



11th ADMM Meeting-Plus and Buddhism

For Prelims: [ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus](#), [Buddhist Principles](#), [Act East policy](#), [United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea \(UNCLOS\), 1982](#), [ASEAN](#), [Global Commons](#), [High Seas](#), [Antarctica](#), [Outer Space](#), [Vinaya Pitaka](#), [Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation \(BIMSTEC\)](#), [India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway Project](#), [Indian Ocean Rim Association \(IORA\)](#).

For Mains: India's Act East Policy, India and its neighbourhood- relations.

Source: [PIB](#)

Why in News?

Recently, India's Defence Minister addressed the **11th ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus) forum** held in **Vientiane, Lao PDR**.

- He emphasised the role of [Buddhist principles](#) in resolving conflicts and celebrated a decade of India's [Act East policy \(AEP\)](#).

What are the Key Highlights of the 11th ADMM Meeting-Plus?

- **Freedom of Navigation:** India highlighted the need for adherence to the [United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea \(UNCLOS\), 1982](#) for freedom of navigation and overflight in the [Indo-Pacific region](#).
 - India advocated for a **Code of Conduct** that protects the **rights and interests** of nations that remain consistent with **international law**.
- **International Order:** India called for greater adoption of **Buddhist principles** of peaceful coexistence in a world that is increasingly **polarised into blocks and camps**.
- **Advocacy for Dialogue:** India's approach to **border disputes, trade agreements**, and other challenges demonstrates its belief in **open communication** to foster trust, understanding, and cooperation.
- **Asian Century:** India described the **21st century as the "Asian Century,"** emphasising ASEAN's economic dynamism and its **vibrant trade, commerce, and cultural exchanges**.
- **Decade of the Act East Policy:** India Highlighted the success of **India's Act East Policy**, which has strengthened ties with [ASEAN](#) and **Indo-Pacific nations** over the past decade.
 - The Act East Policy was launched in **November 2014** at the **12th ASEAN-India Summit 2014** held in Myanmar capital **Naypyidaw**.
- **Climate Change and Defence:** India proposed the development of an **ADMM-Plus Defence Strategy on Climate Change** to tackle interlinked security and environmental challenges.
- **Global Commons:** India underscored the importance of safeguarding [Global Commons](#), which include **shared natural resources** beyond national boundaries.
 - Global Commons include [High Seas](#), [Atmosphere](#), [Antarctica](#) and [Outer Space](#).

Note:

India quoted **Rabindranath Tagore's 1927 remark** during his Southeast Asia visit: "**I saw India everywhere, yet I couldn't recognise it.**"

- The statement symbolises the **deep and widespread cultural & historical ties** between India and SouthEast Asia.

What is ADMM-Plus Forum?

- **About:** It is a multilateral defence cooperation framework that brings together the defence ministers of the **10 ASEAN** member states, **8 Plus countries (dialogue partners)**, and **Timor Leste**.
 - **ASEAN Members** include Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam.
 - **8 Dialogue** partners include **India**, China, **Russia**, Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand and the **US**.
- **Establishment:** The Inaugural ADMM-Plus was convened in **Ha Noi, Viet Nam, on 12th October 2010**.
 - Since **2017**, the ADMM-Plus **meets annually**, to allow enhanced dialogue and cooperation among **ASEAN and the Plus Countries**.
- **Focus Area:** The ADMM-Plus currently focuses on **seven areas** of practical cooperation, namely
 - Maritime security (MS)
 - Counter-terrorism (CT)
 - Humanitarian assistance and disaster management (HADR)
 - Peacekeeping operations (PKO)
 - Military medicine (MM)
 - Humanitarian mine action (HMA)
 - Cyber security (CS)
- **Experts' Working Groups (EWGs):** EWGs have been established to facilitate cooperation in these areas.
 - The EWGs are each **co-chaired** by **one ASEAN Member State** and **one Plus Country**, operating in a **three-year cycle**.

