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Thirty Years of ASEAN-India Relations: The Stock-taking of Outcomes for 1992-2022

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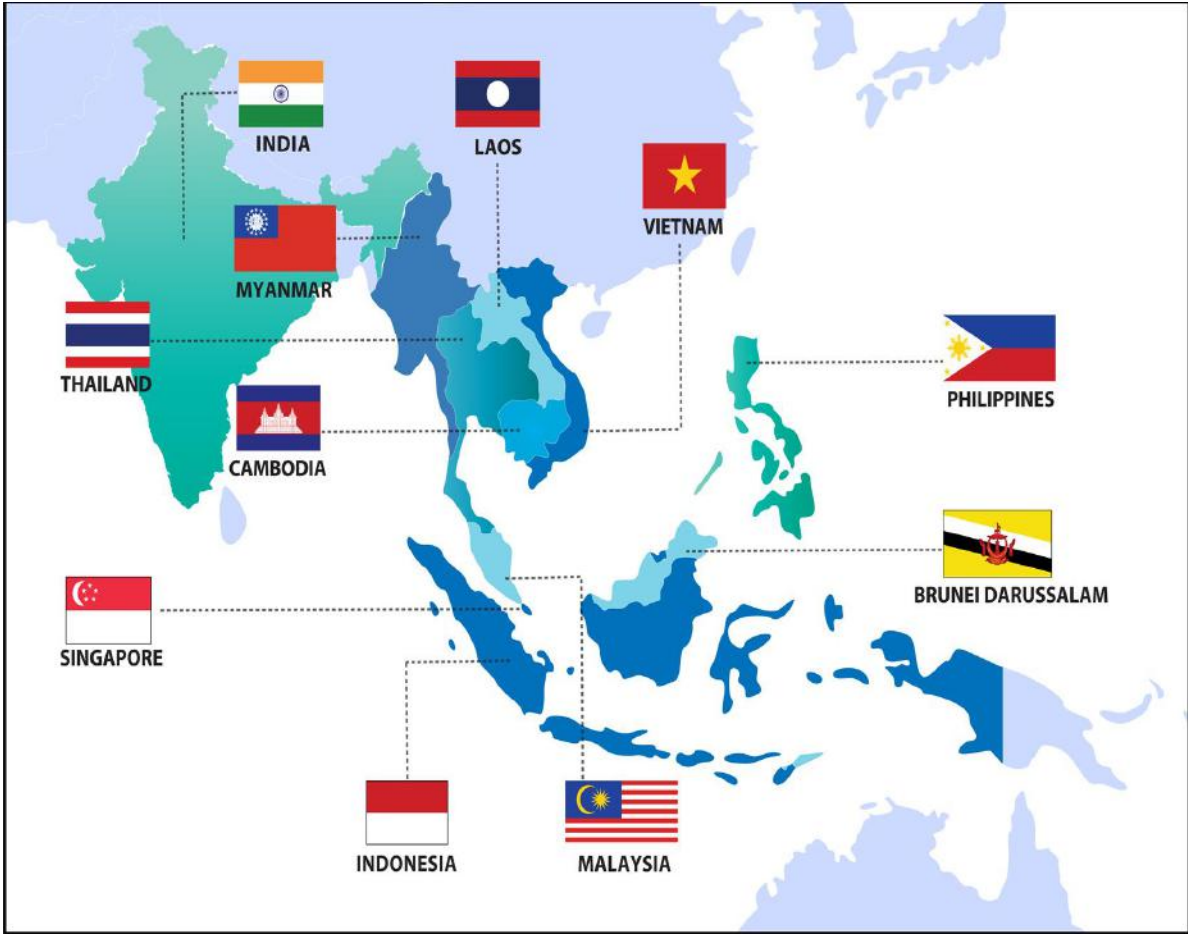
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Source: National Biodiversity Authority of India

Executive Summary

1. This working paper is an attempt to narrate and explain the 30 years of India-ASEAN relations in a nutshell. The Introduction of the working paper offers an insight into the features of India's Act East Policy (AEP) and the importance of the ASEAN region in India's external relations with the Indo-Pacific countries. The introduction section also discusses the objectives, research questions and the framework of the study. The framework provides clarity about the paper's focus on Culture, Connectivity and Commerce (3Cs) in ASEAN-India relations based on institutional mechanisms and multilateral cooperation.
2. The Background of India-Southeast Asia Relations is the section to reiterate the pre-independence and post-independence domestic, regional and international contexts to situate the relevance of studying the overarching relations between the two sides. The background also clarifies the focus of the study being India's approaches and vision towards ASEAN and not the vice-versa. However, it also reminds us that ASEAN member countries are equally interested in maintaining meaningful partnership with India.
3. From Look East to Act East: Explaining Major Outcomes of Diplomacy and Institutional Mechanisms is the section to illustrate and explain the major diplomatic endeavours and outcomes in India-ASEAN relations in the last 30 years. Starting from Summit Diplomacy, this section throws light on various existing institutional mechanisms that have been in place to strengthen the relationship. This section also focuses on the primary documents as guiding principles of ASEAN-India relations and the areas of thematic cooperation.
4. Features of ASEAN-led Multilateralism speaks about adaptation and innovation, inclusivity, ASEAN centrality and the balancing role in the Indo-Pacific as the salient features of ASEAN-led multilateralism. India's Indo-Pacific vision and a renewed AEP have the potential to create a synergy in the Indo-Pacific with ASEAN.
5. Building ASEAN Community: Role of India emphasizes on the fact that Indian interests in augmenting cultural cooperation, connectivity and commercial partnerships with ASEAN fit well in the concept of ASEAN Community. Therefore, it can safely be argued that India is in the right direction to assist ASEAN in its goals of community building. This section illustrates the year-wise developments in detail in the fields of 3Cs between India and ASEAN.
6. Finally, in the Conclusion, the author has drawn the summary outcome analyses to elaborate the successes and failures in India's ASEAN story. This highlights India's achievements in building and re-building its relationship with ASEAN and also points to the limitations.

1. Introduction

India's Look East Policy (LEP) had its beginning in early 1990s. LEP aimed at orienting India's foreign policy towards its eastern neighbours, especially the Southeast Asian economies. However, the year 2014 had been a remarkable year as the two-decades old Look East Policy was renamed, upgraded and refurbished as Act East Policy. The year 2022 again signifies another landmark year in the history of India's partnership with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as both sides are observing the 30 years of dialogue relations. At the diplomatic level, this can also be regarded as a celebration of India's Act East Policy (AEP), which is a renewed and transformed format of the Look East Policy (LEP).

Former Indian External Affairs Minister Smt. Sushma Swaraj visited Myanmar, Vietnam and Singapore in 2014 where she spoke about the necessity of Acting East and not just Looking East. In Singapore, she said, "Look East is no longer adequate, now we need Act East".¹ In November 2014, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi attended the 12th ASEAN-India Summit in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar where he signaled towards action-oriented partnerships between ASEAN and India. Some of his recommendations included a review of the ASEAN-India Free Trade Agreement (FTA) in Goods, implementation of the ASEAN-India FTA on Services and Investment, formation of a Special Purpose Vehicle for easy financing and implementation of the connectivity projects, building Information Highways or i-highways, smart cities, ASEAN-India Solar Project for research, manufacturing and deployment, India-ASEAN Space-related Ground Station in Vietnam, mutual recognition of degrees, increased people-to-people contacts between students, teachers, diplomats, parliamentarians, media personnel, farmers, artists and experts, improving cultural tourism and Buddhist pilgrimage tourism between ASEAN and India.² As India started moving towards action-oriented Act East Policy, the suggestion of late Smt. Swaraj about 3Cs (culture, connectivity and commerce) also gained prominence as three important pillars of ASEAN-India partnership. On 25 August 2014, at the 3rd Roundtable of ASEAN-India Network of Think Tanks in Vietnam, Minister Swaraj had mentioned about 3Cs (culture, commerce and connectivity) and 5Ts (Tradition, Talent, Tourism, Trade and Technology).³

The AEP initiated several changes in India's relations with the ASEAN. In February 2017, the then Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Government of India attempted to answer a question on the specific features of Act East Policy. The answer cited the key principals and objectives of AEP as the following;

- (a) Promoting economic cooperation, cultural ties and strategic partnership with extended neighbourhood in the Asia-Pacific region.
- (b) Furthering engagements with the Asia-Pacific countries at bilateral, regional and multilateral levels.

(c) Providing enhanced connectivity to the Northeastern states which share borders with the neighbouring countries.

(d) Continuing efforts to convert LEP incorporating strategic-political-security-cultural and economic aspects through dialogues and institutional arrangements.⁴

Interesting point to note however is, the Government of India situated its AEP within the spectrum of Asia-Pacific in 2017; the strategic space of Indo-Pacific gained prominence in the ministerial statements and documents much later.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

In this given background, this study aims to highlight the major diplomatic, political, strategic, economic and cultural achievements in India-ASEAN partnership from an Indian perspective. This also focuses on India's position in the ASEAN-led multilateral initiatives and the benefits India aspires to get from those initiatives while New Delhi is set to appear on the stage of Indo-Pacific with stronger convictions and responsibilities. The important question this study is prepared to answer is- what is the history of 30 years journey relating to India's diplomatic endeavors and engagements with ASEAN, especially in the fields of culture, commerce and connectivity. This is important because, (1) LEP/AEP represents an inevitable and significant part of India's foreign policy in the post-Cold War era and (2) ASEAN occupies the central position in India's AEP as well as India's broader vision on Indo-Pacific. Therefore, it is safe to argue that this study represents the convergence of past and present in India's foreign policy towards the East.

2.2 The Framework

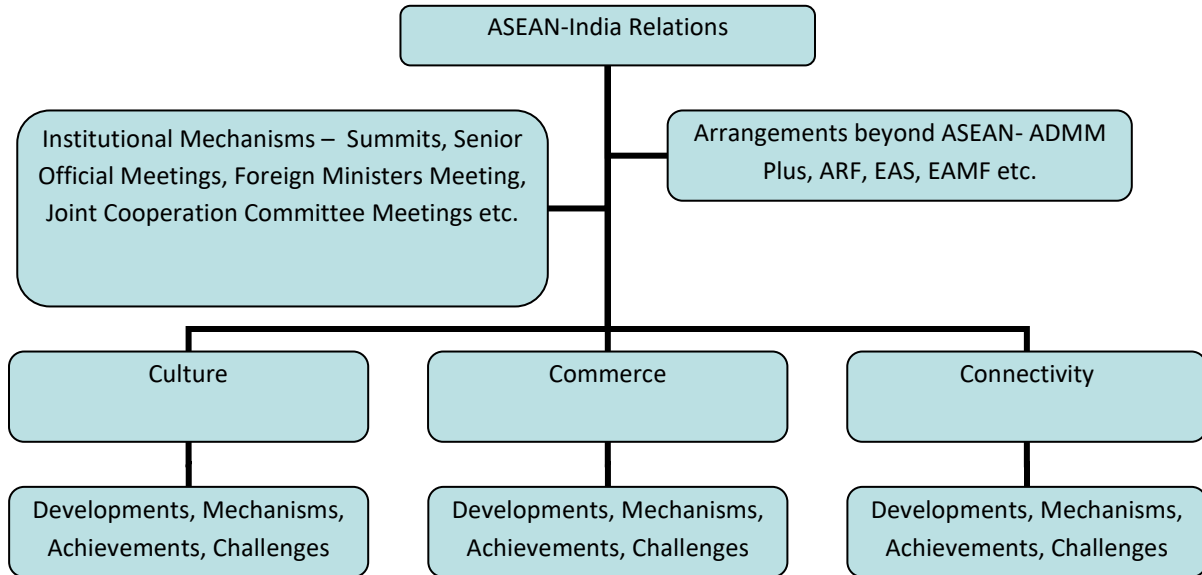
The study is divided into the following sections-

- The Background of India-Southeast Asia Relations
- From Look East to Act East: Explaining Major Outcomes of Diplomacy and Institutional Mechanisms
- Features of ASEAN-led Multilateralism
- Building ASEAN Community: Role of India
- Conclusions

Based on primary resources available in the documents of Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Culture, and Indian Council for Cultural Relations of Government of India, ASEAN Secretariat and a few other national and international

government agencies and organizations, this study primarily offers policy-oriented perspectives and content analyses of the same. See Figure 1 for the summary framework of the paper.

Figure 1: Summary Framework of the Paper



2. The Background of India-Southeast Asia Relations

2.1: The 20th Century Background of India-Southeast Asia Relations:

The ties between India and Southeast Asia started centuries ago and continued during the colonial era. Until 1867, Singapore was administered from Calcutta.⁵ Burma was a part of British India between 1885 and 1937. In the 1910s and 1920s, Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore visited Indonesia, Malaya, Singapore, and Thailand. He also visited Burma, thus completing a significant part of Southeast Asian tour. His memories from Southeast Asia are widely covered in essays and letters.⁶ Tagore was highly influenced by the local and traditional culture in Southeast Asia and wanted to arrange cultural exchanges between India and Indonesia. Southeast Asia does not only figure in Indian literature and cultural discussions, it has a central position even in its strategic thinking. In 1943, K M Panikkar suggested that a regional security framework should be developed including India, Britain, Indonesia and Australia.⁷

After India's independence, many countries in the world including some in Southeast Asia started looking at India as a leader of the so-called Third World countries. In Bandung Conference, the then Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru joined hands with the Indonesian

President Sukarno and other Asian leaders in the spirit of Non-Alignment and reiterated the importance of multiculturalism and democracy. Few months prior to the India-Pakistan conflict in 1965, Singapore declared itself as an independent state, different from Malaysia in August 1965. During the 1965 war, Singapore became one of the first countries to support India. Malaysia too supported India in the United Nations Security Council. Singapore attempted to make India a part of geopolitics in Southeast Asia, owing much to India's status as a leader of non-alignment movement. Simultaneously, Singapore also wanted to project itself free from Chinese influence by bringing India closer to itself. Singapore offered India to train its armed forces, use the abandoned British-made dockyard for ship building and repairing facilities and approached Air India to assist the newly-built Singapore Airlines for technical and manpower cooperation. These, if executed, could have given India a better position in Southeast Asia long before 1990s. However, the Cold War bipolarity and related complexities forced India to distance itself from the original grouping of ASEAN. However, India accepted Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) in 1971 as it represented principle of non-alignment, non-external interferences, and formation of an area of peace. Former Indonesian Foreign Minister Adam Malik made a visit to India in 1973 and during this visit, India made an attempt to appreciate ASEAN's efforts of establishing peace in Southeast Asia. The decades of 1970s and 1980s were marked by bilateralism and cordial diplomacy between India and a few Southeast Asian countries. In later period, the economic relations between India and Southeast Asia moved further.

