

### **Overview of India-ASEAN- Relations**

India began formal engagement with ASEAN in 1992 as a “Sectoral Dialogue Partner” (and subsequently as a “Dialogue Partner” in 1996. The initial years as a Dialogue Partner (DP) entailed interaction at the Foreign Minister level which was further upgraded to the Summit level in 2002, when the first such Summit level meeting was held.

2. At the 20 year Commemorative Summit Meeting in New Delhi (December 2012) our Dialogue Partnership was further elevated to a Strategic Partnership.
3. During the 25-year Commemorative Summit in New Delhi (January 2018), India and ASEAN have further agreed that our Strategic Partnership will be focused on building cooperation in the maritime domain.
4. The year 2022 marks 30 years of ASEAN-India relations and it has been designated as ASEAN-India Friendship Year by the leaders in October 2021.

### **Institutional mechanisms for engaging ASEAN**

#### *Summit/AIFMM/AISOM*

5. Engagement with ASEAN is a multi-level interaction process. At the apex is the annual summits (“*ASEAN-India Summit*”) supported by meetings at the Foreign Minister level (“*ASEAN-India Foreign Ministers Meeting*”-AIFMM; *In ASEAN’s terminology, it is called ASEAN Post Ministerial Conference(PMC) 10+1 Sessions with Dialogue partners*) and Senior Official level meetings (“*AISOM*”)(*ie, standalone, prior to AIFMM, prior to AI Summits*). In 2021, 18<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-India Summit was held on 28 October, 2021; AIFMM was held on 04 August, 2021 and 23<sup>rd</sup> AISOM was held on 28 April, 2021. The cycle of meetings begins at Ambassador’s level, ASEAN India Joint Cooperation Committee Meeting (AIJCC), which was held on 23 March 2022.

On October 28, 2021 Prime Minister co-chaired the 18th India-ASEAN Summit with Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah of Brunei, the current Chair of ASEAN. The Summit was held virtually and saw participation from the Leaders of ASEAN Member States. The major highlights were:

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- i. Adoption of ASEAN-India Joint Statement on Cooperation on the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific for Peace Stability and Prosperity in the Region.
- ii. India's support for establishing the ASEAN Cultural Heritage List.
- iii. Beginning of the process of establishment of ASEAN-India Project Management Unit (AIPMU);

**The ASEAN-India Plan of Action & sectoral level Work Plans, for cooperation activities.**

6. Mutually beneficial cooperation activities is one of the tools that is used to engage the ASEAN platform. Cooperation activities are identified either as part of the 5 year 'Plan of Action' approved at the Foreign Ministers level, or through the Work Plans of cooperation generated during interactions with ASEAN 'Sectoral Bodies'.

7. To support cooperation activities between ASEAN and India, Govt of India has created three funds: (i) **ASEAN-India Cooperation Fund (AIF)**, (ii) **ASEAN-India Green Fund (AIGF)** and **ASEAN-India Science and Technology Development Fund (AISTDF)**.

**Delhi Dialogue**

8. The 'Delhi Dialogue' (DD) mechanism hosted by India annually, traditionally inaugurated jointly by India and ASEAN at the Foreign Minister's level, serves as the main Track 1.5 mechanism for our engagement. The DD-mechanism allows participation of think tanks, academics and prominent civil society persons from both India and the ASEAN region, in addition to government representatives, with the objective of contributing ideas and perspectives to furthering the India-ASEAN strategic partnership (the 11<sup>th</sup> edition of the Delhi Dialogue was held in December 2019, Delhi). The XII<sup>th</sup> edition of Delhi Dialogue is planned for June, 2022.

