

DIPLOMACY & BEYOND PLUS

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ASEAN-INDIA

Celebrating 30 Years of Partnership



Community of Values
30th Anniversary Celebrations of
ASEAN-India diplomatic relations



MESSAGE

I am very happy to share with you that the ASEAN-India Friendship Year 2022 has been celebrated with full vigour and enthusiasm. The publication gives the highlights of the activities. This year witnessed the intensification of people-to-people contact through Artists' Camp, Music Festival, Start-up Festival, Grassroots Innovation Forum, ASEAN-India Network of Universities etc.

This year also witnessed increased interaction at the leadership level. Apart from the regular meetings, we also have had Special ASEAN-India Foreign Ministers Meeting held in New Delhi, the XII edition of Delhi Dialogue coincided with the same; ASEAN Inter Parliamentary Assembly delegation visited India in August this year after a gap of 10 years; for the first time, India also had ASEAN-India Defence Ministers' Meeting.

As the informed readers know, India established relations with the ASEAN in 1992. In the last three decades the world has changed substantially. 30 years down the lane, the ASEAN has become heart of the Indo-Pacific from the perspective of the global community. No other region probably is as much discussed, constructively, as Indo-Pacific these days. While in the geo-political sense it has got traction in the last couple of years, India has added advantage of its historical linkages, in the ancient, medieval and modern history. This is reflected in monuments & traditions and values & people in the region.

In order to cope with the realities of the time, steps have been taken by India under the visionary leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi. India made a qualitative shift from the Look East to Act East Policy and subsequently announced and synergized its Indo-Pacific initiative with that of ASEAN's Outlook, it has also been done in harmony with other regional initiatives such as Security and Growth for All in the Region, popularly known as SAGAR.

The relationship matured in stages – it went from sectoral dialogue partnership to full dialogue; then Summit level partnership becoming Strategic and in November 2022, ASEAN and India became Comprehensive Strategic Partners. India's External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar has described ASEAN, "the one which always stood tall as a beacon of regionalism, multilateralism and globalization".

Time and again, the Indian leadership has reiterated its support to the ASEAN centrality in the emerging regional architecture. While India has been expressing itself through the policy pronouncements, on the ground that is getting reflected in our increased interaction with the region. A few facts and figures can illustrate how ASEAN remains the center of focus for India both at the level of government and people. Our trade for the last financial year (April '21 to March '22) has crossed USD 110 billion. Cumulative FDI into India from ASEAN since 2000 has been USD 132 billion, which is 22 per cent of India's total inbound investment. Similarly India's investment into ASEAN since 2000 has been 21 per cent of India's total outbound investment. Around 18 per cent of India's outbound tourists visited beautiful ASEAN countries in 2019. India has a 15 per cent strong Indian Diaspora in this region, who acts as a natural bridge between us. We get 8 per cent of inbound tourists from ASEAN and we hope that this shall only increase.

India and ASEAN have been working together in maintaining and promoting peace, stability, maritime safety and security, freedom of navigation and overflight in the region, other lawful uses of the seas and unimpeded lawful maritime commerce and strive to ensure open, transparent, inclusive and rules-based regional architecture through existing ASEAN-led frameworks and mechanisms such as East Asia Summit, the ASEAN Regional Forum, ADMM plus. India is fully involved in these processes.

I take this opportunity to thank Diplomacy and Beyond Plus Magazine team for bringing out this beautiful and substantial issue on the ASEAN-India Friendship Year.

H.E. MR. JAYANT N. KHOBRADE
Ambassador of India to ASEAN

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Publisher's Note



Dear Readers,

It is with immense pleasure that I present this special edition on ASEAN-India Celebrating 30 Years of Partnership. Apart from sharing a relationship with the ASEAN countries that is not only historical but also resilient, the countries share commonalities. ASEAN-India has always looked to work together towards developing an economic and social bond.

I would like to give a special thanks to the Indian Mission to ASEAN, Jakarta for providing us the opportunity to bring out this special edition on this landmark occasion. We are also deeply obliged to the Hon. Ambassador of India to ASEAN, Jakarta, H.E. Mr. Jayant N. Khobragade, for his insightful message to the publication.

India established relations with the ASEAN in 1992. During the 19th ASEAN-India Summit held in November 2022, this relationship upgraded to Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. This special edition looks into an extensive understanding of the ASEAN relations with India in various sectors such as trade, economy, maritime, science and technology, and many more. The publication also highlights the events celebrated for the ASEAN- India Friendship Year, 2022.

On behalf of our entire team, I would like to convey my sincere gratitude to all the esteemed contributors for their valuable inputs to the Diplomacy and Beyond Plus Edition, dedicated to ASEAN-India.

Surya Prakash
Publisher

CONTENTS

3

Message from H.E. Mr. Jayant N. Khobragade, Ambassador of India to ASEAN



8

ASEAN-India : Bilateral Ties



13

Message from H.E. Ina Hagniningtyas Krisnamurthi, Ambassador of Indonesia to India



14

Interview : H.E. Usana Berananda, Director-General of the Department of ASEAN Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Thailand



16

ASEAN-India : Economic Relations



20

ASEAN-India Friendship Year -2022



28

ASEAN & India's Act East Policy

31

19th ASEAN-India & 17th East Asia Summit in Cambodia, 2022

34

ASEAN-India
Maritime Cooperation

37

ASEAN-India : Science and
Technology Cooperation



41

Unity in Diversity
ASEAN Countries at a Glance

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ASEAN–India

Bilateral Ties

The initial points of engagement between ASEAN and India in the early 1990s were based on common civilizational ties and the need for collaborations between developing countries that have common issues.

As times have matured, these issues have found various means for collaboration, particularly through the five-year plan of action (POA), which provides a framework for the ASEAN–India relationship.

– Dr. Shrabana Barua –

It has been 30 years since India began to engage with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as a Sectoral Dialogue Partner (SDP). In 1995, at the Fifth ASEAN Summit, the relationship was converted to a full-dialogue partnership. By 2012, as the relationship reached its 20th year, it was further elevated to a "strategic partnership." During the 19th ASEAN–India Summit held in Cambodia, November 2022, ASEAN and India upgraded their relationship to Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP).

Steady and Structured Progression

India's relationship with ASEAN has been steady and progressive. As noted, the evolution from a SDP in 1992 to a CSP in 2022 can be read as an expected outcome of India transitioning from Look East Policy (LEP) to Act East Policy (AEP). At the same time, the ASEAN–India relationship is hinged on structural and multi-pronged mechanisms. The summit level, the level of the foreign ministers, and the level of senior officials are the three engagement formats that form the tip of the relationship. The ASEAN–India Summit meetings take place twice



a year, in August and November (with exceptions made during COVID times). The ASEAN-India Foreign Ministers' Meeting (AIFMM), also referred to as the ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference (PMC), backs the summit meeting. This is further backed by the ASEAN-India Senior Official Meeting (AISOM), the 24th edition of which was held in June 2022 in Delhi. And, all of these begin at the ambassador's level, through the Joint Cooperation Committee Meeting (AIJCC), which was held in March this year.

India engages with ASEAN through other institutions and forums that are ASEAN-led. This includes the East Asia Summit (EAS), the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the ASEAN Defence Minister's Meeting Plus (ADMM Plus), and the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF). The EAS, for instance, is a leader-led group comprising 18 states that was set up in 2005. Over time, it has evolved to become an important part of the regional architecture that seeks "cooperation on political, security, and economic issues of common regional concern." Additionally, there are also other mechanisms for coordination between ASEAN and India. The sectoral dialogue mechanism works by focusing on specific issues ranging from trade, energy, education, connectivity, space, technology, etc. A Track 1.5 mechanism is also visible through the Delhi Dialogue that India hosts annually. The 12th edition of it took place in June this year. All of this

structured progress adds strength to the ASEAN-India relationship.

Convergences on ASEAN Centrality

2022 is being celebrated as the ASEAN-India Friendship Year. The thirty-year relationship is particularly valuable in the context of geopolitics shifting from the Trans-Atlantic to the Indo-Pacific and ASEAN's role within it. The Indian and Pacific Oceans began to be seen not just as contiguous areas but as integrated ones, especially as the maritime domain gained attention and while new initiatives were being taken, the role of ASEAN became important for India.

The ASEAN Charter went into effect in 2008, providing a new legal framework for Southeast Asian states located in the heart of the Indo-Pacific. The idea of ASEAN centrality in the regional architecture, an idea initially pushed by Indonesia, is considered a central aspect of India's Act East Policy. To be noted is the fact that varying ideas about the Indo-Pacific exist. India announced the idea of the Indo-Pacific Ocean Initiative (IPOI) in 2019, identifying seven aspects for maritime cooperation. IPOI is still evolving, but it has been in line with the ASEAN vision for the Indo-Pacific, i.e., the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific, indicating scope for greater cooperation between the two.