By mid 1990s, India had multiple joint ventures in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand. By 1996, approved foreign direct investments from Southeast Asian countries were as follows; Singapore (1891.9 million rupees), Malaysia (129.8 million rupees), Indonesia (3133.0 million rupees), Thailand (414.0 million rupees) and Philippines (2557.5 million rupees).⁸ This was a result of Indian understanding that it cannot be a trivial player in global politics and economics anymore. Not only economy, but in security perspective too, early 1990s was a justified time to start Look East Policy. The LEP was introduced by former Indian Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao in Singapore as he was delivering the prestigious annual Singapore Lecture.⁹ With the end of Cold War, Southeast Asia too experienced vast changes in the political-security scenario. After the USA started to withdraw from the region, the power vacuum was to be filled by immediate external players like India and China where India was somehow considered as a balancing power, owing much to its non-aggressive history with Southeast Asia.¹⁰ These geopolitical reasons were coincided with geo-economic interests as well since New Delhi was looking for meaningful strategic relations with ASEAN in the absence of desired outcomes from the SAARC regional cooperation. One can fondly remember the former Prime Minister of Singapore, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew's remarks on ASEAN-India partnership at this juncture;

“... India's trade, investments and other economic relations with the countries of East Asia and the Pacific are reshaping Asia's economic geography. India is an important

ASEAN dialogue partner, a member of the ASEAN Regional Forum, and an inaugural member of the East Asia Summit.... It has developed a thick web of economic ties across the Pacific”... H.E. Lee Kuan Yew, 2005¹¹

The decade of 2010s required more strategic shifts in India’s foreign policy towards the east followed by the global trends and domestic determinants. The world started looking at Asia-Pacific with more vigor in the 2010s and India could not stay isolated at that moment. The transformation of LEP to Act East Policy in 2014 helped ushering in a new era in India-ASEAN partnership. Table 1 shows the names of Indian prime ministers and external affairs ministers (EAMs) since the inception of Look East Policy.

Table 1: Indian Prime Ministers and EAMs since the Inception of LEP

Prime Ministers							
Year	21 June 1991- 16 May 1996	16 May 1996- 1 June 1996	1 June 1996- 21 April 1997	21 April 1997-19 March 1998	19 March 1998-10 October 1999; 10 October 1999-22 May 2004	22 May 2004- 22 May 2009; 22 May 2009- 26 May 2014	26 May 2014- 30 May 2019; 30 May 2019-present
Prime Ministers	P V Narasimha Rao	Atal Bihari Vajpayee	H.D. Devegowda	I K Gujral	Atal Bihari Vajpayee	Mammohan Singh	Narendra Modi
External Affairs Ministers							
Year	21 June 1991- 31 March 1992	31 March 1992- 18 January 1993	18 January 1993- 10 February 1995	10 February 1995- 16 May 1996	21 May 1996 - 1 June 1996	1 June 1996- 18 March 1998	19 March 1998- 5 December 1998
EAM	Madhav Singh Solanki	P. V. Narasimha Rao	Dinesh Singh	Pranab Mukherjee	Sikander Bakht	I. K. Gujral	Atal Bihari Vajpayee
Year	5 December 1998- 1 July 2002	1 July 2002- 22 May 2004	22 May 2004- 6 November 2005	6 November 2005- 24 October 2006	24 October 2006- 22 May 2009	22 May 2009- 26 October 2012	28 October 2012- 26 May 2014
EAM	Jaswant Singh	Yashwant Sinha	Natwar Singh	Manmohan Singh	Pranab Mukherjee	S. M. Krishna	Salman Khurshid
Year	26 May 2014- 30 May 2019	30 May 2019-present					
EAM	Sushma Swaraj	Subrahmanyam Jaishankar					

Source: Collected by author from various sources

2.2 The ASEAN-India Relations in the 21st Century Geopolitical Context

In this section, the author has attempted to provide a glimpse of the impact of domestic and international factors on the foreign policy of any country including India and the ASEAN nations. A detail discussion on this goes beyond the scope of the present paper; however, it is

important to note down some of those influential factors as we discuss the 21st Century India-ASEAN relations in the global context.

The global geopolitics has changed in the past few years. With the coming of Indo-Pacific construct as a geopolitical reality, countries like the USA, India, Australia, Japan and the ASEAN member countries have changed their foreign policy orientation towards the convergence of national, regional and international interests at the juncture of the Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean.¹² The devastating Covid-19-led pandemic has brought several changes in the power relations between countries like the USA and China impacting the global economies and politics. As the US and China have been pushing each other in the name of economic competitions, middle and smaller powers in the Indo-Pacific have chosen to make trilateral/quadrilateral/plurilateral arrangements to gain some benefits from the geostrategic rivalries between the great powers. As far as India is concerned, its Act East Policy has benefitted the country at various levels in the Indo-Pacific. First, through Act East, India already had shown an inclination towards the larger geographic space in the Indian and Pacific Oceans and the construct of Indo-Pacific was able to compliment that. India's initiatives like Security and Growth for All (SAGAR) testifies those complementarities. Second, India's cultural and civilisational linkages with Southeast Asia have always been based on mutual trust and shared heritage and both AEP and Indo-Pacific vision assisted India in branding itself as a responsible and trustworthy power and not as an assertive one. Third, thanks to India's two decades-old ventures with the ASEAN, the institutional mechanisms to further the partnerships were already in existence. The new initiatives undertaken by the Government of India have started to add tangible benefits to the strategic partnership between ASEAN and India.

However, the diplomatic gestures cannot resolve all crises in the mega-region of Indo-Pacific, especially when, the threats and challenges emanate from undeniable and unavoidable circumstances. The challenges in ASEAN-India relations may not always emerge from the international context; rather, the domestic political-economic instability may act as hindrances at times. From the perspective of domestic political-economic-situation, the year 2022 is going to be significant for Southeast Asia. The Philippines will experience a presidential election in 2022 and the country's financial condition and economic policies are going to play an important role in the upcoming election. In Thailand, the military government has made its strong foundation and the country's focus is on short-term survival rather than long-term goals in economy.¹³ Myanmar is unlikely to see any general election in 2022 given the fact that the *Junta* has ousted the elected government in a coup in February 2021. Another truth is the existence of the non-traditional security threats in the region such as violation of human rights, illegal migration and climate change, to name a few. Even though these issues go beyond the scope of this paper, working in tandem to face these challenges is a matter of urgency for the countries and governments.

3. From Look East to Act East: Explaining Major Outcomes of Diplomacy and Institutional Mechanisms

The Look East Policy was launched by former Indian Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao to reduce India’s political isolation post the disintegration of former USSR and to create a stand for India as a regional power in the Asia-Pacific region.¹⁴ However, the LEP was not articulated in the beginning and, on the other hand, in the decade of 1990s, ASEAN was also not a well-prepared institution leading to a slow journey of partnership between India and ASEAN. Table 2 reflects on the major developments in the timeline of ASEAN-India partnership since 1992. In September 1994, Prime Minister Rao was invited to Singapore to deliver the Singapore Lecture where he defined the LEP as not a new but a continuation of century’s old historical and cultural interactions and modern day economic and security partnerships.¹⁵ Some of the important aspects covered in Singapore Lecture included interpretations of sovereignty, different perceptions of culture, problems faced by underdeveloped populations, migration, trade barriers, and lack of international aid and investment flows. ASEAN decided to elevate India as a full dialogue partner in 1995 in Bangkok. In July 1996, in the Post Ministerial Conference in Jakarta, ASEAN finally admitted India, China and Russia as full dialogue partner together. Welcoming ASEAN’s decision, India’s the then External Affairs Minister I. K. Gujral mentioned,

“The ASEAN decision to make India a full dialogue partner is based on your farsighted assessment about the political and strategic convergence, acceleration of economic relations and their future potential, and complementarities in areas that were hitherto not evident or remained unexploited... a key objective of India and ASEAN to move from derivative to direct relationship so that there are no distortions, no misperceptions, no ignorance and no intermediation”,¹⁶

Table 2: Major Diplomatic Developments in ASEAN-India Partnership

Year	Major Development	Primary Area of Interest
January 1992	Sectoral Dialogue Partnership in ASEAN	Trade, investment and tourism
December 1995	Full Dialogue Partnership in ASEAN	Trade and investment, human resources development, science and technology, transport, tourism and infrastructure, health, small and medium scale enterprises and people to people relations involving cultural and professional exchanges

July 1994	ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)	Regional security architecture
November 2002	Summit Partner	ASEAN-India Summit diplomacy started
December 2005	East Asia Summit	India became a founding member of this regional framework under the leadership of ASEAN. Priorities- Environment and Energy, Education, Finance, Global Health Issues and Pandemic Diseases, Natural Disaster Management, and ASEAN Connectivity
October 2010	ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM) Plus 8	An exclusive forum between ASEAN and its 8 dialogue partners to discuss defence related issues
January 2010	ASEAN-India Trade in Goods	Comes under ASEAN-India Regional Trade and Investment Area, for free trade in goods.
December 2012	Strategic Partnership, Commemorative Summit to celebrate 20 years of dialogue partnership	Elevation of dialogue partnership to strategic partnership
August 2014	Act East Policy	Upgrading LEP to action-oriented AEP
2014	Indian Mission to ASEAN (IMA)	IMA established in Jakarta, Indonesia
July 2015	ASEAN-India FTA in Services and Investments	The Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation was signed in 2003 and with the FTA in Services and Investment that was finally implemented.
November 2019	Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI)	Convergence with ASEAN Outlook on Indo-Pacific (AOIP)
September 2020	4 th ASEAN-India Plan of Action 20201-2025	Provides the framework to guide ASEAN-India strategic partnership for five years
October 2021	ASEAN-India Joint Statement on Cooperation on the Indo-Pacific for Peace, Stability and Prosperity in the Region	Released at the 18 th ASEAN-India Summit to indicate the convergence of interests between India and ASEAN in the Indo-Pacific

Source: collected from various sources and AIDCR 2021¹⁷

Between 1992 and 2019, India's diplomatic endeavors have made India a crucial strategic partner of ASEAN. Tables 2 and 3 present further details. In order to sustain the diplomatic efforts, India and ASEAN have developed various institutional mechanisms over the past 3 decades.

3.1 ASEAN-India Summits

- **ASEAN-India Summit, 2002:** The major and foremost institutional mechanism between India and ASEAN is the ASEAN-India Annual Summits that take place every year immediately after the ASEAN Summits and related events. The first of its kind was held in Phnom Penh on November 5, 2002. Considering the ‘pluralistic’ nature of the societies in ASEAN and India, both the sides referred to the ‘promotion of peace, stability and development’ in the Asia-Pacific region.¹⁸ While ASEAN welcomed India’s positivity towards Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC), India acknowledged the necessity of Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (SEANWFZ) Treaty by the former. Prior to this Summit, the first ever ASEAN-India Economic Ministers Consultations were held in Brunei Darussalam in September 2002 where both the sides adopted the ASEAN-India Regional Trade and Investment Area as a long-term objective. ASEAN-India Task Force on Economic Linkages was also established to prepare the draft Framework Agreement to enhance ASEAN-India Economic Cooperation. Another significant development was India’s commitment to the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) so that the new ASEAN members could be assisted in their development, especially in the field of Human Resource Development (HRD). Suggestion was delivered to establish the ASEAN-India Network of Think Tanks (AINTT) to put a long term perspective on the future of ASEAN-India partnership.
- **ASEAN-India Summit, 2003:** The second ASEAN-India Summit was held in Bali, Indonesia. In September 2003, ASEAN and India also signed the Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation marking the beginning of a new era in the economic relations between ASEAN and India. The Indian Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee also inaugurated the ASEAN-India Second Business Summit. By 2003, ASEAN and India were connected through BIMSTEC and MGC paving the way for inter-connected sub-regionalism between South and Southeast Asia. Telecom, space technology, education, training, connectivity were surfacing as the priority areas of partnership between ASEAN and India.¹⁹
- **ASEAN-India Summit, 2004:** The 3rd ASEAN-India Summit was held in Lao PDR in November 2004 where both the sides adopted a Joint Statement on Partnership for Peace, Progress and Shared Prosperity. In this Summit, both India and ASEAN spoke about sustainable growth, multilateralism, tourism cooperation and regional infrastructure among many other issues. However, the most important aspect was improvements towards implementation of Bali Concord II to achieve the goals of ASEAN Security Community, Economic Community and Socio-Cultural Community. Both the sides decided to execute the Partnership and Plan of Action (POA) through external resource mobilization, cooperation and funding. They also decided to review the POA by Senior Officials and Foreign Ministers.

