



18th India-ASEAN Summit

Why in News

Recently, India participated in the 18th [India-ASEAN Summit](#) at the invitation of **Brunei, the current Chair of ASEAN**.

- The **Year 2022** has been highlighted as **India-ASEAN Friendship** by the leaders.
- India-ASEAN Summit is **held every year** and provides an opportunity for India and Asean to **engage at the highest level**.

Key Points

▪ ASEAN in Act East Policy:

- The centrality of ASEAN in [India's Act East Policy](#) and in India's Vision for the wider [Indo-Pacific](#) Vision has been underlined.
- Welcomed the adoption of the **India-ASEAN Joint Statement** on cooperation for peace, stability and prosperity in the region, building upon the synergies between the **ASEAN Outlook for the Indo-Pacific (AOIP)** and **India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI)**.
- Recently, India also addressed the 16th [East Asia Summit](#), where it **reaffirmed India's focus on a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific** and the principle of Asean Centrality in the region.

▪ India-ASEAN Connectivity:

- Exchanged views on enhancing **India-ASEAN connectivity** in broadest terms including physical, digital and people to people.
- India announced its support for establishing the **ASEAN Cultural Heritage List** to further strengthen **India-ASEAN cultural connectivity**.

▪ Trade and Investment:

- The importance of diversification and [resilience of supply chains](#) for post-Covid economic recovery and in this regard, the need to revamp the **India-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement (FTA)** has been underlined.

▪ Rule-Based Order:

- Regional and international issues of common interest and concern, including [South China Sea](#) and **terrorism**.
- The importance of promoting a **rules-based order** in the region including through upholding adherence to international law, especially the [UNCLOS](#).

▪ Covid-19:

- Highlighted **India's efforts** in the fight against the [pandemic](#) in the region and also reiterated support for ASEAN's initiatives in this regard.
- India has contributed medical supplies worth USD 200,000 to **ASEAN's**

humanitarian initiative for Myanmar and USD 1 million for **ASEAN's Covid-19 Response Fund**.

India-ASEAN and China

- Traditionally the basis of **India-ASEAN ties** has been trade and people-to-people ties due to shared historical and cultural roots, a more recent and urgent area of convergence has been balancing China's rise.
 - Both India and ASEAN aim to **establish a rules-based security architecture for peaceful development in the region**, in contrast to China's aggressive policies.
- Like India, **several ASEAN members** such as Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Brunei have territorial disputes with China, the China factor does form an important component of the relationship.
 - India in 2014 reinvigorated the **Look East policy into Act East**, with a more strategic outlook than its previous incarnation, **focusing on engagement not just with Southeast Asian countries but also those in the Pacific**.

Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

▪ About:

- It is a **regional grouping** that promotes economic, political, and security cooperation.
- It was established in **August 1967 in Bangkok, Thailand** with the signing of the **ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration)** by the founding fathers of ASEAN, namely Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.
- Its **chairmanship rotates annually**, based on the alphabetical order of the English names of Member States.
- ASEAN countries have a total population of 650 million people and a combined **Gross Domestic Product (GDP)** of USD 2.8 trillion. It is **India's 4th largest trading partner** with about USD 86.9 billion in trade.

▪ Members:

- ASEAN brings together ten Southeast Asian states – Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam – into one organisation.

ASEAN GROUPING



ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific

- It offers an outlook to **guide cooperation in the region and enhance ASEAN's Community building process** and further strengthen the existing ASEAN-led mechanisms, such as the East Asia Summit.
- Its main objectives are helping to **promote an enabling environment for peace, stability and prosperity** in the region in **addressing common challenges**, upholding the rules-based regional architecture, and promoting closer economic cooperation, and thus strengthening confidence and trust.
- And implementing existing and **exploring other ASEAN priority areas of cooperation**, including maritime cooperation, connectivity, the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, and economic and other possible areas of cooperation.

India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI)

- It is an **open, non-treaty based initiative for countries to work together for cooperative and collaborative solutions to common challenges** in the region. IPOI draws on existing regional architecture and mechanisms to focus on seven pillars: Maritime Security. Maritime Ecology.
- It draws on existing regional architecture and mechanisms to focus on **seven pillars**:
 - Maritime Security
 - Maritime Ecology
 - Maritime Resources
 - Capacity Building and Resource Sharing
 - Disaster Risk Reduction and Management
 - Science, Technology and Academic Cooperation
 - Trade Connectivity and Maritime Transport

Source: PIB

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