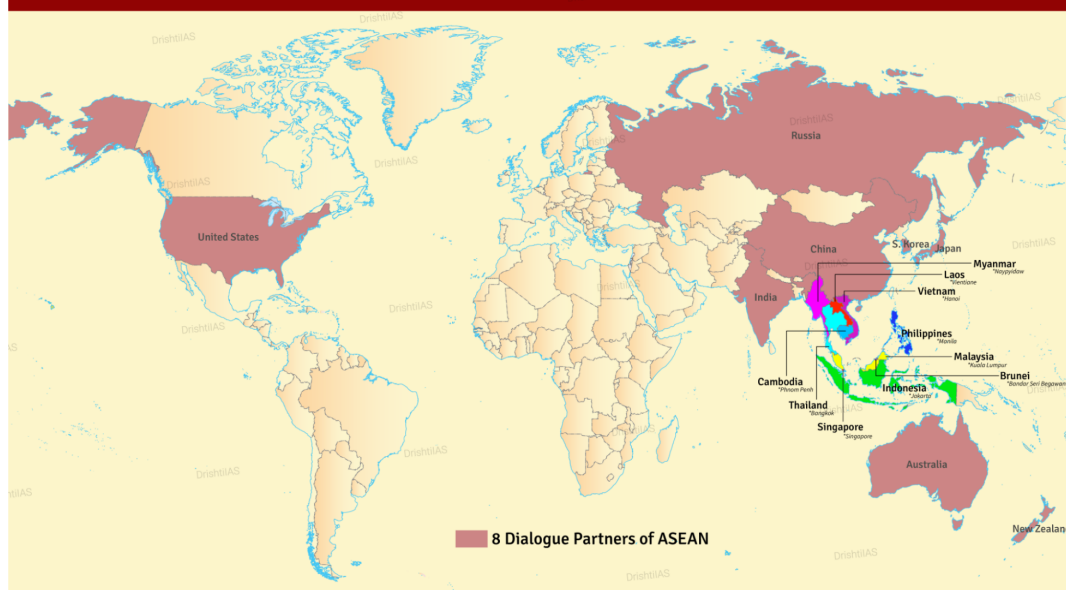
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ASEAN

Association of Southeast Asian Nations



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)



Spread of Buddhism to Southeast Asia

- **Cultural Crossroads:** Indian **traders, sailors, and monks** helped spread Buddhism to Southeast Asia, with ports like **Srivijaya (Sumatra, Indonesia)** and **Champa (Vietnam)** serving as key centres for learning and cultural exchange from the **7th to 13th centuries**.
- **Legitimacy of Rulers:** Southeast Asian rulers adopted Buddhism to strengthen their authority, aligning with figures like **Buddha or Hindu deities** to **legitimise their rule**.
 - The **Srivijaya Empire**, centered in **Sumatra**, was a key player in the spread of **Buddhism**.
- **Fusion of Hinduism and Buddhism:** In Southeast Asia, **Buddhism** often **blended** with local beliefs and **Hinduism**.
 - Buddhist and Hindu temples in Southeast Asia, like **Angkor Wat (Cambodia)** and **Borobudur (Indonesia)**, showcase this fusion.
- **Cultural Diffusion:** Buddhism influenced the local cultures of places like **Bali and Java**, seen in their **dance, rituals, and temple architecture**.

What is the Role of Buddhist Ideals in Conflict Resolution?

- **Buddhist Perspectives:** Three vital **Buddhist perspectives** that can help us resolve or minimise conflict.
 - Everyone is a **Buddha**, worthy of **utmost respect**.

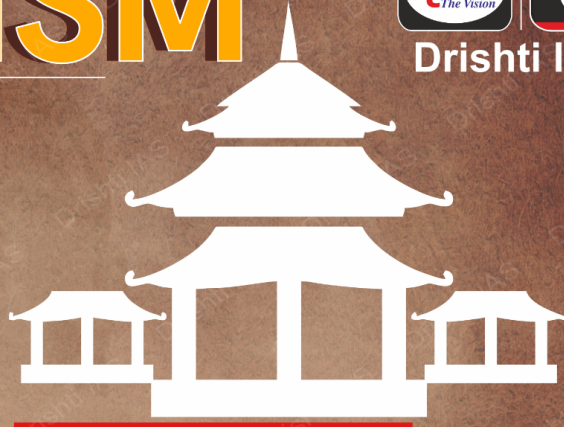
- Dialogue is the **most powerful** means of creating **understanding and respect** among people.
- Our **inner transformation** is the key to changing the world (reducing the **poison of anger** which includes **greed (lobha), hatred (dvesha), and delusion (moha)**).
- **Adhikaraṇasamathadhamma**: Buddhist text [Vinaya Pitaka](#) outlines **adhikaraṇasamathadhammā**, principles for **resolving monks' conflicts**.
 - It provides detailed guidelines for monks on **confession, reconciliation, resolving disputes, and healing splits** in the Sangha.
 - It applies to anyone seeking reconciliation of differences, whether **personal or political**.
- **Middle Path (Madhyam Marg)**: Advocating **balanced policies** that consider all stakeholders' needs, fostering **equitable solutions** while avoiding extremes.
- **Interdependence (Pratītyasamutpāda)**: Promoting **mutual understanding and shared responsibility** among nations to address global issues like **climate change and resource conflicts**.
- **Karuna (Compassion)**: Prioritising **humanitarian aid** and addressing the root causes of suffering in conflict zones, such as **poverty and inequality**.