- **ASEAN-India Summit, 2005:** The fourth ASEAN-India Summit was conducted in Malaysia just few weeks after terror attacks in Bali on October 1 and in New Delhi on 29 October. This provided an impetus to the ASEAN-India Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat International Terrorism which was adopted at the Second ASEAN-India Summit on 8 October 2003 in Bali, Indonesia. Besides security concerns, both the sides elaborated on further collaboration in technology and ASEAN welcomed India's suggestion about an ASEAN India Technology Summit. India continued to support the ASEAN India Cooperation Fund and IAI through tele-education and telemedicine. India proposed that a super specialty hospital in CLMV region can be tied with a counterpart in India for references and recommendations of patients. Similarly, language training centers in the CLMV region were to be assisted by their counterparts in India on remote basis.²⁰
- **ASEAN-India Summit, 2007:** The fifth ASEAN-India Summit was held in Cebu, Philippines in January 2007. This Summit was delayed as the fifth edition was supposed to be conducted in Myanmar but had to be postponed for the domestic instability in the country. Philippines presided over the fifth ASEAN-India Summit and recognized India's efforts in improving the transport and communication sector in CLMV, negotiations on ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement, open skies agreement to liberalise the air services between ASEAN and India and Progress Report of the ASEAN-India Plan of Action (POA) to Implement the ASEAN-India Partnership for Peace, Progress and Shared Prosperity signed at the Third ASEAN-India Summit on 30 November 2004 in Vientiane, Lao PDR. Specific mention about the ASEAN-India IT Ministerial and IT Industry Forum, ASEAN e-Network Project-Establishing a VSAT-based Tele-Education and Tele-Medicine Network to connect Cambodia-Laos-Myanmar-Vietnam (CLMV), and Indian Education Fairs in ASEAN Countries were noted as ASEAN was looking forward to the early implementation of these projects. ASEAN and India also agreed to establish humanitarian assistance networks and tsunami early warning systems as well as committed to improve disaster preparedness and management.²¹
- **ASEAN-India Summit, 2007:** The sixth edition of ASEAN-India Summit took place in Singapore in November 2007 where the ASEAN leaders welcomed establishing an 'an arc of advantage' involving India. In that direction, the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway was perceived as an opportunity for the entire region. ASEAN-India Network on Climate Change, ASEAN-India Science and Technology Development Fund, Special Course for Diplomats from the region, ASEAN-India Project on Education fairs and Entrepreneurs Development Programmes (under IAI) were few other initiatives addressed and proposed for the region's development.²²
- **ASEAN-India Summit, 2009:** Former Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh attended the seventh ASEAN-India Summit in Thailand where he mentioned that ASEAN occupies

the central position in India's LEP. India-ASEAN Trade-in-Goods Agreement was signed in August 2009. The Prime Minister also mentioned about reaching US\$ 48 billion bilateral trade in 2008. Initiatives like India-ASEAN Science and Technology Fund, India-ASEAN Health Care Initiative, traditional medicine cooperation, India-ASEAN Network on Climate Change and Green Fund were already established. Besides, the Prime Minister also proposed forming ASEAN-India Roundtable, negotiations on open skies policy, ASEAN Trade and Industrial Exhibition in India, and, cooperation in space technologies. This was the time when ASEAN was planning to launch ASEAN ICT Master Plan (2010-2015) for which India expressed its commitment to assist the ASEAN region. Besides that, India also proposed to form a Joint Task Force to prepare a Vision Statement for ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit, to be held in 2012 to observe 20 years of dialogue relationship.²³

- **ASEAN-India Summit, 2010:** The eighth ASEAN-India Summit was held in Hanoi in October 2010. Both ASEAN and India were working on the Plan of Action for 2010-2015 and recognized the implementation of ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement. India also announced a Visa on Arrival facilities for the nationals of Cambodia, Lao PDR, Vietnam and Philippines. India also announced 100 IT scholarships (10 from each ASEAN countries) to support the ASEAN Master Plan on Connectivity. India also expressed interest in forming a Centre for Tracking and Data Reception and an Imaging facility for the ASEAN countries. "This Centre would utilize data provided by Indian remote sensing satellites and harness it for multiple developmental applications"- said Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh.²⁴
- **ASEAN-India Summit, 2011:** At the ninth ASEAN-India Summit in 2011 in Bali, the Indian Prime Minister noted that the two-way trade between ASEAN and India has increased 30 per cent in 2010-2011 and reached the US\$ 50 billion mark. With this rise in trade, it was expected that ASEAN-India two-way trade would reach to US\$ 70 billion by 2012. Another significant milestone has been the beginning of the revamped Nalanda University in Bihar where most ASEAN countries participated to strengthen the civilisational bonding with India. ASEAN and India also began to institutionalize the media exchange programme.²⁵
- **ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit, 2012:** The Commemorative Summit was themed on ASEAN-India Partnership for Peace and Shared Prosperity, hosted by India to celebrate 20 years of dialogue relations and 10 years of summit diplomacy. This special summit was a culmination of various meetings and events including the Shipping Expedition of INS Sudarshini to ASEAN countries (till March 2013) and the ASEAN-India Car Rally 2012. The Car Rally started from Guwahati on 17 December 2012 and covered 7448 kms over 19 days across the ASEAN region. Besides, various B2B events and cultural events took place either in New Delhi, Kolkata or in ASEAN capitals.²⁶ In 2012, the ASEAN-India partnership was elevated as strategic partnership as well. Developments like setting up of ASEAN-India Centre in 2013 as a coordination agency to look after the aspects of future of partnership

between the two sides were also begun in 2012. Another noteworthy step was the Vision Statement²⁷ to work on political-security cooperation, economic partnership, socio-cultural cooperation, connectivity and regional architecture encompassing the Asia-Pacific.

The Vision Statement focused on the following aspects;²⁸

- i. ASEAN and India will focus on political and security cooperation consisting of bilateral and multilateral dialogues and consultations, ADMM Plus, combating international terrorism (in line with ASEAN-India Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat International Terrorism), maritime security and so on.
 - ii. Implementing “the ASEAN-India Free Trade Area (FTA) with a combined market of almost 1.8 billion people and a combined GDP of US\$ 3.8 trillion” would be a focus in the field of economic cooperation.
 - iii. Socio-cultural and developmental cooperation would comprise of people-to-people interactions, preservation and maintenance of ancient art and architecture, IAI, capacity building and so on. The Vision Statement also reiterated the importance of connectivity projects between ASEAN and India. It mentioned that the ASEAN Connectivity Coordinating Committee needs to work closely with India’s Inter-Ministerial Group on ASEAN Transport Connectivity to improve air, sea and land connectivity within ASEAN and between ASEAN and India.
 - iv. Maintaining ASEAN centrality in the regional architecture was another significant aspect covered by the vision statement.
- **ASEAN-India Summit, 2013:** The 11th ASEAN-India Summit was held in Brunei Darussalam in 2013. This Summit noted India’s assistance in the ASEAN Community building exercises and India’s announcement of a separate Mission to ASEAN demonstrating strategic importance of ASEAN-India partnership. Key Indian projects in ASEAN countries including sustainable IT infrastructure in CLMV countries, establishment of a Tracking and Data Reception Station and Data Processing Facility for ASEAN in Ho Chi Minh City and progress towards cooperation between the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity [ACB] and the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) of India were mentioned. The Chair’s statement also acknowledged the convening of the Inaugural ASEAN Connectivity Coordinating Committee [ACCC] and India Consultation in Balikpapan, Indonesia, on 10 June 2013. The possibility of an ASEAN-India Transit Transport Agreement was noted.²⁹
 - **ASEAN-India Summit, 2014:** India continued its support for the implementation of the Roadmap for ASEAN Community (2009-2015), the Bali Declaration on ASEAN Community in a Global Community of Nations (Bali Concord III) and in the development of ASEAN Community Post-2015 Vision. Other efforts in ASEAN Master Plan on

Connectivity (MPAC), ASEAN-India Tourism Cooperation under the Memorandum of understanding signed in 2012, cooperation in ICT under IAI continued. Further emphasis was given on the early conclusion of the ASEAN-India Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in Science, Technology and Innovation. Prime Minister Modi recommended deepening of ASEAN-India partnership (as mentioned in the beginning) indicating 'Acting East'.³⁰

- **ASEAN-India Summit, 2015:** The 13th round of ASEAN-India Summit that took place in Malaysia noted the temporary fall in ASEAN-India trade. However, this Summit also addressed issues of international economic uncertainties. Trilateral Highway connecting India, Myanmar and Thailand was mentioned as a key connectivity project between ASEAN and India. Progress in ASEAN-India Science and Technology Development Fund, cooperation in space technology, progress under ASEAN-India Centre, and Indian assistance to CLMV under IAI were also noted as tools for strengthening the strategic partnership between the two sides.³¹
- **ASEAN-India Summit, 2016:** In the 14th ASEAN-India Summit in Lao PDR, the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke about the global economic uncertainties which should work as a driving force to review the ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement. The suggestions for forming ASEAN-India Network of Business Chambers, a Joint Task Force on Connectivity to ensure early completion of the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway, a Flagship ASEAN-India Programme for Combating Malaria, India-ASEAN youth Summit were proposed by Indian prime minister at this Summit. India also invited ASEAN as Guest of Honour at the International Buddhist Conclave in India in 2016. Prime Minister also affirmed, "India's relationship with ASEAN is the foundation of our 'Act East Policy'".³²
- **ASEAN-India Summit, 2017:** In the 15th ASEAN-India Summit in Philippines, the ASEAN leaders reiterated the importance of maritime security, Code of Conduct on the South China Sea, ASEAN Centrality, cyber security cooperation, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Cooperation (RCEP) among other issues. The Chair's statement focused on ASEAN-India Business Council's role in enhancing the commercial partnership between both the sides. India's assistance in ASEAN Master Plan on Connectivity was appreciated as well. ASEAN members also recognised the platform afforded by the 2016 Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (AMCDRR) in New Delhi, India, where implementation of the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) was discussed. ASEAN also launched the One ASEAN, One Response Declaration at the global level.³³
- **ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit, 2018:** The initiation of Act East was given an impetus with yet another Commemorative Summit to celebrate the 25 years of dialogue relations in 2018 and the Delhi Declaration. Shared Values, Common Destiny was the theme

chosen for the Summit reflected through the Delhi Declaration. **Delhi Declaration** highlighted the following aspects;

- i. Focus on the rule-based order and regional architecture (PMC+1 with India, ARF, EAS, the ADMM-Plus, and ASEAN Senior Officials' Meeting on Transnational Crimes (SOMTC)+India Consultations) while maintaining ASEAN Centrality.
 - ii. Ensuring maritime safety and adherence to UNCLOS, strengthening Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF).
 - iii. Working with the plans adopted by ARF, EAS and ADMM Plus on counter-terrorism, maritime piracy and other trans-national crimes.
 - iv. Proposing the First ASEAN-India Cyber Dialogue, 2018 and continued support for establishment of Centers of Excellence in Software Development and Training (CESDT) in some ASEAN Member States.
 - v. Discussions based on consultations given by ASEAN-India Working Group on Regional Air Services Arrangements, ASEAN-India Air Transport Agreement (AIATA) and the ASEAN-India Maritime Transport Agreement (AI-MTA).
 - vi. Continued Science and technology (S&T) cooperation through ASEAN-India Innovation Platform, ASEAN-India Research & Training Fellowship Scheme, and ASEAN-India Collaborative Research and Development Programme, in alignment with the ASEAN Plan of Action on Science, Technology and Innovation (APASTI) 2016-2025 in areas of nano-technology, materials science and biotechnology.
 - vii. Establishment of ASEAN-India Trade and Investment Centre suggested.
 - viii. Track 1.5 and Track 2 level arrangements like Delhi Dialogue, ASEAN-India Network of Think Tanks (AINTT), ASEAN-India Eminent Persons Lecture Series (AIEPLS), diplomats training courses were continued.
 - ix. India's support for the realisation of the ASEAN Declaration on One ASEAN, One Response to tackle natural disasters and catastrophe.
 - x. Expansion of Trilateral Highway till Vietnam was recommended.³⁴
- **ASEAN-India Summit, 2018:** The ASEAN-India Summit was organised in Singapore in November 2018 where Prime Minister Modi launched APIX as a network of fintech cooperation linking Indian and ASEAN financial institutions and companies. He also advocated for Regional Security Architecture based on ASEAN Centrality connecting the regional and sub-regional arrangements between ASEAN and India. Maritime safety and

security, connectivity, people-to-people conversations, counter-terrorism initiatives were few among various other issues discussed.³⁵

- **ASEAN-India Summit, 2019:** Thailand hosted the 16th ASEAN-India Summit in November 2019. The meeting discussed the potential and endorsement of ASEAN-India Strategic Partnership. The leaders also discussed ways and means to increase maritime cooperation, trade and investment, connectivity, and cooperation in science, technology, and innovation. People-to-people connectivity, cultural exchanges, and tourism were discussed as ASEAN and India are closely working together on the socio-cultural front as well. The Indian Prime Minister also discussed about the convergence of Indo-Pacific outlooks of ASEAN and India. India launched the Indo-Pacific Ocean’s Initiative (IPOI) in 2019.³⁶
- **ASEAN-India Summit, 2020:** The 17th ASEAN-India Summit was co-chaired by India and Vietnam on virtual mode due to the emergence of Covid-19 pandemic. The Indian Prime Minister reiterated India’s commitment about US\$ 1 billion for ASEAN connectivity plans. Digital connectivity received a push as the world was struggling to remain connected online. The South China Sea issues and maritime security were discussed.³⁷
- **ASEAN-India Summit, 2021:** The 18th edition of ASEAN-India Summit took place virtually in October 2021 due to Covid-19 pandemic and restrictions on travel and movements. This marked yet another major development in ASEAN-India Summit diplomacy as both the sides launched a Joint Statement on Indo-Pacific stressing the similarities in national and regional security interests visualized by New Delhi and the ASEAN capitals in the Indo-Pacific. This statement calls for synergies of foreign policies of ASEAN capitals and India in the Indo-Pacific construct as reflected through the ASEAN Outlook on Indo-Pacific (AOIP) and Indo-Pacific Ocean’s Initiative (IPOI), released by ASEAN and India respectively. ASEAN has issued such joint statement with no other dialogue partners so far. India has also expressed its interests in ASEAN’s efforts of digital transformation and implementation of industrial revolution 4.0, humanitarian assistance to Myanmar, environment and natural disaster and pandemic management, Blue Economy, Care Economy and a few other initiatives for ASEAN integration and development.

Table 3: List of ASEAN-India Summits

ASEAN India Summit	Venue	Year
First	Phnom Penh, Cambodia	November 2002
Second	Bali, Indonesia	October 2003
Third	Vientiane, Lao PDR	November 2004

Fourth	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	December 2005
Fifth	Cebu, Philippines	January 2007
Sixth	Singapore	November 2007
Seventh	Thailand	October 2009
Eighth	Vietnam	October 2010
Ninth	Jakarta, Indonesia	November 2011
Tenth	Cambodia	November 2012
Commemorative Summit (20 years of dialogue relations)	New Delhi	December 2012
Eleventh	Brunei	October 2013
Twelfth	Myanmar	November 2014
Thirteenth	Malaysia	November 2015
Fourteenth	Lao PDR	September 2016
Fifteenth	Philippines	November 2017
Commemorative Summit (25 years of dialogue relations)	New Delhi	January 2018
Breakfast Summit	Singapore	November 2018
Sixteenth	Thailand	November 2019
Seventeenth	Vietnam	November 2020
Eighteenth	Brunei	October 2021

Source: Collected from various resources

3.2 ASEAN-India Foreign Ministers Meeting

ASEAN-India Foreign Ministers level meetings are annual events, co-chaired by the Indian External Affairs Minister and the foreign minister from the country-coordinator for India from the ASEAN side. Rest of the nine ASEAN countries too send their foreign ministers to participate in the meeting. The External Affairs Minister (EAM) of India plays a special role in ASEAN-India relations as the primary navigator of India's foreign policies and programmes towards ASEAN and its member countries besides the rest of the world. Apart from the regular

ASEAN-India Foreign Ministers Meetings, EAM also represents India at special events and meetings conducted by ASEAN when required. In 2005, the then EAM Natwar Singh addressed the ASEAN members in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean Tsunami. While Mr. Singh appreciated the Government of Indonesia's efforts in convening the meeting, he also mentioned,

“There is need to deal with both emergency relief issues as well as with later phases of rehabilitation and reconstruction. India is committed to continuing its support and assistance in every possible way, including providing trained search and rescue teams, setting up web-based disaster management information systems, and human resources development for disaster management.”³⁸

On many occasions, the Foreign Ministers Meetings prove to be action-oriented and result-driven. In 2009, the then EAM of India announced that India would be investing US\$ 729,753 in creating a Digital Science and Technology Library Project for the ASEAN countries. This was an outcome of Prime Minister's commitment in the second ASEAN-India Summit.³⁹

In July 2012, the 10th edition of the ASEAN-India Ministerial Meeting was held in Phnom Penh where the EAM reaffirmed India's assistance in the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI), the Master Plan on ASEAN Plus Connectivity (MPAC), the Declaration for a Drug Free ASEAN by 2015 and other collaborative efforts to enhance partnership and regional cooperation.

