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18th India-ASEAN Summit

Notes for civil services preparation



UPSC

General Studies

18th India-ASEAN Summit

Recently, India participated in the **18th India-ASEAN 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** and in India's Vision for the wider **Indo-Pacific** 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**, 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** in broadest terms 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** for post-Covid economic recovery and in this regard, the need to revamp the **India-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement (FTA)** has been underlined.
- **Rule-Based Order:**
 - Regional and international issues of common interest and concern, including **South China Sea** and **terrorism**.
 - The importance of promoting a **rules-based order** in the region including through upholding adherence to international law, especially the **UNCLOS**.
- **Covid-19:**
 - Highlighted **India's efforts** in the fight against the **pandemic** in the region and also reiterated support for ASEAN's initiatives in this regard.
 - 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 trade 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**, with a more strategic outlook than its previous incarnation, **focusing on engagement not just with Southeast Asian countries but also those in the Pacific**.

Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

- **About:**
 - It is a **regional grouping** that promotes economic, political, and security cooperation.
 - It was established in **August 1967 in Bangkok, Thailand** with the signing of the **ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration)** 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) of USD 2.8 trillion. It is India's 4th largest trading partner with about USD 86.9 billion in trade.