**Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)**

**(Updated: Feb 2022)**

**About:**

* It is a**regional grouping** that promotes economic, political, and security cooperation.
* It was established in **Aug 1967 in Bangkok, Thailand**  by the founding fathers 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.
* ASEAN countries have a total population of 650 million people and a combined [**Gross Domestic Product (GDP)**](https://www.drishtiias.com/printpdf/base-year-for-gdp-calculations) of USD 2.8 trillion. It is **India’s 4th largest trading partner** with about USD 86.9 billion in trade.

**Members:**

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

[](https://www.drishtiias.com/images/uploads/1635836047_image1.jpg)

**India’s Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI)**

* It is an**open, non-treaty-based initiative for countries to work together for cooperative and collaborative solutions to common challenges** in the region. .
* It focusses on **seven pillars:**  
  + Maritime Security
  + Maritime Ecology
  + Maritime Resources
  + Capacity Building and Resource Sharing
  + Disaster Risk Reduction and Management
  + Science, Technology and Academic Cooperation
  + Trade Connectivity and Maritime Transport

**Why in News**

In Oct 2021, India participated in the **18th** [**India-ASEAN Summit**](https://www.drishtiias.com/daily-updates/daily-news-analysis/17th-asean-india-summit) at the invitation of **Brunei, the current Chair of ASEAN.**

* The **Year 2022** has been highlighted as **India-ASEAN Friendship** by the leaders.
* India-ASEAN Summit is **held every year** and provides an opportunity for India and Asean to**engage at the highest level.**

Key Points

**ASEAN in Act East Policy:**

* The centrality of ASEAN in [**India's Act East Policy**](https://www.drishtiias.com/daily-updates/daily-news-analysis/india-s-act-east-policy-1) and in India's Vision for the wider [**Indo-Pacific**](https://www.drishtiias.com/loksabha-rajyasabha-discussions/the-big-picture-indo-pacific-strategic-importance) Vision has been underlined.
* Welcomed the adoption of the **India-ASEAN Joint Statement** on cooperation for peace, stability and prosperity in the region, building upon the synergies between the **ASEAN Outlook for the Indo-Pacific (AOIP)** and **India’s Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI).**
* Recently, India also addressed the **16th**[**East Asia Summit,**](https://www.drishtiias.com/important-institutions/drishti-specials-important-institutions-international-institution/east-asia-summit) where it **reaffirmed India's focus on a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific** and the principle of Asean Centrality in the region.

**India-ASEAN Connectivity:**

* Exchanged views on enhancing **India-ASEAN connectivity,** including physical, digital and people to people.
* India announced its support for establishing the **ASEAN Cultural Heritage List** to further strengthen **India-ASEAN cultural connectivity**.
* **Trade and Investment:**  
  + The importance of diversification and [**resilience of supply chains**](https://www.drishtiias.com/daily-updates/daily-news-analysis/launch-of-supply-chain-resilience-initiative) for post-Covid economic recovery and in this regard, the need to revamp the **India-ASEAN** [**Free Trade Agreement (FTA)**](https://www.drishtiias.com/daily-updates/daily-news-analysis/india-us-trade-issues-free-trade-agreement) has been underlined.
* **Covid-19**:  
  Highlighted **India’s efforts** in the fight against the [**pandemic**](https://www.drishtiias.com/daily-updates/daily-news-analysis/future-pandemics-and-reduction-measures) in the region.
* India has contributed medical supplies worth USD 200,000 to **ASEAN’s humanitarian initiative** for Myanmar and USD 1 million for**ASEAN’s Covid-19 Response Fund.**

**India-ASEAN and China**

* Traditionally the basis of **India-ASEAN ties** has been trading and people-to-people ties due to shared historical and cultural roots, a more recent and urgent area of convergence has been **balancing China’s rise**.
* Both India and ASEAN aim to **establish a rules-based security architecture for peaceful development in the region,** in contrast to China’s aggressive policies.
* Like India,**several ASEAN members** such as Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Brunei have territorial disputes with China, the China factor does form an important component of the relationship.
* India in 2014 reinvigorated the[**Look East policy** into **Act East Policy**,](https://www.drishtiias.com/daily-updates/daily-news-analysis/india-s-act-east-policy-1#:~:text=About%3A,Pacific%20region%20at%20different%20levels.) with a more strategic outlook than its previous incarnation, **focusing on engagement not just with Southeast Asian countries but also those in the Pacific.**