technology.
- Pharmaceutical technology automation, New and renewable energy technology automation, New and Renewable energy technology, Oceanography.
- Nuclear Technology Applications, E-waste and solid waste management technology, Health Technologies, Technologies pertinent to Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation.
- **Expected outcomes**

1. Databank of technologies available in BIMSTEC Countries
2. A repository of information on best practices in the areas of technology transfer management, standards, accreditation, metrology etc.
3. Capacity building, sharing of experiences and best practices in development
4. Transfer and use of technologies among BIMSTEC countries

• About BIMSTEC

- It was set up as Bangladesh, India Sri Lanka and Thailand Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) on 6 June 1997 at Bangkok, Thailand.
- It was renamed as Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation on 31 July 2004 when the first summit meeting was held in Bangkok, Thailand.
- The member countries are Bangladesh, Bhutan India, Maldives ,Myanmar ,Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand.
- The group was formed to promote economic cooperation between the member countries.
- Headquarters : Dhaka, Bangladesh

Please follow news of 29 march 2022 for more information**4. Iran starts transfer of Russian goods to India by using new trade corridor (June 15, 2022)**

Iran started its first transfer of Russian goods to India, using a new trade corridor that transits the Islamic Republic.

- The cargo will pass through the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC).
- The cargo ship left St. Petersburg for the Caspian Sea port city of Astrakhan.
- It will reach the northern Iranian port of Anjali and then by road to the southern port of Bandar Abbas on the Persian Gulf.
- From Bandar Abbas it will reach India by ship at Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT).

• International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)

- It is a multi-modal transport established by Iran, Russia and India on 12 September 2000 in St Petersburg.
- It is a 7,200 kilometre long multi-mode network of shipping, rail and road transport for freight.
- India, Iran, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Russia, Central Asia and Europe are involved in the corridor.

- Its main purpose is to promote transportation cooperation among the Member States.
- It connects the Indian Ocean to the Caspian Sea via the Persian Gulf to Russia and northern Europe.
- **Significance of INSTC**
- It aims to reduce the cost of movement of goods between India and Russia by about 30 percent and reduce transit time by more than half.
- It will provide an alternative connectivity initiative to countries in the Eurasian region.
- It has the potential to transform countries' economies into specialized manufacturing, logistics and transit hubs.
- It opens a sustainable alternative route for India to trade with Afghanistan and Central Asia.

5. Four holy relics of Lord Buddha from Kapilvastu placed at Gandan Monastery in Mongolia (June 15, 2022)

Four sacred relics of Lord Buddha were kept at the Gandan Monastery in Mongolia from Kapilvastu, India, to mark the Mongolian Buddha Purnima celebrated on June 14.

- Four sacred Kapilavastu relics brought from India by a delegation led by Union Law and Justice Minister Kiren Rijiju, and other relics from Mongolia will be displayed at Gandan for Buddhist devotees to visit till June 24.
- Four holy relics from India were brought to Mongolia on 13 June.
- A 25-member delegation led by Law and Justice Minister Kiren Rijiju has arrived in Mongolia with the holy relics.
- The main Buddha statue at Gandan Monastery was gifted to the people of Mongolia by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2015 and was installed in 2018.
- The Kapilvastu relic is one of the 22 special relics housed in the National Museum of the Ministry of Culture.
- **What are the holy relics?**
- According to Buddhist belief, Buddha attained salvation at the age of 80 in Kushinagar (Uttar Pradesh).
- The Mallas of Kushinagar performed his last rites as a universal king.
- The relics from the funeral pyre were collected and divided into eight shares.
- It was distributed among the Licchavis of Vaishali, Sakyas of Kapilavastu, Ajathasatrus of Magadha, Mallas of Kushinagar, Mallas of Pava, Bullies of Allakappa, Koliyas of Ramagrama and a Brahmana of Vethadipa.
- Its purpose was to build stupas over the sacred relics.

- The stupas over the bodily remains of Buddha (Sarrika Stupa) are the oldest surviving sacred places of Buddhism.
- Ashoka (272-232 BCE), an ardent follower of Buddhism, is believed to have built seven stupas.
- **Kapilvastu Relics**
- The discovery of an inscribed coffin at the stupa site at Piprahwa (near Siddharthnagar in Uttar Pradesh) helped identify ancient Kapilavastu.
- The inscription on top of the coffin mentions the relics of the Buddha and his community, the Shakyas.
- Records from the Union Ministry of Culture show that this discovery was followed by several explorations.
- The excavation of the stupa by the Archaeological Survey of India in 1971-77 led to the discovery of two other relic coffins containing 22 sacred bone remains, which are now under the supervision of the National Museum.
- This was followed by the discovery of more than 40 terracotta ceilings which establish that Piprahwa was the ancient city of Kapilvastu.

6. 38th India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol in Andaman Sea and Straits of Malacca (June 14, 2022)

The 38th India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol (IND-INDO CORPAT) is being conducted from June 13 to 24 2022 in the Andaman Sea and Straits of Malacca.