In 2017, to celebrate 25 years of partnership, 60 numbers of events were organised as specified by the Minister of State at the External Affairs Ministry, Government of India in 2018 at the ASEAN-India Ministerial meeting in Vietnam.

The incumbent EAM, Dr. S. Jaishankar co-chaired the ASEAN-India Foreign Ministers Meeting in 2021. He appreciated ASEAN as an embodiment of regionalism, globalization and multilateralism. He also mentioned,

“India's ties with the ASEAN are, of course, rooted in history and strengthened by proximity. Together, these are factors that can help us achieve a vision of a more 'connected' India and ASEAN. This will naturally require the realization of a dedicated set of initiatives which, of course, constitute the core of our collaborative agenda.”⁴⁰

The foreign ministers of India and ASEAN also negotiate and review the ASEAN-India Plans of Action (PoAs) at regular intervals.

3.3 ASEAN-India Senior Officials Meetings (AISOM)

In March 1993, the first Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) was conducted between ASEAN and India to create the vista for India's sectoral dialogue partnership in ASEAN. Two sides affirmed the exchange of letters on the establishment of sectoral dialogue relations between ASEAN and India. The then Foreign Secretary J N Dixit led the Indian team where both sides agreed to

consider the modalities for ASEAN-India Joint Sectoral Cooperation Committee, ASEAN New Delhi Committee and Joint ASEAN-India Business Council. It was decided that the Joint Sectoral Cooperation Committee would work as an inter-governmental consultative body to coordinate the ASEAN-India Sectoral Dialogue Relations, initially in the areas of trade, investment and tourism.⁴¹ The ASEAN New Delhi Committee was made of the Heads of Diplomatic Missions of ASEAN member countries in New Delhi to facilitate ASEAN's Sectoral Dialogue Relations with India. The ASEAN-India Business Council was comprised of representatives from the respective private sectors of ASEAN and India.⁴² In May 2003, the 5th SOM was concluded again in New Delhi to discuss follow up events after India's Summit partnership was started in 2002. In this meeting, the officials marked that as both the sides continued with stronger engagements, two-way trade between ASEAN and India had registered a 300 per cent growth since early 1990s.⁴³ The dynamism of ASEAN-India partnership is much attributed to the Senior Officials Meetings that took place regularly. New Delhi's Act East Policy gained momentum post 2014 and in that context the 18th ASEAN-India Senior Officials Meeting, convened in Hanoi in March 2016 addressed the contemporary challenges and concerns. New Delhi had already committed for US\$ 1 billion Line of Credit for ASEAN's connectivity projects, especially to narrow the developmental gaps within ASEAN.⁴⁴ The 23rd SOM between ASEAN and India was conducted in April 2021 where both sides expressed their interest in upholding the principles shaped by AOIP and IPOI. India also proposed to observe 2022 as the ASEAN-India Friendship Year to mark 30 years of dialogue relations which was welcomed by the ASEAN officials.⁴⁵

3.4 ASEAN-India Joint Sectoral Cooperation Committee (AIJSCC) and ASEAN-India Joint Cooperation Committee (AIJCM) Meeting

ASEAN-India Joint Sectoral Cooperation Committee (AIJSCC) was established after the ASEAN- India Sectoral Dialogue Relations was concretised in March 1993. The first meeting of the AIJSCC was held in Bali in January 1994 to adopt the Rules of Procedure and Terms of Reference. This was the first inter-governmental consultative body between ASEAN and India. The first AIJSCC Meeting adopted the ToR and Rules of Procedure of the Joint Management Committee for the ASEAN-India Fund. India provided US\$ 158,478 to set up the Fund to support programmes and projects approved by the AIJSCC.⁴⁶

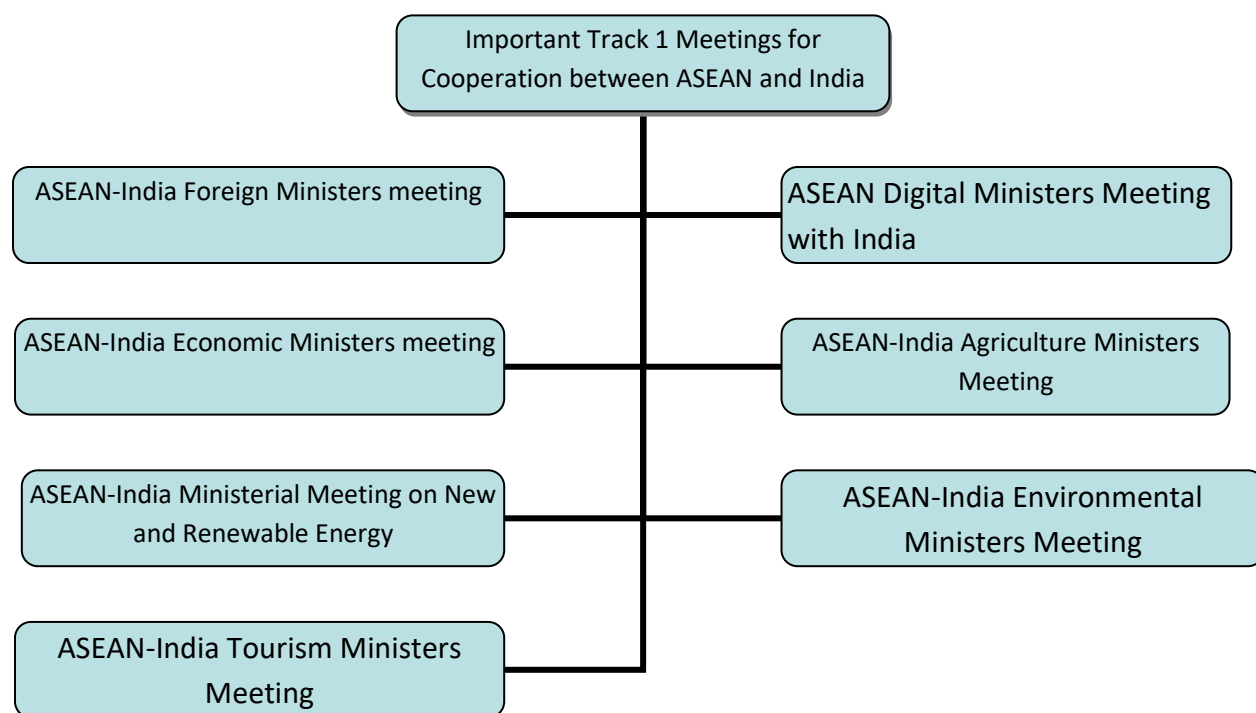
In the first few years, ASEAN and India identified areas of cooperation under the Sectoral dialogue. Under trade and investment, both sides decided to focus on trade liberalisation, facilitation and promotion as well as infrastructure development. A Group of Experts was also formed to identify mechanisms, modalities and areas of trade and investment cooperation between ASEAN and India. Tourism was another field of Sectoral cooperation. Both sides agreed to cooperate in the promotion of tourist destinations and coordination between the travel industries. In the field of Science and Technology, ASEAN and India decided to hold joint

workshops with scientists and technologists to discuss possible collaboration in biotechnology, information technology and advanced materials in science.⁴⁷

Under the aegis of sectoral cooperation, one of the first projects funded by ASEAN-India Fund was in the field of tourism. Thirteen participants from ASEAN and 13 participants from India visited the either side in 1995 on a project titled Reciprocal Familiarization Tour Programme for Tour Operators Selling Outbound Packages.⁴⁸

ASEAN-India Joint Cooperation Committee Meeting (AIJCM) is an ambassador level meeting co chaired by the Indian ambassador to ASEAN secretariat, Jakarta and the PR of country-coordinator. Rest of the remaining 9 countries is represented by their PRs as well. AIJCM is conducted in the first half of the year to review and discuss the progress of the POAs and deliberate on any issue that is of common concern to India and ASEAN. Refer to Figure 2 for the Track 1 level meetings between ASEAN and India.

Figure 2: Important Areas of Cooperation between ASEAN and India



Source: Author’s compilation⁴⁹

3.5 Key Documents Guiding ASEAN-India Relations

This sub-section is an attempt to understand and highlight the primary documents guiding India’s relations with ASEAN. ASEAN-India Partnership for Peace, Progress and Shared Prosperity, November 2004, Plan of Actions to Implement the ASEAN-India Partnership for Peace, Progress

and Shared Prosperity- 2010-2015, 2016-2020 and 2021-2025, Vision Statement on Commemorative Summit, 2012, the Delhi Declaration, 2018 and the ASEAN-India Joint Statement on AOIP are some of the key documents which can be considered as significant outcomes as well as guiding principles of the last 30 years' partnership between ASEAN and India. Table 4 reflects on these key documents and their contributions in the ASEAN-India relations. The last few documents also exemplify India's accommodating expressions towards ASEAN in its Indo-Pacific vision. To showcase India's optimism, at the 18th ASEAN-India Summit in October 2021, Prime Minister Narendra Modi mentioned;

“Our mutual cooperation and mutual sympathy since Covid times will continue to strengthen our relationship in future and will be the basis of goodwill among our people. History is witness that India and ASEAN have had vibrant relations for thousands of years. This is also reflected in our shared values, traditions, languages, texts, architecture, culture, cuisine etc. And therefore, the unity and centrality of ASEAN has always been an important priority for India. This special role of ASEAN, India's Act East Policy which is contained in our Security and Growth for All in the Region i.e. "SAGAR" policy. India's Indo Pacific Oceans Initiative and ASEAN's Outlook for the Indo-Pacific are the framework for our shared vision and mutual cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region.”⁵⁰

Table 4: Key Guiding Principles in ASEAN-India Dialogue Relations and Strategic Partnership

Document	Date and Place	Major Discussions and Outcomes
ASEAN-India Partnership for Peace, Progress and Shared Prosperity, Plan of Action (POA) 2004-2010	November 2004, Lao PDR, 3 rd ASEAN-India Summit	Work on ASEAN-India Cooperation Fund to ensure funding; review of ASEAN-India Partnership and POA by SOM and Foreign Ministers meetings; promote regional cooperation; full implementation of ASEAN-India FTA by 2011 by ASEAN-5 and India
POA to Implement the ASEAN-India Partnership for Peace, Progress and Shared Prosperity- 2010-2015	October 2010, Hanoi	To establish An Eminent Persons Group to chart the ASEAN-India Vision Statement, form the ASEAN-India Roundtable, promote the ASEAN-led regional institutions, ASEAN-India FTA negotiations, re-activation of ASEAN-India Business Council, works under ASEN-India Aviation Cooperation Framework, 2008, Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRs), entrepreneurship development centers in CLMV, ICT, connectivity, Rural Development Research Institutes in CLMV, ASEAN Inter-parliamentary Assembly, Green Fund etc; review the POA and submit reports to Post-Ministerial Conference (ASEAN PMC+1)
POA to Implement the ASEAN-India Partnership for Peace, Progress and Shared Prosperity- 2016-2020	August 2015, adopted by the ASEAN-India Foreign Ministers Meeting	ASEAN centrality, implementation of SEANFWZ, support the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration, support the Global Movement of Moderates, work on ASEAN-India Maritime Cooperation Framework, ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Matters (ASOD) + India Consultations, financial infrastructure development, Support the implementation of the ASEAN Plan of Action on Energy Cooperation (APAEC) 2016-2025, support the implementation of the Brunei Action Plan (ASEAN Strategic Transport Plan) 2011-2015 and its successor document for the post-2015 period, support the ASEAN Integrated Food Security Framework, support ASEAN Multisectoral Framework on Climate Change, ASEAN-India ICT workshops, tourism marts, ASEAN-India S&T Fund, support the ASEAN Action Plan on Joint Response to Climate Change, IAI and narrowing the development gaps, MPAC, Green Fund, review progress and submit the report to the PMC+1.

POA to Implement the ASEAN-India Partnership for Peace, Progress and Shared Prosperity- 2021-2025	September 2020, adopted by the ASEAN-India Foreign Ministers Meeting	Explore cooperation between the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) adopted at the 34th ASEAN Summit in Bangkok and the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) announced by India at the 14th East Asia Summit in Bangkok; support the implementation of the ASEAN Plan of Action in Combating Transnational Crime (2016-2025), ratification of ASEAN-India Investment Agreement, support the ASEAN Plan of Action on Energy Cooperation (APAEC) 2016-2025; support the ASEAN Transport Strategic Plan 2016-2025, Regional Air Services Agreement work, disaster management and emergency response, cross-pillar cooperation that includes connectivity, IAI, smart cities, institutional strengthening, and implementation through review and PMC+1
Vision Statement on Commemorative Summit	December 2012, New Delhi, commemoration of 20 years of dialogue relations	Political-security cooperation, economic cooperation, socio-cultural cooperation, connectivity and regional architecture; funding to be secured through ASEAN-India Fund, Green Fund and S&T Fund; Mekong-India Economic Corridor (MIEC), sub-regionalism, ASEAN centrality remained central.
Delhi Declaration	January 2018, New Delhi, commemoration of 25 years of dialogue relations and 5 years of strategic partnership	New initiatives- International Solar Alliance; ASEAN-India Innovation Platform, ASEAN-India Research & Training Fellowship Scheme, and ASEAN-India Collaborative Research and Development Programme, in areas aligned with ASEAN Plan of Action on Science, Technology and Innovation (APASTI) 2016-2025; ASEAN-India Network of Universities, Goodwill scholarships, Nalanda scholarships.
ASEAN-India Joint Statement on Cooperation on the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific for Peace, Stability and Prosperity in the Region	October 2021, 18 th ASEAN-India Summit, Virtual	The Joint Statement focuses on ways to enhance cooperation in the Indo-Pacific through India's Indo-Pacific Ocean's Initiative (IPOI) and AOIP.

Source: Collected from various sources

3.6 Thematic Cooperation

ASEAN and India have developed 30 dialogue mechanisms in different sectoral cooperation areas in synchronization with the ASEAN Community pillars namely, political-security community, economic community and socio-cultural community. We have chosen the following sectoral cooperation areas to discuss the progress and updates according to their contributions to the ASEAN Community blueprints. In the next segment, the 3Cs (commerce, culture and connectivity) will be discussed in detail as these represent the cross-sectoral cooperation which have benefitted India's recent endeavors in the ASEAN region.

