

CSB IAS ACADEMY

TOPIC OF THE DAY (DATE: 08.09.2023)

20th ASEAN-India Summit

ASEAN is 'Central Pillar' of India's Act East Policy – PM Modi

WHY IN NEWS?

Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended the 20th ASEAN-India Summit and in Jakarta on 7 September 2023.

BACKGROUND

- **ASEAN** - The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is a regional grouping that aims to promote economic and security cooperation among its ten members: *Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.*
- **Establishment:** It was established on **8 August 1967 in Bangkok, Thailand**, with the signing of the ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration) by the founding fathers of ASEAN: Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.
- **Aim:** The motto of ASEAN is **“One Vision, One Identity, One Community”**.
- **Secretariat:** ASEAN Secretariat is located in **Jakarta, Indonesia**.
- ASEAN countries have a total population of 662 million people and a combined gross domestic product (GDP) of \$3.2 trillion as of 2022.
- **Institutional mechanism of ASEAN** include ASEAN Coordinating Council (ACC), ASEAN Secretariat, ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF).

Highlights of ASEAN- India Relations:

- ASEAN-India Summit Started in **2002 in Cambodia**. Since 2002, India has not missed a single ASEAN-India summit. This year summit is **PM Modi's 9th Summit** and the first one of the relations elevated to the Comprehensive Strategic partnership level.
- **During 69th Republic Day celebrations on January 26, 2018** India had invited leaders of all 10 countries of Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN). This was the first time that India hosted more than one head of state or government at the Republic Day event.
- **ASEAN and India celebrated the 30th anniversary last year** and the relations between them have elevated to the level of Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP).
- The bilateral trade between them was just **US\$ 9 billion when they had the 1st summit way back in 2002**, and now the trade is likely to cross the **US\$ 150 billion mark in 2023**. In **2010 Free Trade Agreement** was also signed and entered into force between India and ASEAN

Three recent developments in ASEAN India Relations

- First, **India and Cambodia co-chaired the maiden India-ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting in Siem Reap on 22 November 2022**
- Second, **the 1st ASEAN-India Maritime Exercise 2023** was held in the 1st week of May 2023.
- Third, the **ASEAN Post Ministerial Conference with India**, held in Jakarta on 13 July 2023, saw the adoption of the Annex to the Plan of Action to Implement the **ASEAN-India Partnership for Peace, Progress, and Shared Prosperity (2021-2025)**.

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Significance of ASEAN for India

- **Potential market:** ASEAN constitutes the 3rd largest market in the world. This can help India utilize its export potential.
- **Convergence with Indo-Pacific strategy:** ASEAN is a crucial component of India's "Act East" policy and its "Indo-Pacific" strategy, reflecting the convergence of interests in the region.
- **Countering China's influence:** Strengthening relations with ASEAN countries can serve as a counterbalance to China's influence in the region.
- **Connectivity with North East:** Connectivity initiatives with ASEAN can boost economic development in India's northeastern states by positioning them as a hub for regional trade and commerce.
- **Important for rule-based order:** ASEAN plays a central role in promoting a rules-based security architecture in the Indo-Pacific region, which is essential for the region's stability and prosperity.

HIGHLIGHTS OF 20th ASEAN - INDIA SUMMIT

- At the ASEAN-India Summit, PM Modi held extensive discussions with ASEAN partners on further strengthening of **ASEAN-India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership** and charting its future course. Prime Minister reaffirmed ASEAN centrality in the Indo-Pacific.
- PM Modi Highlighted the synergies between India's **Indo-Pacific Ocean's Initiative (IPOI)** and **ASEAN's Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP)**. He also emphasized the need to complete **the review of ASEAN-India FTA (AITIGA) in a time bound manner**.
- PM Modi presented **a 12-point proposal for strengthening India – ASEAN cooperation covering connectivity, digital transformation, trade and economic engagement, addressing contemporary challenges, people-to-people contacts and deepening strategic engagement, as follows:**
 1. Establishing **multi-modal connectivity and economic corridor** that links South-East Asia-India-West Asia-Europe
 2. Offered to share India's Digital Public Infrastructure Stack with ASEAN partners
 3. Announced ASEAN-India fund for Digital Future focusing on cooperation in digital transformation and financial connectivity
 4. Announced renewal of support to **Economic and Research Institute of ASEAN** and East Asia (ERIA) to act as knowledge partner for enhancing our engagement.
 5. Called for collectively raising issues being faced by Global South in multilateral for a
 6. Invited **ASEAN countries to join Global Centre for Traditional Medicine** being established by WHO in India
 7. Called for **working together on Mission LiFE**.
 8. Offered to share India's experience in providing **affordable and quality medicines to people through Jan-Aushadhi Kendras**.
 9. Called for collective fight against terrorism, terror financing and cyber-disinformation
 10. Invited ASEAN countries to **join Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure**
 11. Called for cooperation in **Disaster Management**
 12. Called for enhanced cooperation on **maritime safety, security and domain awareness**