



# ASEAN

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## What is ASEAN?

- The Association of Southeast Asian Nations is a regional organization which was established to promote political and social stability amid rising tensions among the Asia-Pacific's post-colonial states.
- The motto of ASEAN is **"One Vision, One Identity, One Community"**.
- 8<sup>th</sup> August is observed as ASEAN Day.
- ASEAN Secretariat - Indonesia, Jakarta.

## What are the Recent Developments?

- The **24<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-India Senior Official's Meeting (SOM)** was hosted in Delhi.
  - India and ASEAN celebrated the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their Dialogue Relations.
- In the **2<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN Digital Ministers' (ADGMIN) Meeting** with India, the two sides **finalized India-ASEAN Digital work plan 2022** for future collaboration in the field.

## Who are the Member Nations?

- Indonesia
- Malaysia
- Philippines
- Singapore
- Thailand
- Brunei
- Vietnam
- Laos
- Myanmar
- Cambodia

## Where does the Genesis of ASEAN Lie?

- 1967 - ASEAN was established with the signing of the ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration) by its founding fathers.
  - Founding Fathers of ASEAN are: Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.
- 1990s - Membership doubled after the changing conditions in the region following the end of the Vietnam War in 1975 and the Cold War in 1991.
  - Addition of Brunei (1984), Vietnam (1995), Laos and Myanmar (1997), and Cambodia (1999).
- 1995 - Members signed a deal to create a nuclear-free zone in Southeast Asia.
- 1997 - Adoption of ASEAN **Vision 2020**.
- 2003 - **Bali Concord II** for the establishment of an ASEAN Community.
- 2007 - **Cebu Declaration**, to accelerate the establishment of ASEAN Community by 2015.
- 2008 - ASEAN Charter comes into force and becomes a legally binding agreement.

- 2015 – Launch of **ASEAN Community**.
  - ASEAN Community is comprised of three pillars:
    - ASEAN Political-Security Community
    - ASEAN Economic Community
    - ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community

## What are the Objectives of ASEAN?

- To accelerate economic growth, social progress and cultural development for a prosperous and peaceful community of Southeast Asian Nations.
- To promote regional peace and stability through abiding respect for justice and the rule of law and adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter.
- To promote active collaboration and mutual assistance on matters of common interest in the economic, social, cultural, technical, scientific and administrative fields.
- To collaborate more effectively for the greater utilisation of agriculture and industries, the expansion of their trade, the improvement of transportation and communications facilities and the raising of the living standards of peoples.
- To promote Southeast Asian studies.
- To maintain close and beneficial cooperation with existing international and regional organisations.

## What are the Fundamental Principles of ASEAN?

- The ASEAN fundamental principles, as contained in the *Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia* (TAC) of 1976
  - Mutual respect for the independence, sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity, and national identity of all nations.
  - The right of every State to lead its national existence free from external interference, subversion or coercion.
  - Non-interference in the internal affairs of one another.
  - Settlement of differences or disputes by peaceful manner.
  - Renunciation of the threat or use of force.
  - Effective cooperation among themselves.

## What is the Institutional Mechanism of ASEAN?

- **Chairmanship:** Chairmanship of ASEAN rotates annually, based on the alphabetical order of the English names of Member States.
- **ASEAN Summit:** The supreme policy making body of ASEAN. As the highest level of authority in ASEAN, the Summit sets the direction for ASEAN policies and objectives. Under the Charter, the Summit meets twice a year.
- **ASEAN Ministerial Councils:** The Charter established four important new Ministerial bodies to support the Summit.
  - ASEAN Coordinating Council (ACC)
  - ASEAN Political-Security Community Council
  - ASEAN Economic Community Council
  - ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Council
- **Decision Making:** The primary mode of decision-making in ASEAN is consultation and consensus.

However, the Charter enshrines the principle of **ASEAN-X** – This means that if all member states are in agreement, a formula for flexible participation may be used so that the members who are ready may go ahead while members who need more time for implementation may apply a flexible timeline.

## What Forums are led by ASEAN?

- **ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF):** Launched in 1993, the twenty-seven-member multilateral

grouping was developed to facilitate cooperation on political and security issues to contribute to regional confidence-building and preventive diplomacy.

- **ASEAN Plus Three:** The consultative group initiated in 1997 brings together ASEAN's ten members, China, Japan, and South Korea.
- **East Asia Summit (EAS):** First held in 2005, the summit seeks to promote security and prosperity in the region and is usually attended by the heads of state from ASEAN, Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, Russia, South Korea, and the United States. ASEAN plays a central role as the agenda-setter.
- **ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM)-Plus Meeting:** The [ADMM-Plus](#) is a platform for ASEAN and its eight Dialogue Partners to strengthen security and defence cooperation for peace, stability, and development in the region.
  - The ADMM-Plus countries include ten ASEAN Member States and eight Plus countries, namely Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, ROK, Russian Federation, and the United States.
  - The first ADMM-Plus was convened at Ha Noi, Vietnam in 2010.