3.6.1 Sectoral Cooperation in Defence: The first ADMM Plus was convened between ASEAN and its eight dialogue partners in October 2010. Some of the stated objectives of ADMM Plus include benefiting the member countries in capacity building to address the security challenges, promoting mutual trust and confidence between the defence organizations and mechanisms leading to transparency, strengthening defence cooperation to uphold peace and security in the region, assisting ASEAN in achieving ASEAN Political-Security community goals and helping the grouping in following Vientiane Action programme deliberating on outward looking external relations. India has been a member of ADMM Plus since the beginning. ADMM Plus has identified seven areas of cooperation, namely, maritime security, counter-terrorism, humanitarian assistance and disaster management (HADR), peacekeeping operations, military medicine, humanitarian mine action and cyber security. ADMM Plus has established Experts Working Groups (EWGs) to work on these security areas and every three years the chair and co-chairs of

each of the EWGs are changed within the grouping. In March 2016, India concluded its first Field Training Exercise (FTX)/ Force 18 with ADMM Plus. This was the seven-day long exercise focusing on HADR and peacekeeping operations. FORCE 18 was concluded with 40-member Indian Army contingent, led by Lt. Col. Sophia Qureshi, a first of its kind instance in the history of India and ADMM Plus.⁵¹ The 8th ADMM Plus meeting was conducted virtually in June 2021 with Brunei as the chair. In this meeting the defence ministers from participating countries spoke about an information technology center to strengthen ASEAN's links with the dialogue partners in the field of information security. ASEAN also issued the Bandar Seri Begawan Joint Declaration on the 15th Year of ADMM to focus on enhancing defense cooperation. The Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh participated in the meeting and called for an open, inclusive and free Indo-Pacific exercising the freedom of navigation, overflight and unrestricted use of waters for commercial purposes.⁵²

3.6.2 Sectoral Cooperation in Agriculture: An approximate 41.3 per cent of the total populations of India and ASEAN are engaged in agriculture and that explains the huge potential of cooperation in agriculture between India and the ASEAN region.⁵³ Both India and ASEAN are on the verge of transformative agricultural practices as technology and innovations are improving agricultural productivity every day. Therefore, both the sides need to adapt cutting-edge technologies and use the best practices available to gain benefits from the available market. The Working Group on Agriculture between ASEAN and India had its first meeting in January 2011. Later the Working Group identified a short-term plan for 2011-12 and a medium term plan for 2011-2015 to enhance agricultural cooperation between ASEAN and India.⁵⁴ ASEAN-India Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture and Forestry had its fourth edition in January 2018 where both sides spoke about the medium-term POA on Agriculture and Forestry 2016-20. Food security, farmers exchange visit programmes between ASEAN and India, organic certification of fruits and vegetables were discussed in the meeting.⁵⁵ India has also contributed to the development of ASEAN Food Security Reserve Board to maintain a reserve of rice and other staple food grains to handle emergency situations.⁵⁶ Box 1 has more details on the agricultural cooperation between ASEAN and India. The First ASEAN-India Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture was held on 8 October 2011 in Jakarta, Indonesia and was co-chaired by H.E Dr. Suswono, Minister of Agriculture of Indonesia and H.E Mr. Sharad Pawar, Minister of Agriculture of India.⁵⁷

Box 1:

Plan of Action to Implement the ASEAN-India Partnership for Peace, Progress and Shared Prosperity (2010-2015) (Agriculture and Forestry related points)

Strengthen the interaction between the Ministries related to Agriculture including Aquaculture, Livestock, Horticulture and Commodities in the ASEAN Member States and India

Enhance cooperation in the agriculture sector with a view to meeting the challenges of food security; and endeavour to launch cooperation projects to exchange information and technology, and to develop joint research projects in the fields of agricultural

machinery, agricultural products marketing and improvement of agricultural infrastructure, including the development of irrigation system

Encourage the progress of agriculture-related industries such as agricultural technologies and crop varieties development and breeding technologies through the conduct of exhibitions, expositions and seminars

Develop Human Resources in Forestry and Fisheries sub-sector by providing opportunities for ASEAN young generation to learn Management and Conservation of natural resources and build capacity in Forestry and Fisheries Information System and Space Technology (Remote Sensing and GIS)

**Plan of Action to Implement the ASEAN-India Partnership for Peace, Progress and Shared prosperity (2016-2020)
(Agriculture and Forestry related points)**

Promote networking and cooperation between government authorities concerned, together with agriculture and food experts, laboratories, and agriculture and food-related academic institutions, farmers including farmers' organizations and communities, and traders of ASEAN and India

Support and enhance cooperation in implementing the ASEAN Integrated Food Security (AIFS) Framework, the Strategic Plan of Action on Food Security in the ASEAN Region (SPA-FS) 2015-2020.

Promote responsible fishing practices and to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, particularly in order to sustain fisheries resources, ensure food security, eradicate poverty and to optimize the benefit of to the people and economies in the region.

Promote investment, capacity building, sharing of information, experience and best practices, research and development, agricultural technology, management and innovation in the food agriculture, fisheries and forestry sectors.

Explore cooperation on combating illegal logging and its associated trade

Explore the possibility for India to support ASEAN on the implementation of the "ASEAN Multi-Sectoral Framework on Climate Change: Agriculture, and Forestry towards Food Security (AFCC)".

Explore the possibility to exchange knowledge and experience on sustainable land, forest and coastal management practices

Develop human resources in agriculture, forestry and fisheries subsectors by providing opportunities for ASEAN young generation to learn management and conservation of natural resources and build capacity in agriculture, forestry and fisheries information system and space technology (Remote Sensing and GIS)

Develop ASEAN human resources in the area of agriculture by providing opportunities for ASEAN young farmers to learn from India's experiences and best practices on techniques, management and farm working practices through training and extension

Plan of Action to Implement the ASEAN-India Partnership for Peace, Progress and Shared Prosperity 2021-2025

Promote networking and cooperation between government authorities concerned, together with agriculture and food experts, scientists and laboratories, and agriculture and food-related academic institutions, farmers including farmers' organisations and communities, and traders of ASEAN and India

Promote responsible fishing practices and to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, particularly in order to sustain fisheries resources and promote inland fisheries and aquaculture best practices to ensure food security, eradicate poverty and to optimise the benefit of to the people and economies in the region.

Promote investment, capacity building, research and development, technology and innovation, sustainable management, and sharing of information, experience and best practices in the food, agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors as well as in coastal management.

Support the implementation of the Multi-sectoral Framework on Climate Change: Agriculture and Forestry Towards Food and Nutrition Security and Achievements of Sustainable Development Goals (MSFCC), including through deeper cooperation in capacity building and sharing of information, experience and best practices.

3.6.3 Sectoral Cooperation in Energy: The Plans of Action as adopted for 2004-2010, 2010-2015, 2016-2020 and 2021-2025 serve as the main vehicle to drive India's sectoral cooperation with ASEAN including the energy cooperation. Both sides have decided to establish linkages between national standards and conformity assessment bodies and technical regulators to ensure mutual recognition of conformity assessment procedures. India also agreed to support ASEAN in implementing the ASEAN Plan of Action for Energy Cooperation (APAEC) 2010-2015, 2016-2020 that serve as a guideline for ASEAN's energy cooperation initiatives. Both sides also decided to work on establishment of compatible electricity grid and strengthen cooperation through private sector participation. India also committed to help CLMV in rural electrification including access to solar energy, bio mass, bio gas, micro hydro and off-grid electrification. Institutional linkages between ASEAN and India through ASEAN Centre for Energy to develop research and innovation are also mentioned in the POAs. The Indian Ministry of New and Renewable Energy hold meetings with ASEAN's energy ministers at regular intervals to ensure partnership in sustainable use of energy resources. Currently the ASEAN-India New and Renewable Energy Initiative can be considered as an outcome of the efforts. Both India and ASEAN have also been working to develop policy guidelines and standards for ASEAN-India Best Mining Practices to protect the environment and promote sustainable mineral resources uses.⁵⁸ Presently they are also working on developing clean technologies to minimize hazards to the environment. As far as trade in energy is concerned, both sides mentioned about liberalization of power trade, technology transfer and realisation of multilateral power trade involving ASEAN Power Grid and integration of renewable into the grid.⁵⁹

3.6.4. Sectoral Cooperation in Technology:

ASEAN- India Joint Cooperation Committee had recommended science and technology as one of the priority cooperation sectors between ASEAN and India, and in accordance with that, ASEAN-India Working Group on Science and Technology (AIWGST) and ASEAN-India Science & Technology Collaboration (AISTC) formally started in 1996. AIWGST's objectives include promotion of scientific and technological expertise, explore potential collaboration in S&T between ASEAN and India, assessing the current strengths of India and ASEAN in S&T and encourage private sector cooperation. In the field of Science & Technology, ASEAN-India Fund granted financial assistance for a Workshop on Advanced Materials in Hyderabad in December 1995. ASEAN-India Fund also decided to allocate Rs. 2 million for initial cooperation activities in S&T cooperation between ASEAN and India.⁶⁰ In 1996, Thailand also hosted two workshops - one on biotechnology and the other one on Multimedia in Education.⁶¹

In order to ensure a dedicated funding for the ASEAN-India Science & technology Collaboration, ASEAN-India Science & Technology Collaboration (AISTDF) was set up after India announced about this in November 2007 at the 6th ASEAN-India Summit in Singapore. The fund became operational in 2009-2010 and started taking projects from the next year. India contributed US\$ 1 million as the seed money to form the Fund. The AISTDF works as a part of Department of Science & Technology, Government of India's international collaboration efforts. AISTDF has been working in various thematic areas to enhance S&T collaboration with ASEAN and other regional organizations including International Solar Alliance, Mission Innovation, International AIDS Vaccine Initiative, Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO), etc.⁶² Details are furnished in Table 5. Under the broader ambit of ASEAN-India S&T collaboration, initiatives such as ASEAN-India Research Training Fellowship are spread to involve private sector participation which is managed and implemented by the FICCI. Other initiatives like ASEAN-India Collaborative R&D, Innovation Platform are directly managed by the Government of India and ASEAN Secretariat.⁶³ For more information, see Table 5.

Table 5: S&T Cooperation between ASEAN and India

ASEAN-India S&T Cooperation	Major Activities
ASEAN-India Science & Technology Collaboration, started in 1996	ASEAN-India Collaborative R&D on Thermally Sprayed Ceramic-Based Coatings, R&D project on Extent of Transfer of Alien Invasive Organisms (Nuisance) in South/SE Asia Region by Shipping, Training Course on Analysis of Chemicals and Biological Contaminants in Raw and Processed Products for ASEAN Countries, R&D project entitled "The Indian Ocean Dipole Mode, El Nino Southern Oscillation (ENSO) and Monsoon Interactions and their Socio-Economic Impacts on India-ASEAN Nations, ASEAN-India S&T Digital Library, Training program on Quality System in Manufacturing, Participation of ASEAN school children have participated in India's National Children Science Congress (NCSC), Thematic workshop/ technology mission (technology mission on functional food, renewable energy, marine biotechnology, ASEAN food conference) were also organized and participated in last couple of years
ASEAN-India Science & Technology Collaboration, initiated in 2008	ASEAN-India Collaborative R&D through projects, ASEAN-India Research & Training Fellowship for ASEAN professionals, Participation of ASEAN School Children in National Children Science Congress, ASEAN-India Innovation Platform, Partnership Development Activities namely workshops, seminars, training programs, technology exhibitions/Fairs, S&T Information dissemination and services.

Source: AISTC website

3.6.5 Cooperation in Trade and Investment:

ASEAN-India cooperation in economic activities is multidimensional. Keeping in view the emerging trends in trade and investments, the Leaders signed the ASEAN-India Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation at the 2nd ASEAN-India Summit in 2003. The Framework Agreement provided the foundation for ASEAN India Free Trade Area (FTA), which includes FTA in goods, services and investment. The ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement was signed in Bangkok on 13 August 2009 after six years of negotiations. The ASEAN-India FTA incorporates tariff liberalisation of over 90 per cent of products traded between these two dynamic regions. The economic activities between ASEAN and India are supervised by ASEAN-India Economic Ministers meetings and supported by ASEAN-India Business Council and various working groups.⁶⁴ Further details are furnished in Segment 5.2.

3.6.6 Cooperation in Tourism:

The existing cooperation in ASEAN-India tourism cooperation is based on the MoU between ASEAN and India on tourism cooperation signed in January 2012 in Manado, Indonesia. However, prior to this MoU, the stage for tourism cooperation between ASEAN and India was set by ASEAN-India Partnership for Peace, Progress and Shared Prosperity Agreement, signed in November 2004 at the 3rd ASEAN-India Summit in Vientiane. The ASEAN-India PoAs also mention about enhancement of tourism cooperation between the parties. For the implementation of the MoU, both sides have agreed to undertake joint projects and ensure private sector participation in tourism cooperation activities. The Meeting of ASEAN-India Tourism Ministers (MATM+India) was marked as an annual institutional mechanism to consider, review and approve tourism related projects and policies between ASEAN and India. ASEAN National Tourism Organisations (ASEAN NTOs) + India act as the operating arm of the MATM+India. ASEAN-India Cooperation Fund and other funding mechanisms can provide funding to the ASEAN NTOs+India for implementation of policies and programmes.⁶⁵ Starting from 2012, the year 2021 saw the eighth edition of the MATM+India meeting on virtual format due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Joint Media Statement released after the February 2021 MATM+India meeting acknowledged that while ASEAN received 4.7 million Indian travelers in 2019; India received 930,339 ASEAN tourists in 2019. Followed by this, Covid-19 pandemic imposed restrictions on international travel resulting in reductions in number of travelers. The 2021 Joint Media Statement mentioned about development of ASEAN Sustainable Tourism Assessment Tools, development of a Concept Paper on ASEAN-India Tourism Training Programme, formation of ASEAN-India Crisis Communications Team and India's involvement in ASEAN Promotional Chapter for Tourism.⁶⁶

3.6.7 Cooperation in Connectivity:

ASEAN-India connectivity is often projected as an ‘arc of prosperity’ that holds physical, digital, civilisational and people-to-people connectivity.⁶⁷ In November 2015, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced US\$ 1 billion Line of Credit to promote connectivity between India and ASEAN. India became the third dialogue partner of ASEAN, followed by China and Japan, to have the ASEAN Connectivity Coordinating Committee plus one (ACCC Plus India) meetings to enhance regional connectivity in line with the ASEAN Master Plan on Connectivity. In 2021 ASEAN-India Summit Joint Statement, both sides reiterated the need for strengthening connectivity. “Connecting the connectivities” played the key role in the ASEAN Summit and related events in 2021 and India expressed its commitment as follows;

“... exploring key priority areas of cooperation to reinforce the existing MPAC 2025 and promote prosperity and development in the Indo-Pacific region; and exploring potential synergies with sub-regional frameworks, such as, the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), the Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA), Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT), Mekong sub-regional cooperation frameworks, including Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS)”.