There are many points of convergence that India finds in AOIP. In terms of principles, even as India pushes for reformed multilateralism, starting with those at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), New Delhi continues to advocate international laws set up by the UN Charter and advocate for peace, security, and stability in the Indo-Pacific. The AOIP, too, reaffirms ASEAN centrality while promoting international law set by the UN Charter, of mutual respect, non-interference, and many other principles, as well as those established by the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation for Southeast Asia (TAC). In terms of issue areas, AOIP prioritizes maritime cooperation, connectivity, UN Sustainable Development Goal 2030, South-South cooperation in areas of economy, etc., most of which are goals for India's AEP. ASEAN and India have both supported common goals and envision an Indo-Pacific that is aimed at creating a win-win environment. It is this that led ASEAN-India to celebrate the 25th anniversary of SDP in 2017 around the theme "Shared Value, Common Destiny."

Issue-based Engagement

The initial points of engagement between ASEAN and India in the early 1990s were based on common civilizational ties and the need for collaborations between developing countries that have common issues. As times have matured, these issues have found various means for collaboration, particularly through the five-year plan of action (POA), which provides a framework for the ASEAN-India relationship. The POA 2021-25 outlines the mechanisms of cooperation in four broad fields. First is political cooperation, which covers issues of security, maritime, transnational crimes, and counterterrorism. Second is economic cooperation, including trade and investment, finance, energy, food, agriculture and forestry, tourism, information and communication technology, science, technology, and innovation. The third is socio-cultural, covering disaster management and emergency response, environment, climate change, biodiversity, public health, education, youth, culture, and people-to-people (P2P). Fourth is cross-pillar cooperation, comprising



connectivity, smart cities, sustainable development, and ASEAN institutional strengthening.

In the economic context, the ASEAN-India Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation (CECA) was signed in 2003, which provided a mandate for a free trade agreement (FTA). As a consequence, an ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA, implemented since 2010), an ASEAN-India Trade in Services Agreement (AITISA, ratified in 2018), and an Agreement on Investment (signed in 2014) were formulated, making for the ASEAN-India Free Trade Area (AIFTA). At present, efforts are being made to review AITIGA to "make it more user-friendly, simple, and trade-facilitative." There is also the ASEAN-India Business Council (AIBC) mechanism, set up in 2003, that allows interaction between private players within the region. Similarly, given that energy is a crucial area for seeking cooperation, the ASEAN-India High-Level Conference on Renewable Energy took place in February 2022.

In the socio-cultural context, the ASEAN-India Network of Think Tanks (AINTT)

became a way for P2P cooperation and is worthy of replication in other forums. Within the same category, the exchange of parliamentarians, the media exchange programme, and student exchange are other examples.

Recently, the ASEAN-India Network of Universities (AINU) was officially launched on August 29, 2022 in Jakarta by the Secretary-General of ASEAN, Dato Lim Jock Hoi, and the Indian Minister of State for External Affairs and Education, Dr. Rajkumar Ranjan Singh. AINU is aimed at twinning universities in India and ASEAN under common areas of interest through Faculty Exchange Programmes. The network looks to contribute to the ASEAN Workplan on Education (2021–2025), as well as the various cross-sectoral initiatives including the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025, the ASEAN Declaration on Human Resource Development for Changing World of Work, and the ASEAN Digitalization Masterplan 2025.

One more important aspect of cooperation that has gained traction in recent times is in the connectivity sector. The Master Plan for ASEAN



Connectivity (MPAC) 2010 was upgraded to MPAC 2025, which encompasses connectivity in the physical, P2P, institutional, and various other areas. The Special ASEAN-India Foreign Ministers' Meeting was held in New Delhi, India, on 16 June 2022. The meeting was co-chaired by H.E. Dr. Vivian Balakrishnan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Singapore, and H.E. Dr. S. Jaishankar, Minister of External Affairs of India. During the meeting it was reiterated that efforts will be made to synergize aspects of MPAC 2025 with the connectivity plan under India's AEP, in line with the "Connecting the Connectivities" approach. In this context, the importance of completing and expanding the India - Myanmar - Thailand Trilateral Highway into Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam was emphasized, as well as support for the ASEAN Smart Cities Network and other related discussions.

Conclusion

Among many multilateral forums, ASEAN's position stands strong in Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific. It can be concluded that the ASEAN-India friendship is strengthening and finding increasing convergences amidst many common challenges, including during the COVID crisis. India became one of the founding members of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF), announced in May 2022, where seven states of ASEAN also joined. With both ASEAN and India growing in importance with the rise of the Indo-Pacific, there is an increasing scope for cooperation.



ASEAN-India ties, anchored in history and nurtured by common ethos, have withstood the test of time and indeed, grown stronger with each passing decade. ASEAN has always stood tall as a beacon of regionalism, multilateralism and globalization. It has successfully carved out a niche for itself in the region and provided the foundation for the evolving strategic and economic architecture in the Indo-Pacific. The strong convergence of the AOIP and the IPOI is a testimony to our shared vision for the region. As we enter the fourth decade of our relationship, a better connected India and ASEAN would be well positioned to promote decentralized globalization and resilient and reliable supply chains that is so needed by the international community.

H.E. Dr. S. Jaishankar, Minister of External Affairs, India

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Dr. Shrabana Barua is a Research Fellow at Indian Council of World Affairs, India



MESSAGE

On 13 November 2022, Indonesia received the handover of Chairmanship of ASEAN from Cambodia. Just a day before, on 12 November 2022, ASEAN and India have upgraded their cooperation to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP), the highest-tier of relationship between ASEAN and its dialogue partners.

This truly shows the importance of India to ASEAN as a partner and, more importantly, as a neighbor.

The great importance of India can also be seen from the fact that the Declaration of ASEAN – India CSP is not merely on the economic front, but it also highlights the civilizational linkages, maritime connectivity, and cross-cultural exchanges between ASEAN and India.

2023 is indeed an important year for both Indonesia and India to start the process of realizing the ASEAN-India CSP. In 2023, during India's G20 presidency, Indonesia is in the Troika of G20, and at the same time, Indonesia is also the Chair of ASEAN. Both circumstances are advantageous for Indonesia and India to engage in the discussions for deepening ASEAN-India ties.

As the theme of Indonesia's ASEAN Chairmanship 2023 is "ASEAN Matters: Epicentrum of Growth". Indonesia will strive to further engage with ASEAN's dialogue partners, importantly India, to carry out concrete activities in the framework of the ASEAN Outlook of Indo Pacific. Indonesia is also launching a flagship event of Indo-Pacific Infrastructure Forum. Indonesia wishes to enhance the potential of this platform to discuss collaborative projects by focusing on areas of mutual interest.

As the Comprehensive Strategic Partner of ASEAN, we believe India will lend its continuous support for Indonesia's ASEAN Chairmanship throughout the year 2023.

H.E. Ina Hagniningtyas Krisnamurthi
Ambassador of Indonesia to India



In Conversation with H.E. Usana Berananda, Director-General of the Department of ASEAN Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Thailand

1. ASEAN and India are celebrating their 30th Anniversary of dialogue this year. How has this relationship strengthened with time and what are the future objectives to uphold this relation?

The ASEAN-India relations were established as a sectoral dialogue partnership in 1992, and grew into a full dialogue partnership in 1995. It elevated recently to a comprehensive strategic partnership in November, 2022, which reflects close cooperation as well as represents the unique status and strategic importance of India in this region.

In terms of political and security cooperation, India was among the first Dialogue Partners that acceded to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) while also actively participating in the ASEAN-led mechanisms, including the East Asia Summit (EAS) and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). Several conferences and workshops have been jointly hosted with a particular focus on maritime cooperation.

On the economic front, there is the ASEAN-India Free Trade Area (AIFTA), which includes FTAs in goods, services, and investments. We have witnessed upward trends in two-way trade as well as increasing FDI. Both sides also agree to review the ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA) to make it more user-friendly, simple, and trade facilitative.

In the case of socio-cultural cooperation, both ASEAN and India have worked together to enhance people-to-people contact and academic exchanges through various programmes such as the 1,000 doctoral fellowships for ASEAN students. Close cooperation on traditional medicine and R&D in vaccines and medicine will also be important and served as a strong basis for our future cooperation.

I believe that the Special ASEAN-India Foreign Ministers' Meeting, together with the annual ASEAN-India Senior Officials' Meeting and the Delhi Dialogue, convened in New Delhi is a natural opportunity for us to not only take stock and reflect on our past but to lay a solid groundwork for our future cooperation and mutual benefits.

2. What necessary steps are being taken to strengthen ASEAN and its member countries' people-to-people linkages?

ASEAN and India have close cultural and historical ties, and education is one of the fields that can help promote our people-to-people contact. For example, under ASEAN-India framework, scholarships are offered to all ASEAN member states at Nalanda University and ASEAN-India Network on Universities are among the ways to show up our close ties and efforts to enhance people-to-people linkages.

