

2. Development in India's Northeast Region

Prelims Syllabus: Governance- Policies

Mains Syllabus: GS-II Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.



Why in News?

- The region comprising India's eight north-eastern States is undergoing dramatic change.

Dramatic changes witnessed by the region:

- It has overcome several (but not all) security challenges and is now heading toward economic development.
- Political changes and the extensive web of linkages with neighbouring Bangladesh.
- Japan has emerged as a significant development partner for both India (particularly in the NE region) and Bangladesh.

Opportunity:

- Bringing the troika of Bangladesh, India and Japan closer for producing path-breaking changes in the northeast.

Vision:

- The long-term vision is for Bangladesh and the northeast to become a hub and key industrial corridor of this region, serving a population of 220 million.

Efforts made to realise this vision:

- The third India-Japan Intellectual Dialogue hosted by the Asian Confluence (ASCON), in Agartala, Tripura, assessed the evolving thinking of experts and policymakers.

- The Matarbari Deep Sea Port (DSP) on the southeastern coast of Bangladesh is being constructed with Japanese assistance.
- To be operational in 2027, the port will have to cater to the needs of Bangladesh and India's northeast and one of the most important projects representing the troika.

The competitive advantage of the NE region:

- Blessed with vast natural resources.
- Its strategic location, sharing borders with Nepal, Bhutan, China, Bangladesh and Myanmar, is an asset.
- The population, with its good education, already excels in the services sector drawing potential investor attention.

What are the challenges?

- Japan as a single investor in the northeast is unworkable.
- Restrictions on the flow of investments from Bangladesh.
- Little attention seems to be paid to the BIMSTEC. This must change to progress towards the vision of establishing the Bay of Bengal Community (BOBC).

Way Forward:

- A joint focus on comprehensive connectivity and accelerating industrialisation in Bangladesh and the NE is accompanied by job opportunities.
- The creation of regional industrial value chains in the sectors where the NE enjoys competitive advantage (agro-processing, man-made fibres, handicrafts, etc) will ensure that the new connectivity links will be fully utilised and productive.
- Expanding policy convergence and taking people along.
- The goal should be to connect a large part of South Asia with Southeast Asia.
- Also, India can assist Bangladesh in becoming an integral part of the Act East Policy.