ASEAN-India ACCC was welcomed at the 10th ASEAN-India Summit and the first meeting of ACCC-India was held in Indonesia. Besides this, in November 2008, ASEAN-India Aviation Cooperation Framework was adopted at the 14th ASEAN Transport Ministers Meeting. India participated in the ASEAN Land Transport Working Group Meeting for the first time in 2012.

3.6.8 Cooperation in Environment

ASEAN-India cooperation in environment is reflected through the ASEAN-India Green Fund which was set up by the prime minister of India at the 6th ASEAN-India Summit in 2007 in Singapore with an initial funding of US\$ 5 million. The National Biodiversity Authority of India and the Manila based ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity have launched a project on Capacity Building towards implementing the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing, the City Biodiversity Index, and the Strategic Plan on Biodiversity’ under the ASEAN-India Green Fund. The first ASEAN-India Environment Ministers Meeting was held in New Delhi in 2012. The following aspects were covered in the meeting;

- Achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets: Progress at National Level and Resource Mobilization
- Biodiversity for Sustainable Development, Livelihoods, Poverty Reduction and Food Security
- Coastal and Marine Biodiversity;

- Implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization (ABS) to the Convention on Biological Diversity.⁶⁸

4. Features of ASEAN-led Multilateralism

ASEAN-led multilateral arrangements are one way of safeguarding the regional architecture in Southeast Asia and Indo-Pacific. At the 38th and 39th ASEAN Summits, chaired by Brunei Darussalam, the ASEAN leaders issued a declaration on multilateralism, to reflect on ASEAN's commitments towards multilateralism. They reaffirmed their commitment to uphold multilateralism to enhance ASEAN's capacity in building resilience in facing any emerging challenge. The declaration also emphasized on strengthening the concept of ASEAN-centrality by putting ASEAN at the core of all ASEAN-led mechanisms including ASEAN Plus One, ASEAN Plus Three (APT) ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), East Asia Summit (EAS), ADMM Plus, Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF).⁶⁹ The salient features of ASEAN-led multilateralism and regional order are important to understand India's position and stakes in them. Also refer to Box 2.

4.1 Adaptation and Innovation

The first and foremost multilateral forum led by ASEAN was the establishment of ARF in 1994. ARF represented ASEAN's capability to adjust itself with the emerging security architecture after the end of the Cold War and showcased its flexibility towards other regional and extra-regional players in Southeast Asia. This paved the way for creating an acceptance favouring ASEAN and ARF as the most promising regional leaders in the Asia-Pacific. The emergence of ARF was criticized partially as ARF would mean security consultations and security alignments within and outside ASEAN which had the potential to damage ASEAN's principle of non-interference. However, this was proved wrong and ARF came up as strong multilateral organization led by ASEAN. ARF members acknowledged and adopted the ASEAN Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC), accepted it as a code of conduct and also recognised the ASEAN version of cooperative security. This ensured that ASEAN will be the leading factor in ARF and the non-ASEAN members of ASEAN will not be able to drive ARF according to their interests and agenda.⁷⁰ This set the path towards implementation of 'realpolitik' by small and medium size ASEAN powers in the 21st Century's Southeast Asia.

4.2 Inclusivity

The next premier multilateral arrangement led by ASEAN was East Asia Summit (2005) which demonstrated ASEAN's power of ushering in inclusivity in Asia-Pacific. ASEAN included India

and Russia in EAS thereby extending the geographic scope of East Asia. Defining East Asia as per ASEAN's definition was a departure from what Southeast Asia used to be during the Cold war era - a region divided on the lines of super power rivalries. EAS therefore helped ASEAN in legitimizing East Asian inclusivity and the security architecture it was trying to form.⁷¹ Singaporean Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong commented that,

“ASEAN Foreign Ministers agreed on a set of criteria that would allow the participation of India, Australia and New Zealand in the first East Asia Summit. This was a wise decision. It kept East Asian regionalism inclusive, forward looking and open. It underscored the importance of adapting to new developments and not being trapped by narrow and outmoded geographic notions. But that decision was only the end of one chapter, not the end of the book”.⁷²

The ASEAN-led multilateral mechanisms added voices to the regional powers like Australia, India, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea as these countries were attempting to see their positions in the Asia-Pacific power game, sometimes torn between the USA and China. While this was true for the decades of 1990s and 2010s, ASEAN and its multilateral initiatives remain central to the emerging geostrategic construct of Indo-Pacific in the decades of 2010s and 2020.

4.3 ASEAN Centrality

ASEAN Centrality is an idea that provides driver's seat to the ASEAN member countries in any multilateral or regional mechanism in Southeast Asia. In 2007, ASEAN charter described ASEAN as the “primary driver for the wider region” including the Asia-Pacific.⁷³ ASEAN Centrality also implies that the regional and national interests of ASEAN states will be addressed and acknowledged as ASEAN engages with any external powers in the region. This also indicates ASEAN's role as a moderator in the security-strategic issues in and around Southeast Asia and not being a pawn at the hands of the great powers. The convening of ADMM Plus in 2010 was in sync with the idea of ASEAN Centrality as the platform offers a consultative forum to the ASEAN and its dialogue partner countries' Defence Ministers to discuss common issues of defence and security concerns. India, on its part, has always recognized ASEAN Centrality in the official statements, diplomacy and geostrategic planning. This earned India the label of a rising Middle Power by ASEAN which is commensurate with security interests of both the sides.

4.4 Balancer in the Indo-Pacific

Most of the policy making exercises and academic discussions have acknowledged India as a balancer in Southeast Asia. In the larger construct of Indo-Pacific, however, one can consider ASEAN as a balancer. With developments like Quadrilateral Security Dialogue in the Indo-Pacific, ASEAN countries faced the tough decision of taking sides - either with the Quad partners, namely, the USA, Japan, India and Australia or with China, which has taken an

unappreciative attitude towards Quad. This was addressed by ASEAN diplomatically with the ASEAN Outlook on Indo-Pacific (AOIP) that strategically concentrates on ASEAN's benefits and opportunities from the Indo-Pacific rather than indulging in a power competition, primarily led by the USA and China.⁷⁴

ASEAN-led multilateralism and ASEAN-centrality have helped ASEAN to transform itself from a regional organization maintaining regional affairs to an organization with a global approach and influence.⁷⁵ This has also helped India in overcoming the fear of losing grounds to ASEAN in the East Asian and Indo-Pacific security architecture. C Raja Mohan had once explained that India's exclusion from ASEAN Plus Three (APT) process and APEC and the slow growth in Look East Policy had raised questions over India's credibility as a regional player in Southeast and East Asia and ASEAN's true desire to welcome India on board in the scenario of regional security architecture led by ASEAN. In the decade of 2000s, with EAS and ADMM Plus, both India and ASEAN could address that fear. In the next decade, India-ASEAN relations helped India achieving a number of objectives- brand as a regional power with soft power elements, renewed relationships with US, Australia and Japan, common platforms to fight terrorism and other transnational threats and ensuring maritime security and safety and growing economic partnerships in the Indo-Pacific.⁷⁶

In the next segment, another significant aspect of ASEAN will be discussed regarding the ASEAN Community, its pillars and India's role and position in building ASEAN Community.

ASEAN Community represents the new-age ASEAN where the national governments can have their interests converged with the broader agenda of ASEAN. In other words, ASEAN Community building exercise carries forward the regional norms and principals along with the international order, diplomacy and external relations while assisting the member countries to achieve their national goals and development.⁷⁷

Box 2: What does ASEAN Speak about India?

“We appreciated India's continued support for ASEAN Centrality in the evolving regional architecture. We appreciated India's active participation and positive contribution to ASEAN-led mechanisms, including the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the East Asia Summit (EAS), the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM Plus), Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF) and other Senior Officials Meetings and engagements. Through these mechanisms, ASEAN-India cooperation continues to gain strength in effectively responding to traditional as well as non-traditional security challenges, especially terrorism, violent extremism, radicalisation, maritime security, and cybersecurity”.....

Source: Chairman's Statement of the 15th ASEAN-India Summit 14 November 2017, Manila, Philippines “Partnering for Change, Engaging the World”

5. Building ASEAN Community: Role of India

The ASEAN Community is a combination of three pillars- ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC), ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC). In 2009, ASEAN declared the Roadmap for ASEAN Community 2009-2015 and the three pillars- APSC, AEC and ASCC were launched in 2015. The next guiding document in the same direction was declared in 2015 themed as ASEAN 2025: Forging Ahead Together. ASEAN 2025 is a combination of ASEAN Community Vision 2025, the ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint 2025, the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint 2025 and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint 2025. Refer to Table 6 for further details.

Some of the milestones achieved by ASEAN, especially with regard to ASEAN Community are as follows;

- In 2015, ASEAN established the ASEAN Community consisting APSC, AEC and ASCC.
- ASEAN has also adopted the ASEAN Convention on Counter Terrorism in 2007 and the ASEAN Convention against Trafficking in Persons in 2015 to handle some of the security related challenges.
- ASEAN has established ADMM and ADMM-plus for external partners as foundations of intra-ASEAN defense co-operation and defence-military cooperation between ASEAN and its external partners.
- ASEAN and China also reached a framework for the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea in 2017, a crucial step for the formal conclusion of a Code of Conduct.
- 78 Non-ASEAN Member States and organizations have accredited their Ambassadors to ASEAN.
- ASEAN has established 42 ASEAN Committees in third countries around the globe to raise awareness on ASEAN and enhance its profile.
- ASEAN Security Outlook was issued in 2013 to promote greater transparency and deepen understanding of each other's defense-security policies.

Table 6: Important Documents and Declarations towards forming ASEAN Community

Year	Document/Declaration	Primary Issue/commitment
1967	Bangkok Declaration	Formation of ASEAN
1997	ASEAN Vision 2020	By 2020, a concert of Southeast Asian nations will be established.
2003	Bali Concord II	To concretize the ASEAN Vision 2020, the ASEAN Heads of States/Governments adopted the Declaration of ASEAN Concord II (Bali Concord II) in 2003 to establish the ASEAN Community by 2020
2007	Cebu Declaration	Accelerated the establishment of ASEAN community by 2015
2008	ASEAN Charter	To unite under One Vision, One Identity and One Caring and Sharing Community
2009	Roadmap for an ASEAN Community, 2009-15 (APSC Blueprint, AEC Blueprint, ASCC Blueprint, IAI Strategic Framework, IAI Work plan 2- 2009-2015)	“One Vision One Identity One Community”
2015	ASEAN Community Vision 2025, Forging Ahead Together	Successor to Roadmap for an ASEAN Community 2015
2020	Hanoi Declaration on the ASEAN Community’s Post-2025 Vision	To develop a post-2025 vision document
2021	ASEAN Strategic Policy Framework on Promoting and Adaptive ASEAN Community of Greater Understanding, Tolerance and a Sense of Regional Agendas Among peoples of ASEAN	To strengthen shared peace-oriented values in the region

Source: collected from various sources

Referring to the three pillars of ASEAN Community and India’s Act East Policy, the first and foremost convergence can be found in the formula of 3Cs- commerce, connectivity and culture. In view of this, in this segment, focus has been given to India-ASEAN relations in the context of commercial (trade and investment) partnership, cultural partnerships and connectivity projects. More details on ASEAN country coordinators for India and ASEAN Secretary Generals are furnished in Table 13 and Table 14.

5.1 Cultural Cooperation between ASEAN and India

Box 3: Excerpts from *Letters from Java*, written by Rabindranath Tagore during and on his Southeast Asia tour, 1927

“... in Java and Bali we have two neglected and forgotten outposts of ancient Indian civilizations.... There is a vast unexplored field in these islands of the Indian Archipelago for the study and interpretation of the ancient traditions of our country... There is every danger of our ancient traditions being lost for for all times and once they are lost they will be lost for all times for there will be no possibility of getting to know them again.”

Indian cultural influences were spread across Southeast Asia embracing Vietnam, Burma (now Myanmar), Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore, Cambodia and Malaysia. Ancient kingdoms in Southeast Asia including Funan, Sri Kshetra, Pagan, Khmer, Sri Vijaya, Sailendra and Majapahit were deeply influenced by Indian political and religious thought, art and architecture, language and literature. Thai language and Bahasa Indonesia have Indo-Sanskrit vocabulary imbibed in them. Buildings and monuments in Pagan, Borobudur, Angkor and Lara Djonggrang are symbols of Indianization of Southeast Asian architecture. Ramkein, Amaramala, Arjuna Vivaha, Bharat Yuddha, Wajang Kulit are some of the literary masterpieces still in use in Southeast Asia which were partially adopted from Ramayana and Mahabharata. Buddhism was spread to Southeast Asia from India. Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Cambodia practice Theravada Buddhism which had strong roots India. Bali and Java are two islands in the Islamic nation Indonesia that practice Hindu cultural traits. History, religions and culture are not the end of natural ties between India and Southeast Asia; geography too is an element of shared heritage. The island of Pu Bresh, located in the Northwest of Sumatra, is just 92 nautical miles away from Indira Point. This is less than the distance between Chennai and Tirupati. K M Panikkar, Nilakanta Shastri, R C Majumdar have worked on cultural, maritime and historical connections between India and Southeast Asia and on many occasions, they used the term Southeast Asia to identify both South and Southeast Asia. But even before them, India's first Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore who took three voyages to different parts of Southeast Asia found out the cultural, religious and civilisational similarities between India and Southeast Asia. (For details, refer to Box 3) The poet visited Indonesia, Malaya, Singapore, Thailand (then Siam), Burma (now Myanmar), Taiping (now Taiwan) and wrote about the mysterious yet strong similarities between both the regions. He also met the Indian communities, Chinese communities, the local kings and their royal families and the British and other European administrative officials. Some of his speeches were dedicated to the children in the region referring to the importance of liberal education to strengthen the cultural roots in the young minds.⁷⁸ Moving to the contemporary period, many of those Indian diaspora in Southeast Asian countries like Singapore, Malaysia and

Thailand have contributed significantly to the national developments of their respective host countries.⁷⁹ After independence, the Government of India has taken various initiatives to enhance the cultural ties between India and Southeast Asia and the LEP/AEP augmented those efforts by transforming into some tangible and some intangible benefits for India's strategic interests. Ministry of Culture, Government of India continues with those initiatives and adds to the cultural engagements and interactions between India and ASEAN countries, both at bilateral level and at the multilateral level. In this section, details are furnished on cultural relations between India and ASEAN in the decades of 1990s, 2000s and 2010s.