**Sectoral Dialogue mechanisms:**

9. In addition to the Summit-Foreign Minister-SOM-Ambassador level interactions, Indian line ministries also interact with their ASEAN counterparts through sector-specific dialogue mechanisms. The following are some of the important sectoral bodies:

- For business and trade: The ASEAN Economic Ministers+India meetings (Ministerial level)
- For Energy: East Asia Summit Energy Ministers Meeting (Ministerial level)
- For Education: EAS Education Ministers Meeting (Ministerial level)
- For activities in the ICT domain; digital connectivity with ASEAN: ASEAN Digital Minister's Meeting ADGMIN (TELMIN before 2021)+India meetings (Ministerial level).
- For promoting maritime connectivity activities: ASEAN India Maritime Transport Working Group (AIMTWG) (Official)
- For promoting road connectivity activities: ASEAN Highways Sub Working Group (AHSWG) (Official level)
- For promoting cooperation activities in the Agriculture sector: ASEAN-India Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture and Forestry (AIMMAF) (Ministerial level)
- For promoting security sector cooperation including combating terrorism, transnational crimes, drug trafficking. Senior Official's Meeting on Transnational Crimes SOMTC+India (SOM level)
- For promoting cooperation in S&T and the Space Sector: ASEAN-India Working Group on Science & Technology (AIWGST) (Secretary level)

### **India-ASEAN economic engagements**

10. The three main formal institutional mechanisms being used to promote the India-ASEAN economic 'connect' are as follows:

- *ASEAN Economic Ministers-India Consultations (AEM + India)*: The ASEAN Economic Ministers (AEM) is one of the main ASEAN 'sectoral bodies' and therefore AEM-India meetings, one of our most important sectoral body engagements; Commerce Minister attends these meetings. In recent times main agenda of discussions in AEM-India meetings has been review of AITIGA.
- *The ASEAN India Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation (2003)*: finalized during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Summit meeting in 2003, the agreement provides the 'mandate' for the creation of an ASEAN-India Free Trade Area. Subsequently, under its provisions, an (i) ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (*AITIGA, signed 2009, in-force 1 January 2010*);

(ii) the ASEAN-India Agreement for Trade in Services (*AITISA, signed 2014 and all parties ratified it in 2018*) and Agreement on Investment (*signed 2014*) have been finalized and ratified by all parties.

- *ASEAN-India Business Council (AIBC):* Set up in 2003 to promote Comprehensive Economic Cooperation between India and the ASEAN region. It is meant to serve as a private sector mechanism to provide Governments on both sides with authoritative feedback on their current policies and also recommend steps that Governments could take to further promote the ASEAN -India economic partnership. Meetings of the AIBC, which typically take place on the margins of the ASEAN Business Advisory Council, are also meant to provide opportunities for Indian captains of industry to network with ASEAN captains of industry. The last meeting took place in September 2021.

11. *Trade in Commodities:* Commodity trade between India and ASEAN region has reached 98.39 billion in the period April 2021- February 2022. India's main trading ties are with Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam and Thailand i.e., 5 out of the 10 ASEAN member states (>\$10b). (*Table 1*) (*source DGFT*)

12. *Investment:* Between 2000-2021 cumulative FDI's from ASEAN to India was \$117.88 billion. These were mainly accounted for by Singaporean investments in India (\$115 billion). Indian investment into ASEAN since April 2019 till March 2022 is US\$ 55.5 billion out of which US\$ 51.5 billion investment is in Singapore.

### **ASEAN-led frameworks**

13. In addition to all the above India-ASEAN mechanisms, India also actively participates in various 'ASEAN-led frameworks'. In particular, India regularly participates in the meetings of the East Asia Summit (EAS), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting+ (ADMM+) and the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF) meetings and its supporting processes.

### **East Asia Summit**

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14. Established in 2005, the Leaders-led EAS format is an important part of the ASEAN-led frameworks. In addition to Summit level, EAS also meets at level of Ministers, Senior Officials and Ambassadors. As a nation deeply committed to strengthening the EAS as an ASEAN-led organization, India continues to contribute positively to the EAS goals. Government of India in partnership with Australia organized the 5th EAS Conference on Maritime Security Cooperation in November 2021 to take forward our commitments in the maritime security domain. Government of India in partnership with Australia and Singapore also organised the EAS workshop on Combating Marine Pollution especially Marine Plastic Debris on 14-15 Feb 2022.

15. PM Modi announced the **Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI)** at the 14th EAS in 2019, which was aimed at forging partnerships to create a safe, secure, stable, prosperous and sustainable maritime domain with maritime ecology; maritime security; marine resources; capacity building and resource sharing; disaster risk reduction and management; science, technology and academic cooperation; and trade, connectivity and maritime transport; as its key pillars.