BUDDHISM



Drishti IAS



ORIGIN

- 6th century BC, based on the teachings of Gautam Buddha

MAIN FEATURES

- Essence - Attainment of enlightenment (Nibbana)
- Supreme Deity - None

PRINCIPLES

- Avoid the extremes; follow Madhyam Marg (middle path)
- Individualistic component (everyone is responsible for their own happiness)
- 4 Noble Truths:
 - Dukkha (suffering)
 - Samudya (cause of suffering)
 - Nirodha (suffering could be ended)
 - Atthanga Magga (8-fold path to achieve this)
- 8-Fold Path:
 - Right - view, intention, speech, action, livelihood, mindfulness, effort and concentration

BUDDHISM REJECTS

- Authenticity of Vedas
- Concept of soul (atman) (unlike Jainism)

MAJOR BUDDHIST TEXTS

- Sutta Pitaka (main teachings of Buddha - Dhamma)
- Vinaya Pitaka (rules of conduct for monks/nuns)
- Abhidhamma Pitaka (philosophical analysis)
- Other imp texts - Divyavadana, Dipavamsa, Mahavamsa, Milind Panha

Budhha's teachings were rehearsed, authenticated & divided in 3 Pitakas at the 1st Buddhist Council

These teachings were written down c. 25 BC in Pali

4 BUDDHIST COUNCILS

| Buddhist Council | Patron | Venue | Chairman | Year |
|------------------|-------------|---------------------|--------------|--------|
| First | Ajatashatru | Rajgriha | Mahakashyapa | 483 BC |
| Second | Kalashoka | Vaishali | Sabbakami | 383 BC |
| Third | Ashoka | Patliputra | Mogaliputra | 250 BC |
| Fourth | Kanishka | Kundalban (Kashmir) | Vasumitra | 72 AD |

What is India's Act East Policy (AEP)?

