



Second ASEAN Digital Ministers Meeting

For Prelims: Location of ASEAN nations, ADGMIN, India-ASEAN Digital Work Plan 2022, ASEAN Regional Forum, East Asia Summit.

For Mains: India-ASEAN Digital Work Plan 2022, Information and communication technologies (ICT) and its importance, India's relations with ASEAN.

Why in News

Recently, the 2nd **ASEAN Digital Ministers' (ADGMIN)** Meeting with India virtually, where two sides finalized **India-ASEAN Digital work plan 2022** for future collaboration in the field.

Key Points

▪ About:

- ADGMIN is an **annual meeting of telecom ministers** of **10 ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations)** countries and dialogue partner countries—Australia, Canada, China, EU, India, Japan, Republic of Korea, New Zealand, Russia, UK and US.
 - **ASEAN nations include** Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.

▪ India-ASEAN Digital Work Plan 2022:

- India and ASEAN nations have **jointly approved a work plan** under which they will **develop a system to combat use of stolen and counterfeit mobile handsets**.
- Other areas of cooperation include **wifi access network interface** for nationwide public internet.
- Emphasis will also be given on the **capacity building and knowledge sharing** in emerging areas in the field of **information and communication technologies** such as **Internet of Things (IoT), 5G**, advanced satellite communication, cyber forensics.

▪ Significance of the ICT:

- Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) **enables and strengthens democratic systems and institutions** through enhanced engagement between citizens and the state.
- Use of ICTs **promote free speech, human rights and the free flow of information** besides expanding citizens' opportunities to participate in decision-making processes and have potential to transform lives of people living in rural areas.
- Technology has emerged as a **powerful tool to mitigate the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic** which is not just a challenge for the public health system but is also adversely impacting the economy and social order of the countries.

▪ Related Steps taken by India:

- The telecom ministry in December 2019 had launched a **portal to help people in Delhi-NCR block and trace their stolen or lost mobile phones**.
 - The project is backed by the **Central Equipment Identity Register (CEIR) system**, which was undertaken by the telecom department for addressing security, theft and other concerns including reprogramming of mobile handsets.

Other Related Groupings

▪ **ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM) Plus:**

- It is an **annual meeting of Defence Ministers of 10 ASEAN countries and eight dialogue partner countries.**
- The **ADMM-Plus countries include ten ASEAN Member States and eight Plus countries**, namely Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, and the United States (same as in the EAS).

▪ **ASEAN Regional Forum:**

- Established in 1994, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) is an important platform for security dialogue in the Indo-Pacific.
- It comprises **27 members: the 10 ASEAN member states, the 10 ASEAN dialogue partners** (Australia, Canada, China, the European Union, India, Japan, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea (ROK), Russia and the United States); Bangladesh, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Mongolia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Timor-Leste; and one ASEAN observer (Papua New Guinea).

▪ **East Asia Summit (EAS):**

- Established in 2005, it is a forum of **18 regional leaders for strategic dialogue and cooperation** on the key political, security, and economic challenges facing the Indo-Pacific region.
- It comprises the **ten member states of the ASEAN** which are Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam, **along with 8 other countries namely** Australia, China, Japan, India, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Russia and the USA.

Source: PIB

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