• About India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol

- It is the first post pandemic Coordinated Patrol (CORPAT) between the two countries.
- The navies of both the countries have been operating CORPAT along their International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) since 2002.
- This has helped in building understanding and interoperability between the two navies.
- It has facilitated measures to prevent and suppress illegal fishing, drug trafficking, maritime terrorism, armed robbery and piracy etc.
- India and Indonesia have enjoyed particularly close ties, which include a broad spectrum of activities and interactions that have strengthened over the years.
- This CORPAT contributes to the strong ties between the two countries in the Andaman Sea and the Straits of Malacca.

• Aim of India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol

- Keeping the Indian Ocean Region safe for commercial shipping, international trade and conduct of legitimate maritime activities.

• Other Exercises between India and Indonesia

- **Garuda Shakti** - A joint military exercise
- **Samudra Shakti** - A bilateral maritime exercise

7. Russia overtakes Saudi Arabia to become India's second largest oil supplier (June 14, 2022)

Russia has overtaken Saudi Arabia to become India's second largest oil supplier after Iraq.

- Indian refiners bought about 25 million barrels of Russian oil in May, which is more than 16% of all Russian oil imports.
- India is the world's third largest oil importer and consumer.
- Iraq remained India's top oil supplier in May and Saudi Arabia is now the third largest supplier.
- India has taken advantage of concessional prices to increase oil imports from Russia at a time when global energy prices are rising.
- After the US and China, India is the world's third largest oil consumer, importing more than 85% of its oil.
- **Largest Oil Producer countries in the world**

1. United States
2. Russia
3. Saudi Arabia
4. Canada
5. Iraq
6. China
7. United Arab Emirates
8. Brazil
9. Kuwait
10. Iran

8. Turkey's Erdogan warns Greece to demilitarise Aegean islands (June 10, 2022)

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on June 9 warned Greece to demilitarise islands in the Aegean Sea.

- Turkey says Greece is increasing its military presence on the Aegean islands in violation of treaties.
- Turkey argues that the islands were ceded to Greece on the condition that they remain demilitarized.
- **What is the dispute?**
- Greece and Turkey are allies of NATO, but the two countries have a history of disputes on many issues.
- Some of the issues are mineral exploration in the eastern Mediterranean and rival claims in the Aegean Sea.
- Greece says Turkey deliberately misinterpreted the treaties.
- Turkey argues that this sea should be divided equally.
- **About Aegean Sea**
- It is located between Anatolia and the Balkan Peninsula and spans Turkey and Greece.
- Nine of the 12 administrative regions of Greece are bordered by the sea.
- It has a surface area of about 215,000 km².
- Its maximum length is about 700 km and width is 400 km.
- The Aegean is divided into the Myrtoian Sea and the Thracian Sea.
- It is a major cause of dispute between Turkey and Greece, affecting relations between the two countries since the 1970s.

9. Thailand Becomes the First Asian Country to Legalize Marijuana (June 10, 2022)

Thailand has become the first country in Asia to legalize the cultivation, sale and use of Marijuana.

- Uruguay and Canada are, so far, the only two countries that have legalized recreational marijuana on a national basis.
- Thailand's government has warned that those who smoke in public will be sentenced to 3 months in prison and a fine of 25,000 baht (\$780).
- **What is Marijuana?**
- Marijuana also called weed, is a greenish-grey mixture of the dried flowers of Cannabis sativa.
- The main psychoactive (mind-altering) chemical in marijuana, responsible for most of the intoxicating effects, is delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC).

- The chemical is found in resin produced by the leaves and buds primarily of the cannabis plant.
- More than 500 other chemicals are also found in the plant, including more than 100 compounds that are chemically related to THC.
- It is used for smoking, drinking, within food, or as an extract.
- **Some benefits of Marijuana**
- It works as a healer and has found mention in the Ayurveda.
- It can be used to treat a number of diseases like multiple sclerosis, arthritis, epilepsy, insomnia, HIV/AIDS treatment, cancer.
- It is a super-industrial carbon negative raw material.
- It is being used to make bio-fuel, bio-plastics and even construction material in certain countries.
- By legalizing and taxing marijuana, the government can generate huge amounts of revenue.
- It has the potential to become a cash crop for poor marginal farmers.
- Its consumption was never regarded as a more socially deviant behaviour than drinking.
- Its consumption was never regarded as a more socially deviant behavior than drinking alcohol.

10. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh hands over 12 High Speed Guard Boats to Vietnam (June 9, 2022)

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh handed over 12 high speed guard boats to Vietnam during his visit to Hong Ha Shipyard in Hai Phong on June 9, 2022.

- The boats have been built under the Defence Line of Credit of US\$ 100 million from the Government of India for Vietnam.
- The initial five boats were built in India at Larsen & Toubro (L&T) Shipyard and the other seven at Hong Ha Shipyard.
- The speed boat will be operated by the Vietnamese Border Guard Force.
- This project is a vivid example of India's 'Make in India - Make for the World' mission.
- The Defence Minister said, India would be very happy if close friends like Vietnam bring about a transformation in its defence industry through increased defence industry cooperation.
- Rajnath Singh is on a three-day visit to Vietnam.

Note - for more information please click the link