



20th ASEAN-India Summit and the 18th East Asia Summit

For Prelims: [ASEAN-India Summit](#), [East Asia Summit](#), [India's Digital Public Infrastructure](#)

For Mains: Role of the EAS in addressing regional issues of common interest and concern, Significance of ASEAN for India, India-ASEAN Areas of Cooperation

Source: [PIB](#)

Why in News?

Recently, the **Prime Minister (PM) of India** attended the 20th [Association of Southeast Asian Nations\(ASEAN\)-India Summit](#) and the 18th [East Asia Summit \(EAS\)](#) in Jakarta, Indonesia.

- The two summits were an opportunity for **India to strengthen its relationships with ASEAN countries** and reaffirm its commitment to a free, open, and rules-based [Indo-Pacific](#).

What are the Key Highlights of the 20th ASEAN-India Summit?

- The PM of India 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.
- **The 12-point proposal included the following:**
 - Establishing **multi-modal connectivity and economic corridor that links South-East Asia-India-West Asia-Europe**.
 - Offered to share [India's Digital Public Infrastructure Stack](#) with ASEAN partners.
 - Announced an ASEAN-India fund for **Digital Future focusing on cooperation in digital transformation and financial connectivity**.
 - Announced renewal of support to the **Economic and Research Institute of ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA)** to act as a knowledge partner for enhancing our engagement.
 - Called for collectively raising issues being faced by [Global South in multilateral fora](#)
 - Invited ASEAN countries to join the [Global Centre for Traditional Medicine being established by WHO in India](#).
 - Called for **working together on Mission LiFE(Lifestyle for the Environment)**.
 - Offered to share India's experience in providing affordable and quality medicines to people through [Jan-Aushadhi Kendras](#).
 - Called for a collective fight **against terrorism, terror financing, and cyber-disinformation**.
 - Invited **ASEAN countries to join the [Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure](#)**. Called for cooperation in disaster management.
 - Called for enhanced cooperation on **maritime safety, security, and domain awareness**.

Association of Southeast Asian Nations:

▪ **About:**

- The ASEAN 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.**
- The organization's goal is to **promote stability and economic growth across these nations.**
- Its **chairmanship rotates annually, based on the alphabetical order of the English names of Member States.**
- The region has **one of the largest economies in the world, and it is believed that by 2050, it will have the 4th-largest economy in the world.**

▪ **Members:**

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

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What are the Key Highlights of the 18th East Asia Summit?

▪ **Reaffirming Commitment to East Asia Summit:**

- The PM of India emphasized the significance of the EAS mechanism and reaffirmed **India's support for further strengthening it.**
- India's strong support for ASEAN centrality and called for ensuring a free, **open and rules-based Indo-Pacific.**

▪ **Quad's Vision and Global Challenges:**

- Insights into the PM's discussion on the [Quad's vision](#) and the cooperative approach to address global challenges like terrorism, climate change, and resilient supply chains.

▪ **India's Initiatives in Climate Change:**

- India's initiatives in climate change, including [ISA \(International Solar Alliance\)](#), [CDRI \(Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure\)](#), [LiFE \(Mission LiFE\)](#), and [OSOWOG \(One Sun One World One Grid\)](#) was highlighted.

East Asia Summit

▪ About:

- The EAS was established in **2005 as an Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)-led initiative.**
- The EAS is the **only leader-led forum in the Indo-Pacific** that brings together all key partners to discuss political, security and economic issues of strategic importance.
- The EAS operates on the principles of **openness, inclusiveness, respect for international law**, ASEAN centrality, and ASEAN's role as the driving force.
- The idea of an East Asia Grouping was first proposed by then **Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad in 1991.**
 - The first summit was held in **Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 14 December 2005.**

▪ Members:

- The EAS comprises **18 members**: the **10 ASEAN countries** (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam) and eight dialogue partners (Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Russia and the United States).

▪ Six Priority Areas of Cooperation:

- Environment and energy, education, finance, global health issues and pandemic diseases, natural disaster management, and ASEAN Connectivity.

▪ India and East Asia Summit:

- **India has been a founding member of the EAS since 2005** and has actively participated in all its meetings and activities.
- India views the EAS as a key platform for enhancing its **Act East Policy** and strengthening its strategic partnership with ASEAN and other regional countries.
- At the **East Asia Summit** in Bangkok in **November 2019**, India had unveiled India's **Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI)**, which is aimed at forging partnerships to create a secure and stable maritime domain.
- India has contributed to the EAS cooperation in various fields, such as disaster management, renewable energy, education, health, connectivity, maritime security and counterterrorism.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q1. India is a member of which among the following? (2015)

1. Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
2. Association of South-East Asian Nations
3. East Asia Summit

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 3 only
(c) 1, 2 and 3
(d) India is a member of none of them

Ans: (b)

Q2. Consider the following countries: (2018)

1. Australia
2. Canada

3. China
4. India
5. Japan
6. USA

Which of the above are among the 'free-trade partners' of ASEAN?

- (a) 1, 2, 4 and 5
(b) 3, 4, 5 and 6
(c) 1, 3, 4 and 5
(d) 2, 3, 4 and 6

Ans: (c)

Q3. The term 'Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership' often appears in the news in the context of the affairs of a group of countries known as (2016)

- (a) G20
(b) ASEAN
(c) SCO
(d) SAARC

Ans: (b)

Exp:

- Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) is a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between the ten member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the five countries (Australia, China, Japan, South Korea and New Zealand) with which ASEAN has existing FTAs.
- **Therefore, option (b) is the correct answer.**

Q4. In the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation, an initiative of six countries, which of the following is/are not a participant/ participants? (2015)

1. Bangladesh
2. Cambodia
3. China
4. Myanmar
5. Thailand

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 only
(b) 2, 3 and 4
(c) 1 and 3
(d) 1, 2 and 5

Ans: (c)

Mains

Q. Evaluate the economic and strategic dimensions of India's Look East Policy in the context of the post-Cold War international scenario. (2016)

