



India-Malaysia Defence Cooperation

For Prelims: India-Malaysia Defense Cooperation, Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Free Trade Agreement.

For Mains: India- Malaysia Relations and Recent developments.

Why in News?

Recently, Indian Defence Minister interacted with his Malaysian counterpart to deepen **Defence Cooperation** between the two countries.

- The Malaysian air force has been looking for 18 new light fighter jets with several nations, including South Korea, Pakistan, China and Sweden, making a pitch. The Indian offer is for the [LCA Mk1A version](#).
- India has offered **a dual package for the indigenous fighter jets** as well as maintenance of the Russian origin Su30 MKM aircraft being operated by Malaysia.



What are the Highlights of the Meeting?

- Both countries highlighted the areas in which **Indian defence industries could assist Malaysia**. India invited senior officers from Malaysia to India to **get a first-hand experience of the facilities and products of Indian defence industry**.
- Malaysia expressed the **need for inducting women personnel in peace keeping missions**.

Both sides agreed to engage each other on this issue.

- Both countries agreed to **upgrade capability for [Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief \(HADR\) operations](#)**.
- Both sides discussed the **existing defence cooperation activities and framework** between the two countries, and ways to further enhance them under the existing **Malaysia India Defence Cooperation Meeting (MIDCOM) framework**.
 - The next MIDCOM is scheduled to held in July 2022, and it was decided to use this **platform for a deeper engagement in defence**.

What are the Key Points of India-Malaysia Relations?

- India established **diplomatic relations with Malaysia in 1957**.
- **Economic Relation:** India and Malaysia have signed Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA). CECA is a kind of **[Free Trade Agreement \(FTA\)](#)**.
 - India has also signed the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) in services and investments with the 10-member **[Association of Southeast Asian Nations \(ASEAN\)](#)**.
 - Malaysia is the third largest trading partner in ASEAN.
 - Bilateral trade between India and Malaysia is significantly biased in favour of Malaysia.
- **Defence & Security Cooperation:** joint military exercises “Harimau Shakti” are held annually between the two countries.
- **Traditional medicine:** India and Malaysia have signed a MoU on cooperation in the field of Traditional Medicine in October 2010.
 - The Government of Malaysia has been working to popularize **[AYUSH \(Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy\) systems](#)** in Malaysia.
 - AYUSH systems are practiced in Malaysia.
- **Recent Developments:**
 - In 2020, India **[resumed purchases of Malaysian palm oil](#)** after a gap of four-month following a diplomatic row between the two countries.
 - The former Prime Minister of Malaysia **had criticised India's [Citizenship Amendment Act \(CAA\)](#)** which was considered as an interference in the internal matter of India.

What is the Significance of Malaysia for India?

- As a country where 7.2% of the population is of Indian origin, **Malaysia assumes an important place in India’s foreign policy**.
- Surrounded by busy sea lines of communications such as the **[Strait of Malacca](#)** and the **[South China Sea](#)**, Malaysia is also a key pillar of **[India’s Act East policy](#)** and critical to **[India’s maritime connectivity strategies](#)**.

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