5.1.1. Global Engagement Scheme and Developments in Cultural Cooperation: 1990s-2020

The Global Engagement Scheme (GES) of Ministry of Culture, Government of India was formerly known as the Scheme for Promotion of International Cultural Relations. GES has three components- Festival of India, Grant-in-aid to the India friendship cultural societies based in foreign lands, and Contribution Grants made for international cultural institutions like UNESCO, World Heritage Fund, IRCOM, etc. Festivals of India (FOI) are organised to promote Indian culture abroad, strengthen cultural bond between India and the foreign countries, enhance cultural tourism and increase cultural contacts. The grant-in-aid programmes for Friendship and Cultural societies are implied for promotion of interactions and greater engagements between Indian cultural groups and personalities with their foreign counterparts.⁸⁰ Some of the important initiatives taken under the broad spectrum of cultural cooperation are listed down here. (For individual cultural agreements between India and ASEAN countries, refer to Table 7)

The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) was portrayed as a premier institution representing and advocating Indian cultures, heritages and languages abroad. In Southeast Asia, Jakarta, Indonesia became one of the first places to host ICCR in the region in 1989. Besides organising trainings in Indian music, dance and yoga, ICCR, also used to appoint faculties to teach Hindi and other Indian languages in the foreign universities. The year 2000 also saw the publications of Rama Story in South East Asia by Shri Satyavrat Shastri and A Treasury of Sanskrit Literature by Shri A N D Haksar, brought out by the ICCR. In 1999-2000 cultural delegations from Myanmar, Singapore and Vietnam visited a few cities in India to foster cultural interactions between the regions, sponsored by ICCR and the respective governments. ICCR also organised exhibitions on theme of Indian Dolls in Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam and Thailand.⁸¹

India's Vice President Shri Krishnan Kant visited Cambodia in 2001-02 and a stopover was made in Angkor Wat. After having discussions with the Cambodian King Norodom Sihanouk and the Cambodian Prime Minister Samdech Hun Sen, Shri Kant promised that India will assist Cambodia in renovation of more temple areas in Angkor. This was in sync with India's commitments to the MGC and the CLMV countries in redeveloping the age-old ties between them and India.⁸²

Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh announced seed money of US\$ 1 million for establishing A Museum of Traditional Asian Textiles in Siem Riep during his visit to Cambodia in 2002. By 2004, the Cambodian authority has allotted 1 acre plot for the museum and the project was jointly coordinated by ICCR and APSARA Authority of Cambodia under MGC programme. A delegation from Archeological Survey of India (ASI) participated in a discussion on restoration of Ta Prohm in Cambodia. JNICC, Jakarta along with the Indian mission in Jakarta and ICCR organised several number of events to showcase Indian cultural footprints in Southeast Asia. ICCR cultural troupes visited Kuala Lumpur on several occasions in 2004-05 along with a representation by Ms. Sujata Chaudhury for the Kuala Lumpur Poetry Reading event. Singapore became the venue for the 5th International Indian Film Awards (IIFA) in 2004 and this event was presided over the Singaporean President S R Nathan. Besides, ICCR also sent Ramayana ballet troupe to Singapore to showcase the widespread influence of the Indian epic on Southeast Asian society. The “Path of Compassion” was the theme of the exhibition India organised on the soil of Singapore.⁸³

ICCR’s two Cultural Centres in Indonesia (Jakarta and Bali) conducted a number of outreach programmes in places like Medan, Bandung, Batam and Lombok. “Bharat Katha” dance programme was organised by the Jawaharlal Nehru India Cultural Centre (JNICC) and a 12-member Indonesian dance troupe from Taman Mini Indonesia Indah visited Gujarat in September 2006 to perform at the state-sponsored Navratri festival. “Celebrating India 2006” was organised by the Indian High Commission in Singapore in July 2006 which was a week-long celebration to showcase India’s potential both in trade and culture. The 60th anniversary of the Thai King’s accession to the throne was organised from November 2006 to January 2007 and India participated in the flora exhibition in Chiang Mai province on this occasion. INTACH (Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage) constructed an Indian garden on this occasion. Thailand also organized International Ramayana Festival in 2006 where Indian troupes participated. From Vietnam, a cultural troupe came to India to celebrate Vietnam National day in 2006.⁸⁴

Government of India discussed about the potential of establishing Nalanda University in Bihar with the Government of Singapore and few other Southeast Asian governments which was well received by the later. In July 2007, Nalanda Mentor Group, led by Prof. Amartya Sen, had its first meeting in Singapore. An exhibition on the theme of On the Nalanda Trail: Buddhism in India, China and Southeast Asia was also organised in Singapore’s Asian Civilizations Museum in November 2007. This exhibition was attended by the Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and Indian Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh.⁸⁵

In 2008-09, India provided assistance to Cambodia in the preparation of a Management Plan for Preah Vihear Temple for its inscription on the World Heritage List of UNESCO. In 2008,

Singapore became the second city after New York to host India@60 celebrations highlighting business, tourism and culture.⁸⁶

In Cambodia, the Archeological Survey of India continued with their assistance in renovation and restoration of the Ta Prohm temple site. The Festival of India was organised in Indonesia which had classical and folk performances, medieval Indian art exhibition, film show, fashion show and many other events. Three performing art groups were sent to Indonesia to participate in the Festival..⁸⁷

Archeological Survey of India and Forest Research Institute participated in a Technical Meeting of the International Coordinating Committee for Safeguarding the Temples of Angkor held at Siem Reap from 8-9 June, 2010. In Indonesia, the Festival of India continued for the year and an international conference was organised by ICCR on historical links between India and Southeast Asia.⁸⁸

In Chulalongkorn University, Thailand, an international conference on the theme of Tagore's Vision for Asia: Human Solidarity beyond Nationalism' was organised on 16-17 June, 2011 to commemorate 150th birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore. An exhibition on Tagore and the Romance of Travel was conducted on the same occasion. Another seminar, Life and Legacy of Tagore was conducted in Hanoi, Vietnam in assistance with Museum of Literature, Hanoi.⁸⁹

Like previous years, 2012-13 also had experienced several occasions to celebrate the cultural bond between India and Southeast Asia. ICCR organised an exhibition, Merging Metaphors in Brunei in December 2012 to showcase paintings of Indian and Southeast Asian artists. On 26 November 2012 a bust of Rabindra Nath Tagore was installed in the temple of Borobudur, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. A 10-member percussion group, Saurangi Ensemble, was sent to Philippines in December 2012 and a Filipino performing group, Sindaw Philippines Performance Arts Guild visited India to participate in the ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit. A students' delegation from Philippines visited Delhi, Agra, Jaipur and Mumbai in the same year. ICCR also sent performing groups for the ASEAN India Car Rally and the INS Sudarshini expedition on the occasion of ASEAN-India Commemorative events. Separate cultural troupes were also sent to Malaysia, Thailand and Myanmar. An archeology conference on Cham Civilizational Linkages between India & Vietnam was organised in Vietnam in July 2012 and another conference on Civilisational Dialogue between ASEAN and India was conducted in Patna, India in the same month.⁹⁰

India continued deep cultural linkages with Cambodia in 2013-14. The Archeological Survey of India continued its restoration activities in Ta Prohm temple premises in Cambodia. Mekong Ganga Cooperation Traditional Textile Museum was launched in Siem Riep to create awareness

about the rich history of Asian textile. In February 2014, Festival of India was organised in Phnom Penh and Siem Riep. Another Festival of India was held in Laos in February 2014.⁹¹

Cambodia occupied the central position in ASEAN-India cultural cooperation in 2014-15 as well. The Indian side continued to support Cambodia in water resources development, electric transmission line, restoration of temples, and capacity building of human resources. India initiated a Study of Ground Water Resources in Kampong Speu Province and also was involved in the Development of Master Plan for Siem Reap River Basin at a total cost of approximately US \$ 3 million in 2014. In Kampong Cham province of Cambodia, India also supported in building the India Cambodia Friendship School. India also co-chaired the International Coordinating Committee (ICC) for Safeguarding and Development of the Historic Site of Preah Vihear in December 2014. The ICC contributed immensely to the conservation and management of Preah Vihear temple premises listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Cambodia also hosted Buddha Mahotsava, Ramayana Festival, Women by Women painting exhibition as part of Festival of India programme in February 2014. Lao PDR, Singapore and a few other countries too hosted the Festival of India in 2014 comprising food festival, yoga sessions, film shows and so on. Among other troupes, ICCR sent cultural troupes including Odissi dance group and fusion band to Thailand in 2014 as part of institutional cooperation in the cultural field.⁹²

In July 2015, the first and second phases of Ta Prohm temple renovation and conservation were completed by ASI and the third phase was undertaken. Cambodia celebrated the first International Yoga Day on 21 June 2015 on a grand scale- in front of the Phnom Penh Royal Palace, in Siem Riep and also in Sihanoukville. In 2015, the Festival of India was organised on a grand scale in Indonesia across 18 different cities to promote people-to-people contacts. On the occasion of 50th anniversary of India-Singapore diplomatic relations, an exhibition was organised on the theme of “Treasures from Asia’s Oldest Museum: Buddhist Art from the Indian Museum Kolkata” in Singapore’s Asian Civilisations Museums in June 2015. In 2015, the Festival of India’s second edition in Thailand was dedicated to HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn’s 60th birthday celebrations. The event also had a photography exhibition on the theme of ‘India through the Lens of HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn’ in Bangkok. In Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, a photo exhibition on Peace and Development was conducted collaboratively by India and Vietnam at the War Remnants Museum.⁹³

India hosted the 5th International Buddhist Conclave in October 2016 which was attended by Buddhist organizations and monasteries from most Southeast Asian countries. ICCR signed MoU with PSRB University, Phnom Penh to launch Chairs in Buddhist and Sanskrit studies in the Cambodian university. The Indian mission in Jakarta organised the Pravasi Bhartiya Divas on 9 January 2017 to create avenues for the Indian diaspora communities in making civilisational linkages between India and Indonesia noteworthy. The 14th edition of Global Indian Festival was held in Kuala Lumpur in June 2016. Among many other events, the most famous one in this

festival became the Rajasthani art exhibition, Meraki, jointly organised by Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Indian Cultural Centre (NSCBICC) and Kuala Lumpur International Arts Festival. 2017 was the 70th anniversary of India-Thailand diplomatic relations which was celebrated through Swasdee India Year and Namaste Thailand Year respectively in Thailand and India. Both Thailand and India signed the Executive Programme for Cultural Exchange to celebrate the long years of partnership. India also hosted the International Buddhist Conclave in October 2016 in Sarnath and Buddhist religious delegations from Southeast Asia participated in the event. ⁹⁴

The cultural cooperation between India and Southeast Asian countries remains crucial in 2017-18. New Delhi hosted the International Folk Dance and Music Festival in 2017 and participants from various Southeast Asian countries including Cambodia took part in it. Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts and APSARA National Authority of Cambodia continued to collaborate on restoration and preservation of heritage in Cambodia. 2017 was also marked as India Vietnam Friendship Year. In the 8th Congress of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha, Indian Buddhist sites and heritage were exhibited in Hanoi. ⁹⁵

In 2019-21, India's continued assistance in maintenance, preservation and management of some of the ancient architectural spaces took place as usual including Vat Phou in Lao PDR and in Ta Prohm in Cambodia. United Nations Day of Vesak Celebration was observed in Vietnam in May 2019 along with the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha and Indian Vice President Shri Venkaiah Naidu participated in the event as the Guest of Honour. ⁹⁶

Table 7: Cultural Agreements between India and Southeast Asian Countries

Cultural Agreement between India and Cambodia	31 January 1996
Agreement Concerning Cultural Relations between Indi and Indonesia	29 December 1955
Cultural Agreement between India and Malaysia	March 30, 1978
Agreement between India and Myanmar on Cultural Cooperation	January 25, 2001
Cultural Agreement between India and Philippines	September 6, 1969
MOU between India and Singapore Concerning Cooperation in the Fields of the Arts, Heritage and the Archives	February 5, 1993
Cultural Agreement between India and Thailand	April 29, 1997
Cultural Agreement between India and Vietnam	December 18, 1976

Source: Ministry of Culture, GOI⁹⁷

5.1.2 New Initiatives in ASEAN-India Cultural Relations: ASEAN-India Friendship Year 2022

The ASCC Blueprint 2025 was adopted by ASEAN member states in 2015 in Kuala Lumpur during the 27th ASEAN Summit. The ASCC has multiple areas to focus on including culture and arts, information and media, education, youth, sports, social welfare and development, gender, rights of women and children, rural development and poverty eradication, labour, civil service, environment, haze, disaster management and humanitarian assistance, and health. The Senior Officials Meeting on Culture and Arts (SOMCA) had a meeting with the Indian mission to ASEAN in Jakarta on 20 October 2021. The following areas were discussed in the meeting:

- a) ASEAN-India Friendship Year 2022: To celebrate 30 years of dialogue relations, both India and ASEAN have agreed to celebrate 2022 as the Friendship Year. The celebrations include Youth Summit, release of a book on ASEAN-India Cultural Contacts, ASEAN-India Artists Camp, ASEAN-India Music Festival, launch of a revamped Asian Traditional Textiles Museum in Cambodia, ASEAN-India Media Exchange and ASEAN-India Cooperation on Handicrafts.
- b) Conservation and Restoration of the cultural heritage: Government of India has agreed to assist ASEAN in Listing ASEAN Heritage project. Both sides are working on institutional set up on this.
- c) Participation of Youth: India and ASEAN will sponsor events like special Logo design competition, issuing Joint Stamp and Commemorative Coins to commemorate the friendship year and involvement of the youth through crowd sourcing.
- d) Art and Craft Fair: ASEAN will be a special guest at the Art and Craft fair at Surajkund in 2022 to observe the Friendship Year between India and ASEAN.
- e) Education: ASEAN and India are at the final stage of launching ASEAN-India Network of Universities.

Box 4: PhD Fellowship for ASEAN Students by India

At the ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit in New Delhi in January 2018, the Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi announced the Doctoral fellowship in India for ASEAN students/citizens. Under this Programme, the Indian Institutes of Technologies (IITs) will provide 1000 fellowships to ASEAN citizens to pursue an integrated Ph.D. So far, approximately 22 scholars from ASEAN countries have received the fellowships each year starting from 2019 and continued in 2020 and 2021.