Another field is India's contribution to narrowing the development gaps in the region. With India's expertise in the field of digital transformation and technology, cooperation in these areas, including through the IT Training Centre in CLMV, would help equip the ASEAN workforce and contribute to the development of digital manpower in the region.

Lastly, I think the role of media representatives will be important for raising awareness and equipping information regarding what India has done and can offer to ASEAN. This would be very useful in enhancing the ASEAN-India Dialogue Relations.

3. India hosted the Special ASEAN-India Foreign Ministers' Meeting in June. Can you shed some light on the outcome of this meeting?

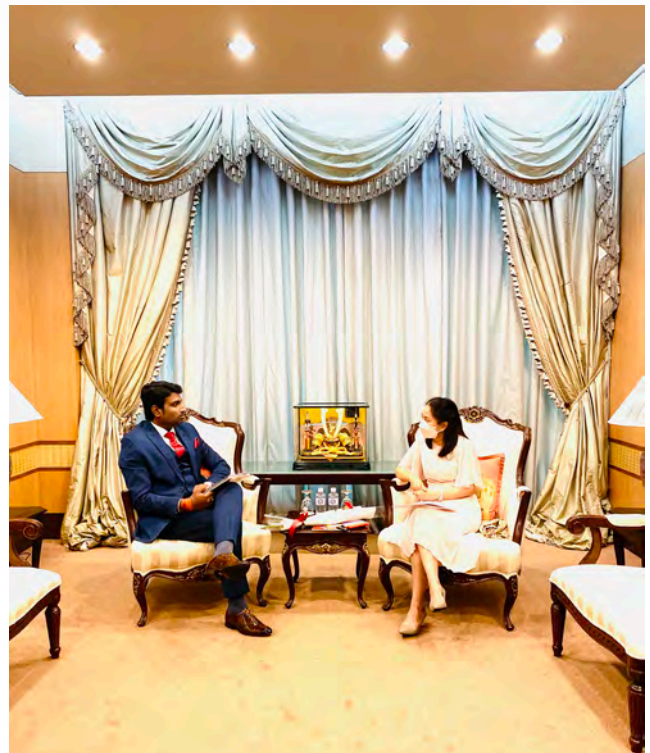
The Special ASEAN-India Foreign Ministers' Meeting was held from 15-17 June 2022, along with the 24th ASEAN-India Senior Officials' Meeting and the 12th Delhi Dialogue. The main objective was to commemorate the 30th Anniversary of ASEAN-India relations and celebrate the ASEAN-India Friendship Year. It was an opportunity to review the implementation of the ASEAN-India Plan of Action, as well as prepare for the upcoming ASEAN-India Ministerial Meeting and Summit.

I think the key message that ASEAN sent during the meetings is that we wish to see India's constructive engagement that contributes to peace, prosperity, and stability in the region. Taking into account the current geo-political uncertainties and a lot of flashpoints in various parts of the world, ASEAN wants to enhance cooperation with India based on the core principle of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP), which is very much in line with India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI).

And I am of the view that synergy of cooperation between the AOIP and IPOI will serve as the basis for our future growth, particularly in the areas that would help unlock the full economic potentials such as trade and investment, digitalisation, regional connectivity, STI, and tourism, as well as sustainable development and climate action through cooperation in clean energy and health security.

4. Can you elaborate on how ASEAN has been further enhancing regional connectivity including strengthening regional linkages to build resilience and enhance COVID-19 recovery efforts with the ASEAN member countries and India?

Regional integration will be key for our post-COVID-19 recovery, and connectivity is key to regional integration. In



terms of physical connectivity, ASEAN and India have pushed forward the early completion and operationalisation of the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway project and its eastward extension, as well as enhanced port connectivity. These connectivities, once completed, will bring ample opportunities for the development of the economic corridor between ASEAN and India, along with the countries of South Asia.

In the case of digital connectivity, both ASEAN and India have become key enablers for the future growth of the region as ASEAN's digital economy grew by 49% in 2021 and has the potential to reach USD 1 trillion in 2030. India is also famous for its expertise in digital technology, especially in the field of artificial intelligence, which is among the areas in which we could work together and share best practices.

5. Would you like to share any message with the avid readers of Diplomacy and Beyond Plus?

With more than 2 billion people, ASEAN and India are in a position to be powerhouses for future growth and prosperity in the region. As we have established the CSP, which will add further areas of cooperation, we can leverage our strengths, geographical proximity, and millennia-old civilisational and cultural ties to strengthen interactions between peoples, including the valuable readers of Diplomacy and Beyond Plus. It is in fact "people diplomacy"—just like this interview—that forms the strong foundation and serves as a stepping stone for our efforts toward a peaceful and resilient future.



ASEAN-INDIA ECONOMIC RELATIONS

Recently the 19th ASEAN-India Economic Affairs Ministers' Meeting 2022 was held in Cambodia. The meeting discussed trade & economic relations between ASEAN and India, and endorsed the Scope of Review of ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA) which will pave the way for initiating the review negotiations to align the Agreement with contemporary trade practices, customs procedures & regulatory harmonization. The meeting was co-chaired by Smt. Anupriya Patel, Union Minister of State for Commerce and Industry, India with H.E. Pan Sorasak, Minister of Commerce, Kingdom of Cambodia.

-Dr. Aradhana Talwar-

The Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and India share robust historical relations dating back to the time of the former's independence. ASEAN countries include Indonesia, Singapore, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, Thailand, Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, and Vietnam. During the 1950s, India started expanding its influence in the South-East Asian region by consolidating and strengthening bilateral relations with the members of ASEAN.

The period of the early 1990s witnessed significant economic and political shifts at the international level that led to India reorienting its foreign policy priorities.

On the other hand, ASEAN countries realized India's importance as an emerging regional power and the South Asian country's role in the grouping's economic and political future. India's relationship with ASEAN has been a key priority of the former's foreign policy paradigms.

In the larger domain of ASEAN-India relations, the economic and trade dimensions play a crucial role in bringing about growth and stability in this part of the Asian continent. Over the years, due to India's increasing foreign exchange reserves and prudently managed economy, the South Asian country has attracted the attention of the ASEAN countries for its robust macroeconomic fundamentals. Moreover, the ASEAN nations have realized that India's unparalleled economic success story provides ample opportunities for the South-East Asian economies to link up with the former's economic resurgence.

On the other hand, Indian policymakers have often opined that India's parameters of security concerns extend beyond its immediate neighbourhood and consider the ASEAN countries as its near-eastern neighbours. Importantly, the shared interests between ASEAN and India in terms of growing recognition of economic integration at the pan-Asian level and emphasis on regional peace and security have led to robust economic and trade relations. This was proven by the dynamic and action-oriented "Act East Policy" at the 9th East Asia Summit and the 12th ASEAN-India Summit in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar, in November 2014 by the Indian PM, Narendra Modi. The "Act East Policy" underlines the potential of the economic relations between the ASEAN countries and India, which can be turned into a strategic partnership. In other words, over the past few years, India's successfully developed services sector and the ASEAN countries' increasing growth in manufacturing has only necessitated the integration of the South Asian and South-East Asian economies. As a result, in 2015, India set up a separate mission to ASEAN and the East Asia Summit in Jakarta to strengthen engagement with the ASEAN countries.

ASEAN and India are home to rapidly growing markets, and address infrastructure challenges at the core of their respective policies. Further, the ASEAN countries and India have investment requirements due to the expansion of their industrial sectors and domestic consumption trends in each other's markets, which have offered space for diversifying trade in goods and services as well as private sector engagement. The growing economic and trade relations in terms of the movement of goods, services, and capital have been mutually beneficial, thereby leading to the signing of the trade treaty, that is, the ASEAN-India Free Trade Agreement (AIFTA) in 2009. The agreement has boosted the volume of trade between ASEAN and India over the years.

Specifically, to strengthen the economic and trade relations between ASEAN and India, three main institutional mechanisms are used for engagement. The first institutional mechanism is the ASEAN Economic Ministers-India Consultations (AEM+India), which is one of the main sectoral body engagements and witnesses the participation of Commerce Ministers. The main agenda of discussions in recent times at meetings has been the review of the ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA).

During the 2nd Summit meeting in 2003, the ASEAN-India Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation was finalized as the second institutional mechanism that provided the "mandate" for the creation of an ASEAN-India Free Trade Area. Consequently, an ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA) was signed in 2009 and came into force on January 1, 2010. Further, the ASEAN-India Agreement for Trade in Services (AITISA) was signed in 2014 and ratified by all members in 2018. In 2014, the provisions of the ASEAN-India Free Trade Area also led to the signing of an Investment Agreement that has been finalized and ratified by all parties.