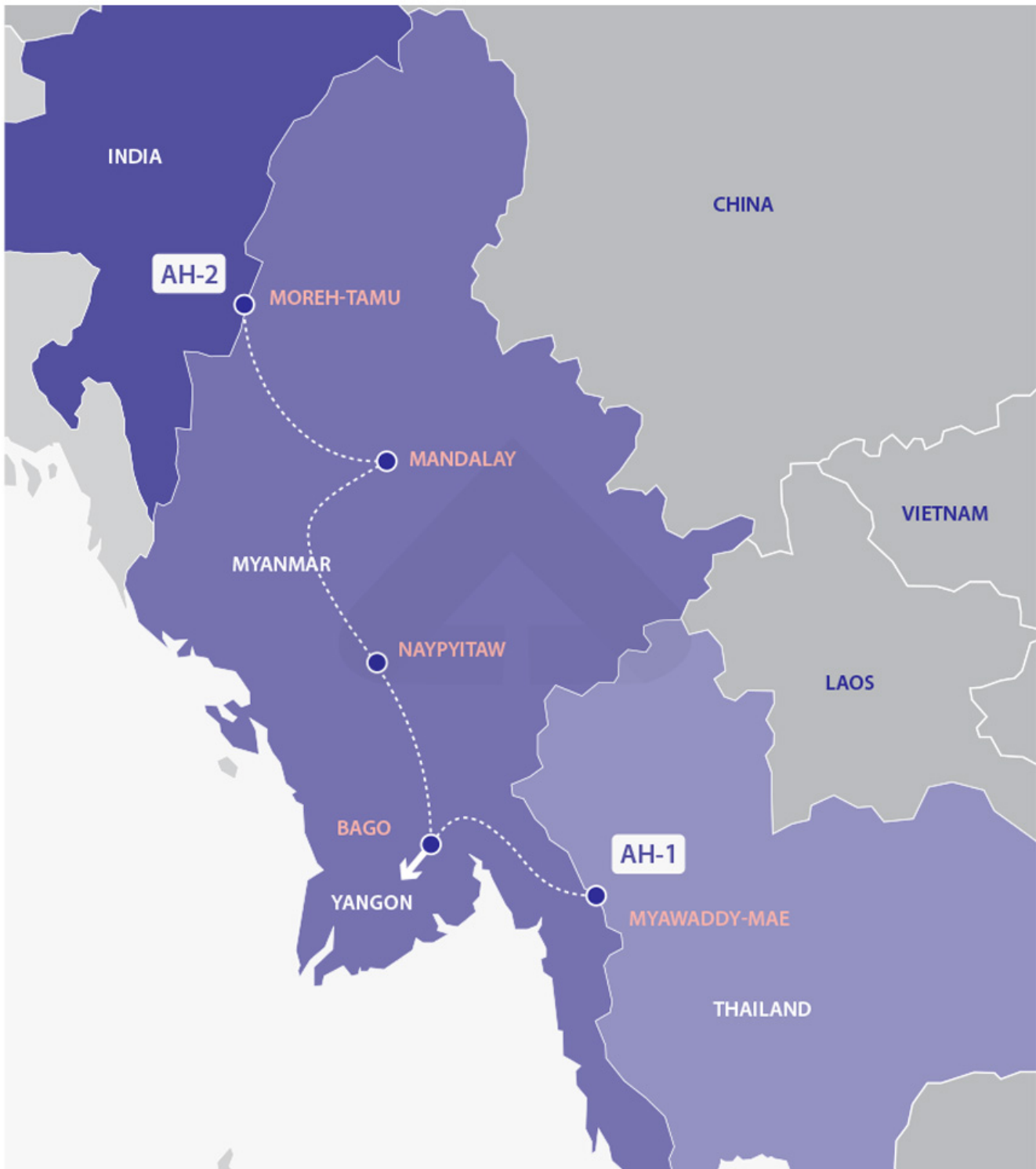
- About:** India's **AEP** is a strategic initiative aimed at strengthening India's engagement with the countries of **Southeast Asia, East Asia, and the broader Indo-Pacific region**.
 - It evolves from the **Look East Policy, 1992**, focusing on **proactive engagement** to boost economic growth, regional security, and cultural exchanges.
- Strategic Partnerships:** India has upgraded its relations to **strategic partnerships** with several key countries in the region, including **Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Japan, the Republic of Korea (ROK), Australia, and Singapore**.
- Regional Engagement:** India is actively involved in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), **East Asia Summit (EAS)**, the **Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)**, Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD), **Mekong Ganga Cooperation**

(MGC), and [Indian Ocean Rim Association \(IORA\)](#).

- **Infrastructure, and Connectivity:** Major infrastructure projects include the [Kaladan Multi-modal Transit Transport Project](#), [India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway Project](#), [Rhi-Tiddim Road Project](#), and [Border Haats](#).
- **Security Cooperation:** There is a shared commitment between India and ASEAN to upholding **international maritime laws** and norms and promoting regional stability.
- **Northeast India:** Efforts focus on improving connectivity between **Northeast India and ASEAN** through trade, cultural exchanges, and infrastructure development.
 - **India-Myanmar-Thailand trilateral highway (Asian trilateral highway)** will connect **India (Moreh, Manipur) and Thailand (Mae Sot)** via Myanmar and is planned to be extended to **Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam**.



India - Myanmar - Thailand Trilateral Highway



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Conclusion

India's participation in the **11th ADMM-Plus** highlights its commitment to **regional peace, security, and cooperation**. Emphasising **Buddhist principles for conflict resolution**, the Act East Policy's success, and climate change defence strategies reflect India's broader vision for a **peaceful, integrated, and sustainable** Indo-Pacific region.

Drishti Mains Question:

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

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)

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)