



# 19th East Asia Summit (EAS)

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## Why in News?

Recently, the Prime Minister of India attended the **19th East Asia Summit (EAS)** in **Vientiane, Lao PDR**.

## What are the Key Highlights of the Visit?

- PM advocated for a development-oriented **Indo-Pacific** approach over expansionism.
- Reiterated support for **Nalanda University** and invited EAS members to the Heads of Higher Education Conclave.
- **Addressed global challenges like terrorism, cyber, and maritime threats**, and stressed dialogue-based conflict resolution.
- PM conveyed his wishes to **Malaysia on presiding as the new Chair of ASEAN** and expressed India's full support to it. **The present chair of ASEAN is Lao PDR.**

## What is the East Asia Summit (EAS)?

- **Establishment:** 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 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 14th December 2005.
- **Objectives:** The EAS operates on the principles of openness, inclusiveness, respect for international law, ASEAN centrality, and ASEAN's role as the driving force.
- **Members:** The EAS is a key forum for strategic dialogue in the Indo-Pacific region, involving **18 countries, including ASEAN 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).
- **Importance:**
  - **Economically:** In 2023, EAS members represented approximately **53% of the world's population and accounted for approximately 60% of global GDP**.
    - **India is ASEAN's seventh-largest trading partner**, while ASEAN is India's fourth-largest partner. In the last ten years India-ASEAN trade had doubled to over USD 130 billion.
  - **Strategically:** Connectivity projects in Southeast Asian countries, both infrastructure and digital, are key to **India's Act East Policy**, with major initiatives like the **India-Myanmar-Thailand Highway and Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport** boosting regional links and connectivity with East Asian Nations.
    - Besides, India also engages in capacity-building through the **Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme** with Southeast Asian countries like

Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam.

- **Culturally: Buddhism, a major cultural and religious tradition** that connects many **Southeast Asian and East Asian nations, originated in India.**
  - Restoration of **Nalanda University** and support for the **International Buddhist Confederation**, enhance India's spiritual and cultural ties with Myanmar, Thailand, and Cambodia, showcasing its commitment to promoting **Buddhist traditions.**

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## East Asia Summit



### UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

#### **Prelims**

**Q. 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. 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)**

**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)**