



ASEAN Denies Myanmar's Chairmanship for 2026

[Source: TOI](#)

Why in News?

[Association of Southeast Asian Nations \(ASEAN\)](#) leaders have decided to deny Myanmar the opportunity to assume the rotating leadership of their regional bloc in 2026.

- This decision comes as a setback to Myanmar's ruling generals, who have been seeking international recognition after seizing power violently in 2021.
- Philippines agreed to take over the **regional bloc's chairmanship in 2026** at the ASEAN summit hosted by Indonesia.



What are the Reasons for Myanmar's Exclusion from the ASEAN Leadership?

- ASEAN diplomats have suggested that **Myanmar's exclusion is related to ongoing civil strife** within the country.
- Additionally, there are concerns that ASEAN's relations with the United States and the [European Union](#), among other international actors, **might be negatively impacted due to their non-recognition of Myanmar's military-led government.**

What is the Background and Concerns in Myanmar?

▪ **Background:**

- In 2021, the Myanmar Army ousted Aung San Suu Kyi's democratically elected government, leading to widespread **condemnation and calls for her immediate release from detention.**
- Western governments, led by the US, have been vocal in their opposition to the military-led government in Myanmar.

▪ **Issues:**

- Since the military takeover in Myanmar, security forces have been accused of killing approximately 4,000 civilians and arresting over 24,000 others.
- Myanmar's economy has collapsed with nearly half of the population now living below the **poverty line.**
- Despite clear legal obligations for the military to protect civilians in the conduct of hostilities, there has been consistent disregard for the related rules of international law.

What is the 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 members 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.
- In 2022, the estimated total GDP of all ASEAN states amounted to approximately **USD 3.66 trillion.**
- Commodity trade between India and ASEAN region has reached 98.39 billion in the period April 2021- February 2022. India's main trading ties are with Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam and Thailand.

▪ **Members:**

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



UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q1. 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)

Q2. 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)