The third important institutional mechanism is the ASEAN-India Business Council (AIBC), which was established in Kuala Lumpur in 2003 to strengthen comprehensive economic cooperation between the ASEAN countries and India. Surprisingly, it also serves as a private-sector mechanism for providing governments in member countries with feedback on their respective policies and suggestions for strengthening ASEAN-India economic relations. The meetings of AIBC also provide a platform to bring together key private sector players from ASEAN and India to establish business networks and share ideas and innovations. In addition to the above-mentioned economic institutional mechanisms, India has also established three funds to further the ties: the ASEAN-India Cooperation Fund (AIF), the ASEAN-India Green Fund (AIGF), and the ASEAN-India Science and Technology Development Fund (AISTDF).

The trade in commodities between India and the ASEAN region reached USD 110.39 billion in the previous fiscal year, with exports to ASEAN worth

USD 42.327 billion and imports from ASEAN worth USD 68.07 billion.

It is observed that ASEAN and India's economic and trade relations have progressed over the years, and efforts are being made to further the ties. Moreover, at present, the crucial role played by India in regional and international groupings has made this South Asian country a reliable economic partner for the ASEAN nations. The strengthening of strategic ties between the two regions certainly has a positive impact on economic and trade relations. A synergetic approach will further the already growing economic and trade relations between the ASEAN nations and India.

Importantly, ASEAN and India's advanced cooperation in areas such as climate change, energy, health, investments in Make in India, and technology, among others, takes advantage of the strengthening of ties to push for greater economic and trade relations.

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ASEAN-INDIA **FRIENDSHIP YEAR 2022**

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF PARTNERSHIP

ASEAN and India have shared long, close historical and civilizational linkages. This year marks an important milestone in the partnership, commemorating the 30th anniversary of ASEAN-India relations. The year 2022 has been declared and celebrated as the ASEAN-India Friendship Year and a series of events were planned and organized to celebrate the occasion throughout the year by the Indian Mission to ASEAN in Jakarta.



A Curtain-Raiser Event: The Celebration of the ASEAN-India Friendship Year

To mark the beginning of the Celebration of ASEAN-India Friendship Year 2022, a curtain-raiser event was hosted by the Indian Mission to ASEAN in Jakarta on 04 March 2022. The Honorable Secretary

General of ASEAN, H.E. Mr. Dato Lim Jock Hoi, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest and stated that “India and ASEAN are natural partners.”

The event was attended by all ASEAN Member States’ Permanent Representatives to ASEAN. Deputy Secretary Generals of



ASEAN and officials from different divisions of the ASEAN Secretariat also attended the event. Ambassadors of the Dialogue Partners of ASEAN were also present.

Apart from the Ambassador of India to ASEAN, H.E. Mr. Jayant Khobragade, Ambassador Kok Li Peng, Permanent Representative of Singapore to ASEAN, in her capacity as Country Coordinator for India, Ambassador Sidharto Suryodipuro, Director General of ASEAN Cooperation, Indonesia, in his capacity as the host of the ASEAN Secretariat and the mission were also present.



22nd ASEAN-India Joint Cooperation Committee Meeting

ASEAN and India reaffirmed their commitment to bring their strategic partnership to a greater height at the 22nd ASEAN-India Joint Cooperation Committee Meeting held at the ASEAN Secretariat on 23 March 2022. The meeting noted several commemorative activities to mark the momentous occasion and took note of the overall progress in implementing the ASEAN-India Plan of Action (2021-2025). Both sides reiterated their commitment to effectively continue the implementation of the Plan of Action to ensure the depth and breadth of the engagement between ASEAN and India benefit the peoples of both sides.

As part of efforts to improve the utilization, management, and execution of joint programmes and projects funded by the ASEAN-India Fund and the ASEAN-India Green Fund, both sides established an ASEAN-India Project Management Unit at the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta. The meeting also commended India's active participation and contribution to supporting ASEAN Centrality in the evolving regional architecture, particularly the ASEAN-led mechanisms. The meeting appreciated India's US\$ 1 million contribution to the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund, as well as for its in-kind contribution, particularly humanitarian relief items that were delivered to Myanmar through the AHA Centre in November 2021. The meeting also appreciated India's key role in the undertaking of the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway Project which would be extended into Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam.

They further deliberated on several initiatives for enhancing cooperation in various areas of mutual benefits, such as combatting transnational crime; maritime security; trade and investment; energy; finance; science and technology; the digital economy/4th Industrial Revolution; and Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Other areas such as tourism; education; sustainable development; biodiversity; climate change; blue economy, smart cities; Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET); disaster management; public health; women empowerment; people-to-people contacts; connectivity; and narrowing the development gap in ASEAN, were also discussed.

Permanent Representative of Singapore to ASEAN Kok Li Peng and Ambassador of India to ASEAN H.E. Mr. Jayant N. Khobragade co-chaired the 22nd AIJCC Meeting. In attendance were the members of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN, the ASEAN Secretariat, and their respective delegations.





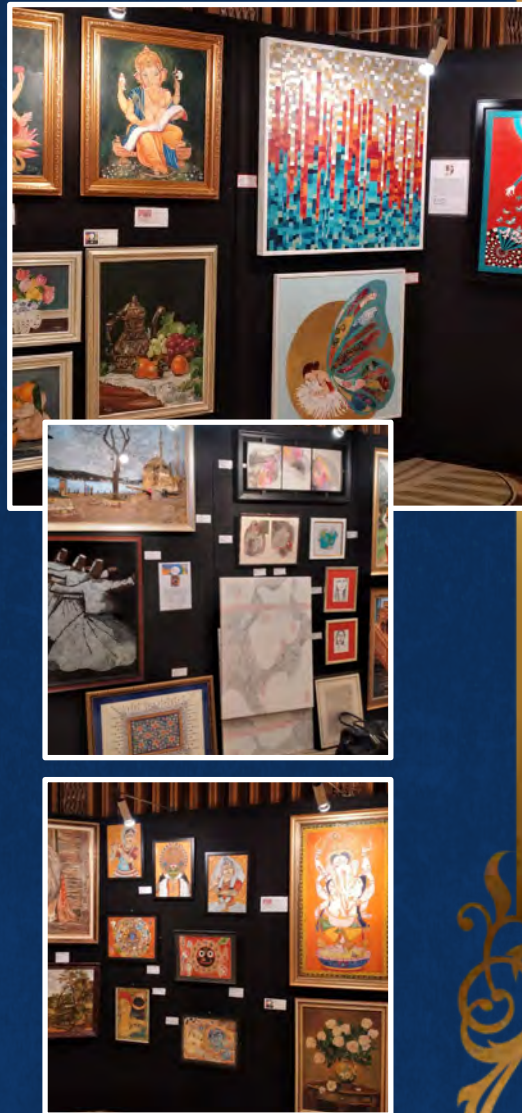
ASEAN-India Diwali Bazaar

Indian Mission to ASEAN in collaboration with the local organization indoindians.com organized ASEAN-India Diwali Bazaar in Jakarta on 09 October 2022, which was held in the Ball Room of Hotel Westin. H.E. Mr. Satvinder Singh, Deputy Secretary General for ASEAN Economic Community was the Chief Guest of the event.

The event was formally inaugurated by H.E. Mr. Satvinder Singh, DSG-ASEAN, H.E. Mr. Jayant N. Khobragade, Ambassador of India to ASEAN, H.E. Ms. Kok Li Peng, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Singapore to ASEAN and Country Coordinator for India, and Ms. Poonam Sagar, M/s Indo-Indians by the lighting of the lamp ceremony.

Each ASEAN Member State, the ASEAN Secretariat, and Indian Missions in Jakarta put up their stalls and in total, more than 120 stalls were put up during the event by the business community and MSMEs of the ASEAN Member States and India.

Various products for lifestyle, beauty, jewelry, fashion accessories, ethnic wear, home decor, food and beverages, education, banking (Bank of India), handicrafts, paintings, Indian spices and groceries, health, etc. were available for various buyers and sellers under one roof.





The ASEAN-India Artists' Camp 2022

The ASEAN-India Artists' Camp 2022 was organised in Udaipur, Rajasthan, from 11-19 October by the Ministry of External Affairs and the ASEAN, to celebrate the 30th anniversary of ASEAN-India relations. The camp was inaugurated in New Delhi on 10th October 2022. Dr. Rajkumar Ranjan Singh, Minister of State for External Affairs and Education addressed the Concluding Ceremony of the Artists' Camp on 19 October 2022 in Udaipur during which he highlighted the importance of the 3 Cs – Culture, Commerce, and Connectivity in strengthening ASEAN-India relations.





Twenty visual artists from ASEAN member states and India participated in the artist camp, during which each of them created their own unique works of art. The artists also participated in various other activities such as lectures and demonstrations, workshops, interaction with artists from other fields, and engagement with students. The objective of the camp was to strengthen people-to-people ties between India and ASEAN member states through artistic expression and celebrate civilizational and cultural connections during the ASEAN-India Friendship Year.

