



## Mains Practice Question

**Q.** What are the key milestones in the 75-year diplomatic relationship between India and Thailand. Discuss how can both nations leverage this relationship to enhance their strategic partnership in the future. (250 Words)

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### Approach

- Start your answer with a brief introduction about India Thailand relation.
- Discuss Key milestones achieved so far.
- Discuss the measures to further deepen ties.
- Conclude accordingly.

### Introduction

- India and Thailand share a long-standing relationship that dates back over 2,000 years. In 2022, the two nations celebrated the completion of 75 years of diplomatic relations.
- India and Thailand have deepened their engagement in several areas, including trade, defense, culture, and people-to-people ties.
  - This milestone provides an opportunity to reflect on the achievements of this relationship and explore ways to deepen cooperation in the future.

### Body

- **Key Milestones:** India's 'Act East' policy has been complemented by Thailand's 'Act West' policy in bringing the two countries closer.
- In recent years, both nations have taken steps to enhance their strategic partnership.
- **Bilateral Institutional Mechanisms:**
  - **Joint Commission Meeting (JCM)** The 8th round of JCM was held in India in 2019 in New Delhi. The JCM was co-chaired by foreign ministers of both countries.
  - **Foreign Office Consultations (FOCs):** The 5th India-Thailand Foreign Office Consultations were held in Bangkok in 2019.
  - **Joint Task Force (JTF):** 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of JTF on Maritime Cooperation Between India and Thailand was held in 2021 in virtual mode.
- **Multilateral Cooperation:** Both countries cooperate closely in the ASEAN, East Asia Summit (EAS) and Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multisectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) groupings as also in Mekong Ganga Cooperation (MGC), Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD), Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and Ayeyarwady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS).
- **Defense Cooperation:** In 2016, India and Thailand signed a memorandum of understanding to enhance defense cooperation, which includes joint military exercises and intelligence-sharing.
  - Exercise Maitree, Ex-Cobra Gold are some examples.
- **Economic & Commercial Partnership:**
  - **Bilateral Trade:** The bilateral trade and investment reached US\$ 9.76 billion in 2020 despite the pandemic situation.
  - **Connectivity:** India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway, which aims to connect Moreh in

India with Mae Sot in Thailand via Myanmar.

- India-Myanmar-Thailand railway line, Mekong Ganga Cooperation (MGC) etc. which would further enhance connectivity and trade between the countries.

- **Cultural Cooperation:** An Indian Cultural Centre was opened in Bangkok (the Swami Vivekananda Culture Centre).
- **Cooperation in the field of Education:** Currently there are five India Studies Centers in Thailand at Chulalongkorn University, Silpakorn University, Mahidol University, Thammasat University and Chiang Mai University.

### Measures to enhance ties:

- To leverage this relationship and enhance their strategic partnership in the future, India and Thailand can take several measures.
  - Both nations can deepen their engagement in areas such as trade, tourism, and culture.
    - India can continue to promote its "Act East" policy, which focuses on enhancing economic and strategic ties with Southeast Asia.
    - India can also seek to enhance its presence in the region by investing in infrastructure development, such as the development of ports and roads.
- India and Thailand can enhance their defense cooperation by sharing best practices and technology.
  - India can share its expertise in areas such as defense production and counter-terrorism with Thailand.
  - Both nations can also engage in more joint military exercises and intelligence sharing to enhance interoperability and combat readiness.
- India and Thailand can work together to promote regional stability and address key strategic issues, such as the South China Sea dispute.
  - India can use its diplomatic influence to promote a peaceful resolution to the dispute, while also engaging with regional actors to promote regional stability.

### Conclusion

- In conclusion, the 75-year diplomatic relationship between India and Thailand has been marked by several key milestones.
- Both nations have taken steps to enhance their strategic partnership in recent years, and there is significant potential for deeper engagement in the future.
  - By leveraging this relationship and enhancing their cooperation, India and Thailand can promote regional stability and contribute to the prosperity of the region.