## What are the Strengths of ASEAN?

- ASEAN commands far greater influence on Asia-Pacific trade, political, and security issues than its members could achieve individually.
- **Demographic dividend** - As of 1 July 2019, the population of the ASEAN was about 655 million people (8.5% of the world population).
- **Economic:**
  - Major global hub of manufacturing and trade, as well as one of the fastest-growing consumer markets in the world.
  - **7<sup>th</sup> largest economy** in the world. It is projected to rank as the fourth-largest economy by 2050.
  - ASEAN has the third-largest labor force in the world, behind China and India.
  - **Free-trade agreements (FTAs)**
    - ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area
    - ASEAN-China Free Trade Agreements
    - ASEAN-India Free Trade Area
    - ASEAN - Japan Free Trade Area
    - ASEAN-Republic of Korea Free Trade Area
    - ASEAN - Hong Kong, China Free Trade Area
    - Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership
  - ASEAN is the fourth-largest exporting region in the world, trailing only the European Union, North America, and China/Hong Kong accounting for 7% of global exports.
- ASEAN has contributed to **regional stability** by building much-needed norms and fostering a neutral environment to address shared challenges.

## What are the Challenges within ASEAN?

- Regional imbalances in the economic and social status of its individual markets.
- **Gap between rich and poor ASEAN member states remains very large and they have a mixed record on income inequality.**
  - While Singapore boasts the highest GDP per capita—nearly \$53,000 (2016), Cambodia's per capita GDP is the lowest at less than \$1,300.
  - Many regional initiatives were not able to be incorporated into national plans, as the less developed countries faced resource constraints to implement the regional commitments.
- The members' political systems are equally mixed with democracies, communist, and authoritarian states.
- While the South China Sea is the main issue exposing the organization's rifts.
- ASEAN has been divided over major issues of human rights. For example, crackdowns in Myanmar against the Rohingyas.
- Inability to negotiate a unified approach with regards to China, particularly in response to its widespread maritime claims in the South China Sea.
- The emphasis on consensus sometimes becomes the a chief drawback – difficult problems have been avoided rather than confronted.
- There is no central mechanism to enforce compliance.
- Inefficient dispute-settlement mechanism, whether it be in the economic or political spheres.

## What about the Cooperation between India and ASEAN?

- India's relationship with ASEAN is a key pillar of her foreign policy and the foundation of Act East Policy.
- India has a separate Mission to ASEAN and the EAS in Jakarta.
- India and ASEAN already has 25 years of Dialogue Partnership, 15 years of Summit Level interaction and 5 years of Strategic Partnership with ASEAN.
- **Economic Cooperation:**
  - ASEAN is India's fourth largest trading partner.
  - India's trade with ASEAN stands at approx. 10.6% of India's overall trade.
  - India's export to ASEAN stands at 11.28% of our total exports. The ASEAN-India Free Trade Area has been completed.
  - ASEAN India-Business Council (AIBC) was set up in 2003 to bring key private sector players from India and the ASEAN countries on a single platform.
- **Socio-Cultural Cooperation:** Programmes to boost People-to-People Interaction with ASEAN, such as inviting ASEAN students to India, Special Training Course for ASEAN diplomats, Exchange of Parliamentarians, etc.
- **Funds:** Financial assistance has been provided to ASEAN countries from the following Funds:
  - ASEAN-India Cooperation Fund
  - ASEAN-India S&T Development Fund
  - ASEAN-India Green Fund
- **Delhi Declaration:** To identify Cooperation in the Maritime Domain as the key area of cooperation under the ASEAN-India strategic partnership.
- **Delhi Dialogue:** Annual Track 1.5 event for discussing politico-security and economic issues between ASEAN and India.
- **ASEAN-India Centre (AIC):** To undertake policy research, advocacy and networking activities with organizations and think-tanks in India and ASEAN.
- **Political Security Cooperation:** India places ASEAN at the centre of its Indo-Pacific vision of Security and Growth for All in the Region.

## What is the Significance of ASEAN for India?

- India needs a close diplomatic relationship with ASEAN nations both for economic and security reasons.
- Connectivity with the ASEAN nations can allow India to improve its presence in the region.
- These connectivity projects keep Northeast India at the centre, ensuring the economic growth of the northeastern states.
- Improved trade ties with the ASEAN nations would mean a counter to China's presence in the region and economic growth and development for India.

- ASEAN occupies a centralised position in the rules-based security architecture in the Indo-Pacific, which is vital for India since most of its trade is dependent on maritime security.
- Collaboration with the ASEAN nations is necessary to counter insurgency in the Northeast, combat terrorism, tax evasions etc.

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