ASEAN-India Music Festival-2022

The Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India in collaboration with 'SEHER' organised the ASEAN-India Music Festival 2022. The festival took place from 16 to 22 November 2022 in India and featured 10 multi-genre contemporary music acts from ASEAN Member States and 5 bands from India. The event was held at the Purana Qila (Old Fort), New Delhi. Minister of State for External Affairs & Culture, Smt. Meenakshi Lekhi participated in the closing ceremony of the event. This was the second edition of the ASEAN-India Music Festival, after its well-received inaugural edition in 2017. A special music showcase also took place in Shillong, Meghalaya, on 22 November 2022, which is considered to be a gateway to ASEAN.







ASEAN & INDIA'S Act East Policy

With the adoption of Act East policy by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, the strategic factor has assumed greater salience as the upgraded policy strives to promote relations with ASEAN countries mainly in three important domains: commerce, culture, and connectivity.

- Dr. Ritu Agarwal -

The changing geopolitical realities have created the need for a balanced and sustainable regional development framework, particularly for Asia. Countries like India and Southeast Asia were part of regional networks created by trade, religion, and the cross-border flow of people across these national territories. In contemporary times, the development of physical infrastructure like highways, aviation, and railway networks has expanded the educational, cultural, and political exchanges between and among these countries. Global challenges in terms of maintaining high economic growth and sustainable livelihoods and non-traditional security threats like climate change, food crisis, and financial meltdown have

further created the need for strategic partnerships for a secured Asian regional order.

India has made efforts to widen and deepen its interaction with ASEAN by building mechanisms to promote trade, tourism, and economic investment. In 2003, India agreed to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) with Southeast Asia. It shows India's commitment and shared interests in peace, security, stability, and development in Southeast Asia'. The 19th ASEAN-India Summit 2022, acknowledged the deep civilizational linkages, maritime connectivity, and cross-cultural exchanges between Southeast Asia and India, which have grown stronger over the last 30 years, providing a strong foundation for ASEAN-India relations. At the summit, ASEAN and India adopted a joint statement announcing the advancement of their existing Strategic Partnership to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

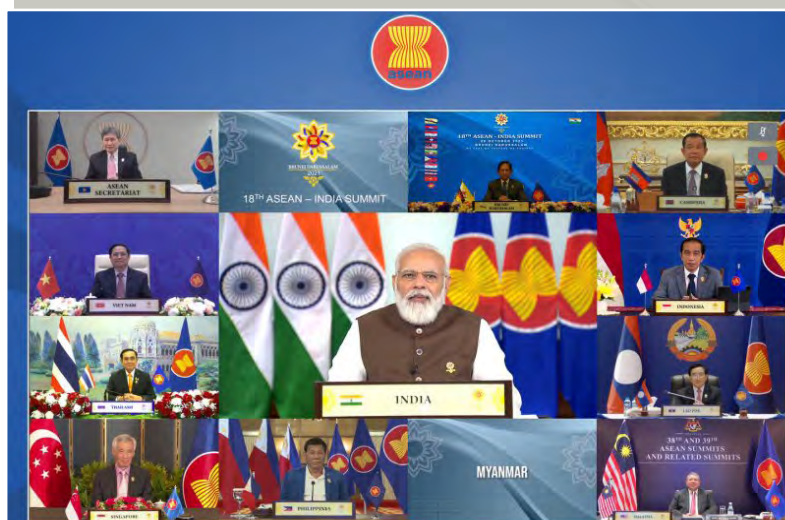
ASEAN and India share borders through the northeast regions and have built a series of partnership programmes and projects to make development possible. India is very well connected to ASEAN countries through the North East Region, which in turn can promote border prosperity and economic partnership between India's North East Region and ASEAN countries. The main focus of the Look East Policy was to promote economic and political relations between India and Southeast Asian economies, and the regional integration model was based on trade, investment, and economic production. Subsequently, India and these countries also established a sub-regional initiative called BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Co-operation).

On November 14, 2014, with the adoption of the Act East policy by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the strategic factor assumed greater salience as the upgraded policy strives to promote relations with ASEAN countries mainly in three important domains: commerce, culture, and connectivity. The policy reflects the intensification of the strategic partnership between ASEAN and India. It emphasizes strengthening cooperation with extended neighbours by keeping ASEAN's core interests in mind. The main agenda was to

connect India with its neighbouring countries so that regional growth could be achieved through a new market integration model of development. India's "Neighbourhood First" policy focuses on enhancing regional interaction with its eastern neighbours, and the North Eastern Region is crucial for that.

India's Act East Policy is closely connected with its long-term vision of developing its northeastern region, which is considered a gateway to Southeast Asia. Prime Minister Modi has shown a strong commitment to developing the infrastructure of the region in transport, highways, communication, power, and waterways. The Act East Policy of India encourages connectivity programmes that promote regional cooperation and integration. The Act East Policy places great emphasis on the connectivity programmes that link India's northeast region with ASEAN countries.

The first Mekong Ganga Cooperation Ministerial Meeting was held in Vientiane, Laos, in November 2000. It sought to expand cooperation in the areas of tourism, culture, education, transport, and communications. On July 21, 2021, H.E. Deputy Prime Minister Prak Sokhonn, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Cambodia, co-chaired the 11th Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC) Foreign Ministers' Meeting with Dr. S. Jaishankar, Indian Minister of External Affairs, via video conference. On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the MGC (2000–2020), all ministers commended the





progress of the implementation of the four-year MGC Plan of Action 2019–2022.

The India–Myanmar Friendship Road was built with Indian assistance and inaugurated in 2001. The India–Myanmar–Thailand Trilateral Highway is another connectivity project linking Moreh in Manipur, India, to Mae Sot in Thailand via Myanmar. As a part of a drive to enhance connectivity with Myanmar, the Moreh–Tamu land road connecting Moreh in India with Tamu in Myanmar became operational in 2018. The Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project is a combination of land, river, and sea routes. These routes will connect Kolkata port in India with Sittwe port in Myanmar by sea.

India's Act East Policy has transformed the northeast region into a critical regional node, establishing transnational ties with India's neighbours to the east. The spatial fixity of borders is being mobilized through different infrastructure projects to generate the territorial intimacy that replaces a sense of remoteness among these countries situated in different geographical settings. It undeniably promotes the cross-cultural exchange of migrant communities and goods, transforming cities and places from local to global players. While the nation-state tries to territorialize the development framework through

the protection of local trade and exchanges, the interface with global capitalism generates new demands on its labour, new migration patterns, and new interactions with global enterprises and companies. Borders, borderlands, and territories, like the closed territorial formation, are frequently juxtaposed with new centres of production, exchange, and agency, where the movement of people across borders generates new demands on questions of intimacy and exchange.

Thus, Act East Policy has redefined these border peripheries as a new site of economic cooperation and investment. The territorial boundaries between India and Southeast Asia have been opened in order to establish a new transnational regional network of cross-border movement of goods, commodities, and people. The mobility of capital and production of goods across borders has transformed these spatial areas from being fixed territories with a myriad of rigidities into new regional spaces of capital investment and promoted connectivity projects to link them into an integrated market framework.

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19TH ASEAN – INDIA SUMMIT TO COMMEMORATE THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF ASEAN – INDIA DIALOGUE RELATIONS

12 November 2022 | Phnom Penh, Cambodia



19th ASEAN-India & 17th East Asia Summit in Cambodia, 2022

D&B Bureau

ASEAN-India Summit

Phnom Penh, Cambodia, hosted the 19th ASEAN-India Summit. The summit was held from the 11th to the 13th of November, 2022. The ASEAN-India summit brought together representatives from ASEAN and the Republic of India to commemorate the 30th anniversary of ASEAN-India dialogue relations. Along with the External Affairs Minister, Dr. S. Jaishankar, the Indian delegation was led by Vice President Shri Jagdeep Dhankar. The Vice President

praised the extensive cultural, economic, and civilizational ties that have existed between South-East Asian countries and India since time immemorial in his opening remarks. He claimed that a key tenet of India's Act East Policy is the relationship between ASEAN and India. He went on to state once more that India supports ASEAN's central position in the Indo-Pacific. In a joint statement endorsed at the summit, ASEAN and India announced the development of their

current strategic partnership into a comprehensive strategic partnership. The significance of fostering and upholding peace, maritime safety, security, stability, freedom of navigation, and overflight in the Indo-Pacific region was reiterated by both parties. The commitment to advancing ASEAN-India cooperation in several areas, including counterterrorism, maritime activities, transnational crimes, the digital economy, regional connectivity, environment, smart agriculture, science



and technology, and tourism, among others, was also reaffirmed in the joint statement. The ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA) review process should be sped up, according to the joint statement, to improve usability, clarity, and trade facilitation. They reaffirmed their commitment to collaborate in order to build resilient supply chains, support the growth of MSMEs and start-ups, including through business-matching events facilitated by the ASEAN-India Business Council (AIBC), and investigate working together on the Single Window platform in order to improve trade facilitation and integration.

