



India's Engagement at ASEAN Meet

[Source: IE](#)

Why in News?

Recently, India's External Affairs Minister's (EAM) visit to Vientiane, Laos, for the [Association of Southeast Asian Nations \(ASEAN\)](#) meetings has garnered significant attention. This visit has provided a platform for high-level dialogues with several global leaders, aiming to strengthen bilateral relations.

What are the Key Highlights of the ASEAN Meet?

- **ASEAN in India's Foreign Policy:** EAM emphasised ASEAN as the cornerstone of [India's Act East Policy](#) and [Indo-Pacific vision](#).
 - 2024 marks 10 years since **India's Act East Policy** was announced at the 9th [East Asia Summit in 2014](#).
 - The policy aims to enhance commerce, connectivity, and capacity building, strategic, and cultural relations with the Asia-Pacific region.
 - India views the ASEAN partnership as crucial for its political, economic, and security cooperation.
 - Highlighted India's vision for the **Indo-Pacific in promoting a free, open, inclusive, and peaceful region** based on a rules-based international order.
- **Focus Areas:** Discussions involved expanding people-to-people linkages and bilateral cooperation.
 - The visit aims to solidify partnerships and advance mutual interests in the region.

What is the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) ?

- **About:** The ASEAN is a regional intergovernmental organization founded on 8th August 1967, in **Bangkok, Thailand**.
 - Creation was formalised through the **ASEAN Declaration**
 - Initially signed by Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand.
 - ASEAN was expanded to include Brunei Darussalam (1984), Vietnam (1995), Laos PDR and Myanmar (1997), and Cambodia (1999).
 - The region has one of the largest economies in the world; believed to have the 4th-largest economy in the world by 2050.
 - The bloc's biggest success in recent years has been promoting economic integration among members. It also helped negotiate the [Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership](#), the **world's largest free trade agreement**.
- **ASEAN Charter (2008):** Provided ASEAN with a **legal status and institutional framework**. It codified norms, rules, and values, enhancing accountability and compliance.
- **ASEAN Summit:** The highest policy-making body, comprising the Heads of State or Government of ASEAN member states, **meets twice annually**.
 - The first summit was held in Bali, Indonesia, in 1976.
- **India-ASEAN Relations:**
 - India began formal engagement with ASEAN in 1992 as a "Sectoral Dialogue Partner" and subsequently as a "Dialogue Partner" in 1995.
 - Partnership elevated to a **Strategic Partnership in 2012 and a Comprehensive**

Strategic Partnership in 2022.



ASEAN
Association of Southeast Asian Nations

8 Dialogue Partners of ASEAN

United States

China

India

Japan

South Korea

Russia

Australia

New Zealand

ASEAN Members: Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar, Cambodia, Brunei, Timor-Leste

Founded: By signing ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration) (1967)
Founding Members: Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand
Secretariat: Indonesia, Jakarta
Chairmanship: Rotates annually
ASEAN Summit Meetings: Occur biannually

ASEAN Economy:

- Combined GDP: ~ USD 3.66 trillion (2022)
- Total Exports: USD 1.73 trillion (8.24% of global exports in 2021)
- Major Export Item: Monolithic Integrated Circuit, Palm Oil, Data Processing Equipment

ADMM+ Meeting: Platform for ASEAN and its 8 Dialogue Partners (India, Australia, US, Japan, S. Korea, China, Russia and New Zealand)
○ First Convened in: Hanoi, Vietnam (2010)

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Indo-Pacific Region

- The Indo-Pacific region is a vast geographic area encompassing the Indian and **western/central Pacific Oceans**, home to diverse cultures and ecosystems.
- It has geopolitical importance, with major powers like China, India, Japan, and the US, and accounts for **more than half the world's population, and it accounts for 60% of global GDP as well as 2/3rd of global economic growth.**
 - However, it faces security challenges like territorial disputes, piracy, terrorism, and nuclear proliferation, as well as environmental concerns.
 - China's rapid growth has contributed to the region's increasing global significance.
- **Indian vision for Indo-Pacific:** India advocates a "free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific" and calls for peaceful resolution of disputes while respecting sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations.



UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

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)

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)

Q. 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)

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