16. On October 27, 2021 Prime Minister participated in the 16th East Asia Summit via videoconference hosted by Brunei. It saw the participation of leaders from ASEAN countries and other EAS Participating Countries including Australia, China, Japan, South Korea, Russia, USA and India. The EAS leaders adopted three Statements on Mental Health, Economic recovery through Tourism and Sustainable Recovery, which have been co-sponsored by India.

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**TABLE 1: INDIA'S TRADE WITH INDIVIDUAL ASEAN COUNTRIES (2020-21)**

*Trade Figures in Billion USD*

S no	Country	Export (2020-21)	Export April 2021-Feb 22	Import (2020-21)	Import April 2021- Feb 22	Total Trade (2020-21)	Total Trade (April 2021-feb 22)
1.	<b>Brunei</b>	0.062	0.039	0.329	0.378	0.392	0.418
2.	<b>Cambodia</b>	0.168	0.175	0.039	0.081	0.208	0.257
3.	<b>Indonesia</b>	5.026	7.522	12.470	15.520	17.496	23.043
4.	<b>Lao PDR</b>	0.027	0.014	0.001	0.00075	0.029	0.015
5.	<b>Malaysia</b>	6.057	6.317	8.373	11.195	14.430	17.513
6.	<b>Myanmar</b>	0.772	0.807	0.526	0.865	1.299	1.673
7.	<b>Philippines</b>	1.457	1.902	0.572	0.665	2.029	2.568
8.	<b>Singapore</b>	8.675	10.228	13.304	16.593	21.980	26.822
9.	<b>Thailand</b>	4.237	5.156	5.682	8.295	9.919	13.452
10.	<b>Vietnam</b>	4.999	6.130	6.120	6.508	11.120	12.638

*Source: DGFT*

**TABLE 2: EVOLUTION OF INDIA-ASEAN OVERALL TRADE (1996-2022)**

*Trade Figures in Billion USD*

S. no	Year	Export	Import	Total Trade	Net
1	<b>1996-97</b>	2.902	2.934	5.836	-0.032
2	<b>1997-98</b>	2.464	3.396	5.86	-0.932
3	<b>1998-99</b>	1.629	4.317	5.946	-2.688
4	<b>1999-00</b>	2.237	4.629	6.866	-2.392
5	<b>2000-01</b>	2.913	4.147	7.06	-1.234

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6	<b>2001-02</b>	3.457	4.387	7.844	-0.93
7	<b>2002-03</b>	4.618	5.15	9.768	-0.532
8	<b>2003-04</b>	5.821	7.433	13.254	-1.612
9	<b>2004-05</b>	8.425	9.114	17.539	-0.689
10	<b>2005-06</b>	10.411	10.883	21.294	-0.472
11	<b>2006-07</b>	12.607	18.108	30.715	-5.501
12	<b>2007-08</b>	16.413	22.674	39.087	-6.261
13	<b>2008-09</b>	19.14	26.202	45.342	-7.062
14	<b>2009-10</b>	18.113	25.797	43.91	-7.684
15	<b>2010-11</b>	25.627	30.607	56.234	-4.98
16	<b>2011-12</b>	36.744	42.158	78.902	-5.414
17	<b>2012-13</b>	33.008	42.866	75.874	-9.858
18	<b>2013-14</b>	33.133	41.278	74.411	-8.145
19	<b>2014-15</b>	31.812	44.714	76.526	-12.902
20	<b>2015-16</b>	25.133	39.909	65.042	-14.776
21	<b>2016-17</b>	30.961	40.617	71.578	-9.656
22	<b>2017-18</b>	34.203	47.133	81.336	-12.93
23	<b>2018-19</b>	37.473	59.321	96.794	-21.848
24	<b>2019-20</b>	31.546	55.369	86.915	-23.823
25	<b>2020-21</b>	31.485	47.420	78.90	-15.93
26	<b>April 2021- Feb 22</b>	38.295	60.10	98.39	-16.69

Source: DGFT

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