East Asia Summit

On the final day of his trip to Cambodia, Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar spoke at the East Asia Summit as the three-day Association

of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) summit came to an end. India, a founding member of the East Asia Summit, remains committed to bolstering and improving it so that it can better address current challenges. Using the convergence of the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative and the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific as a foundation, it is also a crucial platform for promoting practical cooperation in the region. Leaders at the 17th East Asia Summit discussed ways to improve the East Asia Summit mechanism as well as issues of interest and concern on the regional and global levels, such as maritime security, terrorism, and non-proliferation.

The Honourable Vice President emphasised the significance of ASEAN and ASEAN-led mechanisms in the Indo-Pacific during the summit and reaffirmed the significance of the East

Asia Summit as a premier leaders-led forum in the region. He also discussed topics of regional and international significance. The participating nations of the EAS under Cambodia's Chairmanship of ASEAN 2022 acknowledged the need to enhance regional cooperation in addressing new and emerging issues and challenges of shared interests and concerns, supporting ongoing efforts towards a comprehensive post-COVID-19 pandemic recovery, and ensuring the long-term sustainability and resilience of regional institutions. Additionally, they emphasised how important women's economic empowerment and entrepreneurship are to our region's achievement of economic stability, prosperity, future growth, and sustainable development as well as an inclusive and long-lasting recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.



The meeting also focused on the importance of education and academia in fostering research, development, and innovation in sustainable energy technologies by increasing international triple-helix cooperation between government, the private sector, and academia in order to facilitate access to upgraded clean

technologies and improved greener infrastructure for supplying an affordable, dependable, sustainable, and modern energy system.

In a joint statement, ASEAN and India recognised the strong cross-cultural ties, maritime connectivity, and deep ties between Southeast Asia and India that have developed

over the past 30 years. These ties serve as a solid foundation for ASEAN-India relations. In order to strengthen collaboration in the areas of public health, renewable energy, and smart agriculture, Vice President Dhankhar announced an additional contribution to the ASEAN-India science and technology fund of USD 5 million.



ASEAN-India

Maritime Cooperation

On November 23, 2022, Indian Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh participated in the 9th ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) Plus in Siem Reap, Cambodia, where he reiterated India's commitment to nurturing practical, forward-looking, and result-oriented cooperation between India and ADMM Plus countries for enhancing maritime security in the region and safety of the global commons.

**-Dr. Aparajita Pandey-
&
-Rashi Randev-**

The ASEAN nations have a large maritime dynamic in their trade and security. While most ASEAN member countries' trade relations can be traced back to mercantile routes and linkages maintained through sustained maritime contact, security concerns frequently change with the region's rapidly evolving geopolitical situation and the

changing interests of both ASEAN nations and others in the greater region of the Indian Ocean, South East Asia, and East Asia. Therefore, it would be a logical conclusion to believe that access to the ocean, the freedom to navigate the ocean, and the ability to carry out trade and defense exercises are the utmost priorities for the ASEAN region.

Maritime security and cooperation have been important pillars of the ASEAN-India relationship. With the upgraded Act East Policy, India's intentions were to develop maritime security architecture with Southeast Asian countries in order to bring stakeholders in a broader Asian security architecture together. India, being one of the protuberant influences in the Indian Ocean region, has engaged with several Southeast Asian nations like Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand.

ASEAN countries were quick to realise their dependence on the ocean and founded the ASEAN Centre for Combating Transnational Crime during the 1998 Hanoi Declaration. The emphasis on crime and its deterrence also drew attention to the broader dimensions of maritime security when it was classified as a regional problem and member nations began to see it as a problem that required a consistent collaborative effort to resolve. In 2003, the issues surrounding maritime security were first raised in the Bali Concord II, which was echoed in the ASEAN Regional Forum, which also



called for common and comprehensive guidelines for maritime security. This further led to the establishment of the ASEAN Maritime Forum and the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum in 2012.

While the ASEAN Political and Security Pillar is the largest umbrella under which all manner of security concerns are sheltered, sectoral bodies such as the ASEAN Economic Committee and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Committee also find themselves looking at maritime security. This multiplicity can be attributed to the multifaceted nature of maritime security. The scope of maritime security has now been broadened to encompass fisheries, environmental degradation and conservation, transnational crime, counterterrorism, law enforcement, and naval issues. The latest addition to the list is IUU fishing. One can see that this list includes both traditional and non-traditional threats.

There have been several collaborative efforts in the region, some of which are "eyes in the sky," which was a collective security initiative to ensure the protection of the Malacca Strait, which is a strategic and economic chokepoint in maritime traffic. These small steps towards collaboration did give the member nations the confidence needed to believe that greater collaboration and collective decision-making are possible in the maritime security dimension. Such initiatives have also helped in the general expansion of ASEAN as a forum with greater internal dialogue. This increased regional cooperation is also consistent with the ASEAN security blueprint 2025.

A militarising Indian Ocean region has compelled the region's countries, particularly ASEAN

member states, to build military and naval capacity. While most states are individually raising their proverbial fences and attempting to bolster their combative capacities to create principled deterrence, ASEAN nations can take greater advantage of both collective security and collective bargaining power. All indications point to the fact that the ASEAN nations will be making great efforts at collaboration and collective defense to ensure maritime security.

India's engagement with ASEAN countries is at three levels: bilateral engagements, multilateral dialogues, and liaison visits for developing interoperability and encouraging regular interactions with the peripheral countries of the Indian Ocean. Over the years, countries like Singapore, Vietnam, Indonesia, and Malaysia have developed their relations with India's defence establishment. India has regular exercises with Singapore, and the stationing of Singapore aircraft at Kalaikunda airbase as well as defence equipment in Babina and Deolali has been seen as strengthening enhanced cooperation between the two countries.

With countries like Indonesia and Thailand, there have been regular coordinated patrols along the Andaman Sea, and it is an indicator of a thriving relationship with India. With countries like Vietnam, there have been regular defence interactions at the highest levels, and there have been port calls by Indian ships to various ports in Vietnam. Apart from this, India has also stationed one of its senior naval personnel for the Regional Co-operation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (RECAAP) programme in Singapore and has also established



an Information Fusion Centre for the Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) at Gurugram, where Singapore has also placed a liaison officer.

In August 2021, during the UNSC meeting, maritime security was one of the important agenda items for India, and a special dialogue session related to maritime security was also organised by India. During this meeting, Prime Minister Modi evidently voiced the opinion that the countries needed to resolve their differences in maritime disputes through international arbitration or direct mechanisms. A robust maritime security architecture is essentially necessary for India through the ambit of trade and commerce, which stretches from the South China Sea to the East Asian region, and also for strategic needs and purposes as India conducts exercises with countries such as Singapore, Vietnam, and the Philippines. India has defence agreements with nine countries out of ten Southeast Asian countries. These defence agreements have been instrumental in facilitating high-level visits and the exchange of personnel for training programmes.

In the 18th ASEAN-India Summit, the member states of ASEAN and India welcomed the adoption of the ASEAN-India Joint Statement on cooperation on the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) for Peace, Stability, and Prosperity in the Region. This was to promote practical cooperation between India and the ASEAN priority areas as identified in the AOIP. Furthermore, the upgradation of ASEAN-India's relationship to a

Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP) at the 19th ASEAN-India Summit is a significant milestone as well as for India's Indo-Pacific policy and maritime outreach. Several ASEAN states whose maritime policies are in tandem with the IPOI's key pillars have expressed interest in collaborating with India on the IPOI. Some of the important pillars of the IPOI are maritime security, maritime ecology and resources, disaster risk reduction and management, capacity building, and resource sharing in science and technology, trade connectivity, and academic cooperation.

Recently, as announced by the Ministry of External Affairs, the maiden ASEAN-India maritime exercise will be held in the first half of 2023. On November 23, 2022, Indian Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh participated in the 9th ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) Plus in Siem Reap, Cambodia, where he reiterated India's commitment to nurturing practical, forward-looking, and result-oriented cooperation between India and ADMM Plus countries for enhancing maritime security in the region and safety of the global commons.

ASEAN and India are two of the world's largest and fastest-growing economies, and ostensibly, the comprehensive set of partnerships between ASEAN and India echoes the need to engage in the maritime domain more constructively, as ASEAN as a robust multilateral organisation and India as a growing superpower hold great potential in the maritime domain.



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ASEAN-India : Science and Technology Cooperation

The deliberations of the technology summit between ASEAN and India led to the creation of a dedicated ASEAN-India S&T Development Fund (AISTDF) with a corpus of \$1 million annually for research and development projects. During the 19th ASEAN-India Summit in Cambodia, the ASEAN-India science and technology fund that supports scientific research has been increased by \$5 million

- Sachin Tiwari-

ASEAN-India Science & Technology Collaboration formally started in 1996 with the establishment of the ASEAN India S&T working group (AIWGST). Initially, the ASEAN India Fund (AIF) was used to support collaborative S&T projects and activities between ASEAN and India. However, in 2008, MEA and DST jointly established the ASEAN-India S&T Development Fund (AISTDF) to support R&D projects and related project development activities. The core of the improved AISTDF is the ASEAN-India Innovation Platform.

Science and Technology Cooperation

ASEAN-India Science and Technology cooperation ranges in different fields and includes information technology, biotechnology, and space technology.

It also involves convergence in emerging new areas including digital information, smart cities, and green technology.

The cooperation in information technology started as an early initiative with the ASEAN-India Digital Archives Project in 1999, a multilingual project developed and shared among teachers, students, and other researchers. In 2000, the National Institute of Information Technology (NIIT) imparted a training program in software technology to 94 ASEAN scientists, part of the knowledge economy that was iterated in the first ASEAN-India meeting.

Recently, during the 19th ASEAN-India Summit 2022, the ASEAN-India science and technology fund that supports scientific research has been increased by \$5 million to include the emerging areas of public health, renewable energy, and smart agriculture.



Information Technology

The investment in technology through the business parks has been growing between the ASEAN countries and India. In 2009, at the Bangalore Information Technology Park, a 40 percent partnership with the Singapore consortium demonstrated the partnership. The collaboration has increased the skilled manpower of IT professionals leading to expanding economies in the ASEAN countries. There are software development training centers in Myanmar, Vietnam, Lao PDR, and Cambodia.

The recent changes in IT collaboration have been exemplary, with the COVID-19 pandemic having had a significant impact on daily lives and putting pressure to change the way we work and collaborate. The convergence of the issue can be seen in the digital plans developed by citizens, businesses, and governments in both regions—India's Digital Plan and ASEAN's Digital Master Plan 2025. The strategy calls for ensuring security and trust in the system. The institutional framework includes Track 1.5 cyber dialogue, of which three have already been conducted.

The exchange of digital threats has been ongoing

between the Singapore Cyber Security Agency and the India Computer Emergency Readiness Team, which works on cyber threats. The approval of the ASEAN-India Digital Work Plan 2022 is an important step that includes nationwide support for increasing WiFi access and building capacity in the IT field by combining emerging technologies such as the Internet of Things, 5G, satellite communications, and cyber forensics.

With the development of startups in Southeast Asian countries and India, there has been a significant rise in startup partnerships.

In October 2022, ASEAN and India celebrated 30 years of relations with the launch of the 1st ASEAN-India Start-Up Festival in Jakarta. ASEAN-India Startup Festival is a flagship initiative that aims to strengthen cooperation and collaboration in science, technology and innovation between the ASEAN Member States and India as highlighted in the Plan of action for the ASEAN-India Partnership for peace, progress, and shared prosperity (2021-2025).

This festival presents an opportunity for participating delegates from ASEAN and India to expand the national startup ecosystem to a



global network, connect with businesses and investors from the international arena and further strengthen cross-border ties with ASEAN countries in the field of science and technology. In his remarks, Ambassador of India to ASEAN, H.E. Jayant Khobragade pointed out that “India has emerged as the 3rd largest ecosystem for Start-up globally with over 77,000 recognised startups across the country. The startup aims to provide collective solution in 56 diverse industry sectors with 13% from IT service, 9% healthcare, 7% education etc. This has led to exponential growth of unicorns in India”.

With the objective of enhancing cooperation between ASEAN Member States and India in the field of Science, Technology and Innovation (STI), the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Govt. of India and the ASEAN Committee on Science, Technology and Innovation (COSTI) in partnership with the National Innovation Foundation (NIF) – India launched the 3rd ASEAN-India Grassroots Innovation Forum 2022 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia on 19 December 2022. The three-day forum (19th to 21st December 2022) provided a platform for participants to share experiences and best practices in grassroots innovation among ASEAN and Indian communities. The event comprised seminar sessions, innovation competitions, and an exhibition. By bringing together key players, namely government officials, grassroots innovators, student innovators, academics, business actors, and the wider community, this forum provides a platform to promote and strengthen the development of the grassroots innovation ecosystem. Ms. Shalini Kumari from India received first prize in the Grassroots Innovation Competition at the 3rd ASEAN India Grassroots Innovation forum for her innovation ‘Modified walker with adjustable legs’.

The grassroots innovators, the student innovators, the experts and professionals from the participating countries continue to engage in meaningful dialogues with each other leading to sharing of knowledge and an opportunity to grow together, aligned with “Shared values, common destiny” approach.



Biotechnology

The other fields include biotechnology as the field for cooperation. These have been on R&D projects in South and South-East Asia to protect against alien invasive organisms. Another project is the analysis of the chemical and biological contaminants in ASEAN countries. Aside from these, academics and scientists have been trained to train young biotech professionals as part of the capacity-building process. The medical sector has been growing with the COVID-19 disruption and its huge consequences. At the 18th ASEAN-India summit in 2021, Indonesian President Joko Widodo stressed the need for not only tackling the pandemic but also future preparation. India's role in medicine production and the healthcare profession is vital, as is its collaboration with ASEAN. The issue has been highlighted by the need for reforms in healthcare that include



cooperation in pharma, telehealth, and medical tourism with ASEAN and India partnership. Innovative programs are being conducted, such as the 36-hour hackathon initiated by PM Modi that included all the ASEAN countries for collaboration on economics, education, science, and technology as well as health care, the blue economy, and the sharing of varied skills as part of the expansion.

Energy Cooperation

To strengthen institutional ties between ASEAN and India, the Indian Mission to ASEAN at Jakarta facilitated the signing of an MoU between the ASEAN Centre for Energy (ACE) and The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) on November 9, 2022. On this occasion, the Indian Ambassador to ASEAN, H.E. Mr. Jayant Khobragade, wished ACE and TERI continued success in their collaboration and emphasised how the MoU can empower organisations to work toward a cleaner and greener planet.

The rapid development of both regions, as well as the changing climate, have increased the demand for alternative energy. The expansion of the discussion at the ASEAN-India Renewable Energy Forum 2022, where the dignitaries talked about renewable energy ambitions, progress made, and priority areas for their respective countries and reiterated their commitment to taking ASEAN-India cooperation in the sector forward. The development of energy has been achieved by ASEAN through a common power grid, where the possibility exists for the integration of the Indian subcontinent under the "One Sun, One World, One Grid Initiative" plans for future cooperation in sustaining energy demands. The cooperation has strengthened with the development of the ASEAN-India Blue Economy Framework in 2022. Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India in partnership with Coordinating Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Investment, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Indonesia; in collaboration with

the ASEAN-India Centre (AIC), Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), and the National Maritime Foundation (NMF) jointly organised the 4th ASEAN-India Workshop on the 'Blue Economy' on the theme "Advancing Partnership for Sustainability" on 15-16 December, 2022 in New Delhi. Mr. Saurabh Kumar, Secretary (East) addressed the workshop as India and ASEAN take steps to enhance Blue Economy cooperation as Comprehensive Strategic Partners. He also highlighted the importance of sustainable development, connectivity, Science and Technology, and safety and security to further this cooperation.

Smart Cities

Other building initiatives, such as smart cities, have been pushed. Singapore PM Lee Hsien Loong spoke of the new synergies that are reflected in the ASEAN smart cities network and India's smart cities plan and the possibility of partners in the development of the cities. There is also an MoU between Singapore and India for smart city collaboration, including the use of AI and geospatial data for management. During the recent ASEAN-India summit, a joint statement on smart cities was released. It stated that the two organisations would "explore cooperation such as city-to-city partnerships between ASEAN Smart Cities Network (ASCN) and Smart City Mission of India by fostering exchanges of best practices and capacity-building to help build cities that are resilient, innovative, well-connected, and technologically advanced."

These discussed convergent areas include emerging technology, which represents ASEAN and India's partnership in the efforts, not only with the government, but also with the scientific community, professionals, and the private sector.

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UNITY IN DIVERSITY

ASEAN Countries at a Glance

D&B Bureau

ASEAN member countries represent the diversity of Southeast Asia. ASEAN has become a body with regional and global clout, and it aims to bolster economic growth among its 10 members and promote peace and stability across the region. On August 8, 1967 at a meeting in Bangkok, ASEAN was set up. Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Singapore declared that "the association represents the collective will of the nations to bind themselves together in friendship and cooperation and, through joint efforts and sacrifices, secure the blessings of peace, freedom, and prosperity for their peoples and posterity." Brunei joined in 1984, followed by Vietnam in 1995, Laos and Burma in 1997, and Cambodia in 1999.

Its principal aims include accelerating economic growth, social progress, and sociocultural evolution among its members, alongside the protection of regional stability and the provision of a mechanism for member countries to resolve differences peacefully. Due to its global influence and regional success, ASEAN has been credited as one of the world's most successful and influential organizations and an "emerging powerhouse."

Here's a brief profile of ASEAN member states.



**Hassanal Bolkiah ibni Omar Ali
Saifuddien III
(Sultan & Prime Minister)**



BRUNEI

Brunei is a sovereign state located on the north coast of the island of Borneo in Southeast Asia. It is the only sovereign state completely on the island of Borneo. It's known for its beaches and biodiverse rainforest, much of it protected within reserves. Brunei's major exports are crude oil and Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG), with Japan, South Korea, India, Australia and Indonesia being its major markets. Manufactured goods, machinery & transport equipments are the main imports, sourced

from ASEAN neighbors, Malaysia and Singapore, as well as from the US & South Korea. Brunei's political system is governed by the constitution and the national tradition of the Malay Islamic Monarchy, the concept of Melayu Islam Beraja (MIB). Under Brunei's 1959 constitution, His Majesty Paduka Seri Baginda Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah is the head of state with full executive authority.



**Hun Sen
(Prime Minister)**



CAMBODIA

Cambodia is located in the southern portion of the Mainland Southeast Asia. It is bordered by Thailand to the northwest, Laos to the northeast, Vietnam to the east, and the Gulf of Thailand to the southwest. Cambodia is largely a land of plains and great rivers and lies amid important overland and river trade routes. It has a multifarious cultural tapestry and a fascinating and long history and is famous for its beautiful sunny beaches and

lush natural attractions. Cambodia's major exports are dominated by textile goods, which account for around 70 percent of total exports. Other export products include vehicles, footwear, natural rubber and fish. Cambodia's main export partners are the United States, Hong Kong, Singapore, Canada, Germany and the UK. Cambodia is a constitutional monarchy with a unitary structure and a parliamentary form of government.



**Joko Widodo
(President)**



The Republic of Indonesia is a unitary sovereign state and transcontinental country located mainly in Southeast Asia, with some territories in Oceania. The country shares land borders with Papua New Guinea, East Timor, and the eastern part of Malaysia. Other neighboring countries include Singapore, Vietnam, the Philippines, Australia, Palau, and the Indian territory of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Indonesia is the largest economy in the 10-nation ASEAN, followed by Thailand. Major sectors include manufacturing (tobacco, food and beverages, transport equipment and machinery), mining, construction, transport and communication,

finance and real estate. Indonesia's major trading partners include Japan, Singapore and the US. Major exports are mineral fuels, machinery and transport equipment and manufactured goods. Major imports include machinery, electrical equipment, iron and steel. Indonesia is a republic with a presidential system. As a unitary state, power is concentrated in the central government. Indonesia has a mixed economy in which both the private sector and government play significant roles. The country is the largest economy in Southeast Asia and a member of the G20 major economies and recently held the G20 presidency for the year 2021-2022 and shall be the chair of ASEAN for the year 2023.



**Phankham Viphavanh
(Prime Minister)**

LAOS



Laos is a landlocked country in the heart of Mainland Southeast Asia, bordered by Myanmar (Burma) and China to the northwest, Vietnam to the east, Cambodia to the southwest, and Thailand to the west and southwest. It has a geologically diverse landscape, with its forested mountains, upland plateaus and lowland plains. Laos' major trading partners include Thailand, and Vietnam, and their main exports are timber, mining commodities, and hydroelectricity. Major imports include machinery, equipment, and motor vehicles. The Lao People's Democratic Republic is a one-party socialist republic. Laos is a one-party state and the only legal political party is the Lao People's Revolutionary Party (LPRP).



**Anwar bin Ibrahim
(Prime Minister)**

MALAYSIA

Malaysia is a federal constitutional monarchy located in Southeast Asia. Malaysia shares a land and maritime border with Thailand in the north and maritime borders with Singapore in the south, Vietnam in the northeast, and Indonesia in the west. East Malaysia shares land and maritime borders with Brunei and Indonesia and a maritime border with the Philippines and Vietnam. Malaysia has a multi-ethnic, multicultural, and multilingual society. Malaysia is a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), and it adopts a liberal trade regime. Companies

are allowed to trade freely without special restrictions. At present, Malaysia has already eliminated duties on over 95 percent of its tariff lines to other ASEAN countries. In 2015, Malaysia adopted the rotational chair of ASEAN, and at the end of the same year, the ASEAN Economic Community was established. Malaysia is among the four ASEAN member countries participating in the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), a trade agreement signed among 12 Pacific Rim countries in February 2016. Malaysia is a federal constitutional elective monarchy.



MYANMAR

Myanmar is a sovereign state in Southeast Asia. It is bordered by India and Bangladesh to its west, Thailand and Laos to its east and the People's Republic of China to its north and northeast. Myanmar is a country rich in jade and gems, oil, natural gas, and other mineral resources. Myanmar's major export destinations included Thailand, India, Japan, and Singapore. Myanmar is a country dotted with thousands of Buddhist

temples and is known for its serene white beaches along the Andaman Sea and the Bay of Bengal. Major exports included fuel, agricultural products, garment and mineral products. Major import sources are Singapore, Thailand, Japan and India. Myanmar's imported goods mainly comprised machinery, transport equipment, basic metals and manufactures.



**President Ferdinand
Romualdez Marcos Jr.
(President)**



PHILIPPINES

The Philippines is a unitary sovereign state and island country in Southeast Asia. Situated in the western Pacific Ocean, it consists of about 7,641 islands. The Philippines shares maritime borders with Taiwan to the north, Vietnam to the west, Palau to the east, and Malaysia and Indonesia to the south. Primary exports include semiconductors and electronic products, transport equipments, garments, copper products, petroleum products, coconut oil, and fruits. Major trading

partners include the United States, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, the Netherlands, Hong Kong, Germany, Taiwan, and Thailand. It is a founding member of the United Nations, the World Trade Organization, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum, and the East Asia Summit. The Philippines has a democratic government in the form of a constitutional republic with a presidential system.



SINGAPORE

**Lee Hsien Loong
(Prime Minister)**



Singapore is a sovereign city-state and island country in Southeast Asia. It is located at the southern tip of the Malay Peninsula, with Indonesia's Riau Islands to the south and Malaysia to the north. Singapore is a global commerce, finance and transport hub. Singapore is a multi-cultured country. Besides the stunning architecture that makes up its iconic skyline, the city-state is home to museums that boast a range of collections, colourful street murals, and public art installations, it is often described as one of the cleanest and most orderly cities

in the world. It consists of the main island and about 64 smaller offshore islands.

Singapore is one of the most developed economies globally. Singapore's main exports include machinery and equipments, electronics and telecommunications, pharmaceuticals and other chemicals, refined petroleum products and chemical products. Singapore is a parliamentary republic with a Westminster system of unicameral parliamentary government representing constituencies.



**Prayut Chan-o-cha
(Prime Minister)**



Thailand is a country at the centre of Mainland Southeast Asia. It is bordered to the north by Myanmar and Laos, to the east by Laos and Cambodia, to the south by the Gulf of Thailand and Malaysia, and to the west by the Andaman Sea and the southern extremity of Myanmar. Its maritime boundaries include Vietnam in the Gulf of Thailand to the southeast, and Indonesia and India in the Andaman Sea to the southwest. Thailand encompasses diverse ecosystems, including the hilly forested areas of the

northern frontier, the fertile rice fields of the central plains, the broad plateau of the northeast, and the rugged coasts along the narrow southern peninsula. Thailand's major sectors include electronics, car making, transport, storage, communication, tourism, finance, and real estate. Thailand is an export-oriented economy. The politics of Thailand is currently conducted within the framework of a constitutional monarchy, whereby the Prime Minister is the head of government and a hereditary monarch is the head of state.



**Phạm Minh Chính
(Prime Minister)**



Officially known as the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, it is the easternmost country in the Mainland Southeast Asia in Southeast Asia. Vietnam is bordered by China to the north, Laos to the northwest, Cambodia to the southwest, & the Philippines, Malaysia & Indonesia across the South China Sea to the east & southeast. Vietnam's chief trading partners include Japan, Australia, the ASEAN countries, US & Western Europe. Vietnam is a Southeast Asian country known for its beaches, rivers,

Buddhist pagodas and bustling cities. Major industry and service sectors of the country include manufacturing, mining, construction, real estate & finance. Major items of the export surge are electronics, computers and components as well as machines and equipments. Once among the smaller economies in ASEAN, Vietnam today emerges as a country moving towards economic modernization and engaging in competitive and export-driven industries.