5.2 Economic Relations between ASEAN and India

The Indians started to make footprints in Southeast Asian from early Christian era. Indian rulers, administrators, traders and military officials had considerable interests in Southeast Asia. Majority of Indian traders to Southeast Asia went from Gujarat, Malabar and Coromandel region and Bengal. Ports of Cambay, Surat, Bombay, Portuguese Goa, Calicut, Travancore, Cannanore, Malabar, Musalipatnam, Nagapattinam, Hooghly, Pipli, Balasore had enjoyed thriving trading relations with different parts of Southeast Asia at different points of time.⁹⁸ The economic connections between India and Southeast Asia continued during the colonial and post-colonial eras. As the modern age came, the trade between ASEAN Five (Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and Philippines) and India on the one hand and India and individual countries in Southeast Asia on the other hand, grew since the 1970s. Unfortunately, since 1980s, the trade surplus against India has been a constant truth in India-ASEAN economic relations.

Ever since ASEAN has been formed as a regional organization, it has impacted the economic and political landscapes of Southeast Asia and the extra-regional powers (including India) as well. In the words of Michael Haas, ASEAN has had such a profound impact that it has ASEANized the international relations of Asian countries”.⁹⁹ ASEAN has not only acted as a regional bloc, it has created sub-regionalism revolving around it and gradually evolved as one of the decisive actors in the Asian political-economic systems.¹⁰⁰ To continue with the trend, ASEAN needed to have closer economic cooperation with rest of the Asian powers including India. Many ASEAN countries were also following the trend of economic nationalism in the post-Cold War era which was accompanied by trade diversification, investment control and investment diversification. This led to lessen dependence on one single country like US or China or Japan for their trade and investment relations. India, with its large demography, market size, and newly introduced liberalization policy, offered them a good alternative to enhance economic partnership. This served the purpose of increasing economic partnerships between ASEAN and India since the 1990s.¹⁰¹

India's imports from ASEAN and Northeast Asia increased from a share of 7.5 to 8.1 per cent and from 11.8 to 14.8 per cent of India's total imports between 1996-97 and 2000-04 respectively. On the other hand, share of imports from North America and EU declined. In 2004-05, edible oil, machinery and electrical machinery contributed for 47.7 per cent of India's total imports from ASEAN. However, India imposed high customs tariff on palm oil from Malaysia and Indonesia leading to trade conflicts between these two countries and India. In the case of Indian exports, the three main products in 2004-05 were petroleum products, jewellery and organic chemicals which accounted for almost 44.4 per cent of total Indian exports to this area. Machinery and electronic machinery only accounted for 5.2 per cent and 2.7 per cent of total Indian exports to the ASEAN region in 2004-05. In the two decades of 1990s and 2000s, several numbers of Southeast Asian firms chose India as outsourcing destination. India was ready with a skilled workforce in IT, an education system that has been producing millions of science and engineering graduates with quantitative analytical skills, a developing IT industry, market orientation in terms of certifications as IT and ITES service providers. Thus India could start to enjoy the benefits of globalization and ASEAN was not far away to respond to this trend.¹⁰² Ever since India initiated LEP, institutional mechanisms and agreements have been adopted to increase trade and investments between India and ASEAN. (See table 7 for major economy related agreements between India and ASEAN). In the new century, the Indian business community started taking ASEAN as an economically important region leading to mutual gains and perception changes.¹⁰³

5.2.1 Agreements and Institutional Cooperation relating to ASEAN-India Economic Partnership: In view of the above changes and the steady growth in trade and investment relations, India and ASEAN decided to institutionalize the economic relations. In other words, it is evident that economic cooperation became the first pillar of partnership between ASEAN and India with the commissioning of ASEAN-India Expert Group on Trade and Investment Cooperation in 1994 which actually transformed the sectoral dialogue relations into operative mode. The Expert Group (EG) had two experts from each ASEAN countries and India which began its study in August 1994 with a target of 6 months. The EG Study aimed at identifying mechanisms, modalities and specific areas of economic cooperation between ASEAN and India for five years. This was ASEAN-India Fund's first funded project. The EG made a presentation at the second AIJSCC meeting in New Delhi and Goa in February 1995 and submitted their report.¹⁰⁴

In the next few years, the bilateral trade between ASEAN and India increased steadily- from \$ 7.6 billion in 1999 to \$ 9.8 billion in 2001.¹⁰⁵ In this backdrop, ASEAN-India Economic Linkage Task Force suggested for a draft agreement to create a regional Free Trade Area between ASEAN and India. Towards this direction, the Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation between ASEAN and India was signed in October 2003 and served as a legal basis to conclude further agreements, including Trade in Goods Agreement, Trade in

Services Agreement, and Investment Agreement that form the ASEAN-Indian Free Trade Area (AIFTA). The ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement was signed and entered into force on 1 January 2010. Under the Agreement, ASEAN Member States and India have agreed to open their respective markets by progressively reducing and eliminating duties on 76.4 per cent coverage of goods. The ASEAN-India Trade in Services Agreement was signed in November 2014. It contains provisions on transparency, domestic regulations, recognition, market access, national treatment and dispute settlement. The ASEAN-India Investment Agreement was also signed in November 2014. The Investment Agreement stipulates protection of investment to ensure fair and equitable treatment for investors, non-discriminatory treatment in expropriation or nationalisation as well as fair compensation.¹⁰⁶

Following points indicate some of the primary targets by the trade, investment and services agreements between India and ASEAN. (Refer to Table 8 and 9 for further details)

- i. **Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation between the Republic of India and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations-** the Parties agreed to enter into negotiations in order to establish an ASEAN-India Regional Trade and Investment Area (RTIA), which includes a Free Trade Area (FTA) in goods, services and investment, and to strengthen and enhance economic cooperation.
- ii. **Protocol to Amend the Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the Republic of India-** The Amendment considered the necessity to revise the Framework Agreement to reflect the current position in relation to the Early Harvest Programme (EHP) in the Framework Agreement.
- iii. **Trade in Goods Agreement under the Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation between the Republic of India and the Association of Southeast Asian Nation-** the ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (the “Agreement/AITIGA”) is a trade deal between the ten member states of ASEAN and India. ASEAN and India signed the Agreement at the 7th ASEAN Economic Ministers-India Consultations in Bangkok, Thailand in 2009. The Agreement, which came into effect in 2010, is sometimes referred to as the ASEAN-India Free Trade Agreement. The Agreement originated out of the Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation between India and ASEAN created in 2003. As the title suggests, this framework agreement set the basis for India and ASEAN to negotiate future trade agreements. In addition to reducing tariffs, the Agreement calls on all parties to establish predictable, consistent, and transparent trade practices to reduce non-tariff barriers. This includes simplifying customs procedures, ensuring permissible non-tariff measures are

transparent, and preventing countries from instituting or maintaining non-tariff measures not in accordance with the WTO.

- iv. **Agreement on Dispute Settlement Mechanism under the Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation between the Republic of India and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations-** dispute arising under the covered agreements means a complaint made by a Party concerning any measure affecting the operation, implementation or application of the covered agreements whereby any benefit accruing to the Complaining Party under the covered agreements is being nullified or impaired, or the attainment of any objective of the covered agreements is being impeded as a result of: (i) a measure of the Party Complained Against is in conflict with its obligations under the covered agreements; or (ii) the failure of the Party Complained Against to carry out its obligations under the covered agreements.
- v. **India-ASEAN agreement on Trade in Investment-** It contains provisions on transparency, domestic regulations, recognition, market access, national treatment and dispute settlement. The ASEAN-India Investment Agreement was signed in November 2014.
- vi. **India-ASEAN Agreement on Trade in Services-** It contains provisions on transparency, domestic regulations, recognition, market access, national treatment and dispute settlement. Trade in services is defined as the supply of a service: (i) from the territory of a Party into the territory of any other Party (“cross-border”); (ii) in the territory of a Party to the service consumer of any other Party (“consumption abroad”); (iii) by a service supplier of a Party, through commercial presence in the territory of any other Party (“commercial presence”); (iv) by a service supplier of a Party, through presence of natural persons of a Party in the territory of any other Party (“presence of natural persons”).

Table 8: Major Economy Related Agreements between India and ASEAN

Sl. No.	Agreement	Year
1.	Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Between the Republic of India and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations	8 October 2003
2.	Protocol To Amend The Framework Agreement On Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Between The Association Of Southeast Asian Nations And The Republic Of India	13 August 2009

	Link	
3	Trade in Goods Agreement under the Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation between the Republic of India and the Association of Southeast Asian Nation Link	13 August 2009
4	Agreement on Dispute Settlement Mechanism under the Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation between the Republic of India and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Link	13 August 2009
5	India-ASEAN agreement on Trade in Investment, Link	2014
6	India-ASEAN Agreement on Trade in Services, Link	13 November 2014

Source: ASEAN website¹⁰⁷

Table 9: Priority Areas of Economic Cooperation between ASEAN and India

Trade Facilitation	Sectors of Cooperation	Trade and Investment Promotion
Mutual Recognition Arrangements, conformity assessment, accreditation procedures, and standards and technical regulations, customs cooperation, NTBs, trade financing, business visa and travel facilitation	agriculture, fisheries and forestry, services: media and entertainment, health, financial, tourism, construction, business process outsourcing, environmental, mining and energy: oil and natural gas, power generation and supply, science and technology: information and communications technology, electronic commerce, biotechnology, transport and infrastructure: transport and communication, manufacturing: automotive, drugs and pharmaceuticals, textiles, petrochemicals, garments, food processing, leather goods, light engineering goods, gems and jewellery processing, human resource development: capacity building, education, technology transfer; and others: handicrafts, small and medium enterprises, competition policy, Mekong Basin Development, intellectual property rights, government procurement	fairs and exhibitions, ASEAN-India weblinks, business sector dialogues

Source: ASEAN¹⁰⁸

5.2.2 ASEAN Economic Ministers (AEM)-India Consultations: AEM-India Consultations are a regular process that happens prior to the ASEAN Summits and related events with the dialogue partners of ASEAN. In 2021, the 18th AEM-India Consultations were held virtually on September 14, 2021. Both the sides deliberated on the progress on the implementation of the

ASEAN-India FTA, and reflected on the ongoing discussions regarding the Scoping Paper on the Review of the ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA).

The 17th edition was held in August 2020 in virtual format which was co-chaired by Shri Piyush Goyal, Minister of Commerce and Industry & Railways and H.E. Tran Tuan Anh, Minister of Industry and Trade of Vietnam. The two sides discussed about trade facilitative measures and make the trade more user-friendly, Review of AITIGA was on the table as well as the AIBC proposal for the same.¹⁰⁹ The 16th edition of AEM-India Consultations was held in Bangkok on 10 September 2019. At this meeting, the ministers agreed to constitute a Joint Committee as per Article 17 of AITIGA to facilitate two-way trade between India and ASEAN. They spoke about utilization of ASEAN-India FTA for areas like FinTech, Connectivity, Start-ups, innovation, women and youth empowerment and MSMEs development.¹¹⁰ The 15th edition of AEM-India Consultation was in parallel to the 6th EAS-Economic Ministers Summit in Singapore on 1 September 2018. In this meeting, it was acknowledged that ASEAN has become the second largest trade partner of India in 2017-18 with bilateral trade valued at USD 81.33 billion, contributing 10.58 per cent of India's total trade with the world.¹¹¹ The 14th AEM-India Consultation was done in September 2017 in Manila which was the 50th anniversary celebration of ASEAN as well.

The 12th AEM-India Consultations were important as both the sides announced the entry into force of the ASEAN-India Trade in Services and Investment Agreements on 1 July 2015 for six ASEAN Member States, namely Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam, as well as for India, who have notified their ratification of the Agreements. This meeting was conducted in August 2015 in Kuala Lumpur.¹¹² AITIGA came into force on January 1, 2010 making one of the world's largest free trade area with a combined population of 1.9 billion people and a combined GDP of US\$ 5.36 trillion. The first AEM-India Consultations were held in Brunei in September 2002. ASEAN-India two-way trade registered a growth of 30 per cent from US\$ 7.6 billion in 1999 to US\$ 9.88 billion in 2001.¹¹³ In this meeting, they acknowledged the study report on AFTA-India Linkages for the Enhancement of Trade and Investment as a road map for greater economic integration. The Study suggested for the formation of an India-AFTA Regional Trade and Investment Area (RTIA). They also agreed to establish the ASEAN-India Economic Linkage Task Force and hosting of ASEAN-India Business Summit.

Besides the AEM-India Consultations, both sides have formed the Trade Negotiation Committee (TNC), Senior Economic Officials Meeting (SEOM) and a number of working groups including TNC Working Group on Rules of Origin, Working Group (WG) on Services and WG on Investment.¹¹⁴

5.2.3 ASEAN-India Business Council (AIBC): AIBC was formed after the first AIJSCC meeting which was also attended by the private sector. AIBC provides a network for the private sector representatives from India and ASEAN. ASEAN Chambers of Commerce and Industry (ASEAN CCI) and India-ASEAN Economic Cooperation Committee (IAECC) are the nodal agencies to coordinate affairs in the AIBC. This was re-launched in 2005 ‘with the aim to foster closer business linkages and providing an industry perspective to the broadening and deepening of economic linkages between ASEAN and India’.¹¹⁵ AIBC is constituted with 2 nominated members from each of the ASEAN countries and 5 from India. The Council is co-chaired by Malaysia’s nominated representative to the council on the ASEAN side and the President of the Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) from India. AIBC also recommends its proposals to the Ministers consultations between India and ASEAN. On 17 August 2021, AIBC had its meeting where it has discussed three main areas of recommendations to put forth for the ministers’ consultations. The three main areas are FTA, SME and women empowerment and trade facilitation.¹¹⁶ (Refer to Tables 10-12)

According to data obtained from ASEAN, the two-way trade between ASEAN and India reached US\$ 65.6 billion in 2020, which was decreased by 14.9 per cent from 2019. In 2020, total FDI inflows from India amounted to US\$ 2.1 billion, which was an increase of 34.7 per cent from the previous year. This positioned India as ASEAN’s seventh largest trading partner and seventh largest source of FDI among ASEAN Dialogue Partners in 2020.¹¹⁷

Table 10: Top 10 Items Imported by ASEAN from India, 2019-2020

HS	Item	Value (US\$ Million)	per cent Share
27	Mineral fuels, mineral oils, products of their distillation, bituminous substances, mineral waxes	6,994.4	24.3
84	Nuclear reactors, boilers, Machinery and mechanical appliances, parts thereof	2531.9	8.8
29	Organic chemicals	2211.8	7.7
71	Natural, cultured pearls, Precious, semi-precious stones, Precious metals etc.	1785.9	6.2
72	Iron and steel	1559.1	5.4
76	Aluminum and article thereof	938.9	3.3
87	Vehicles, parts and accessories	1420.3	4.9
85	Electrical machinery, parts, articles	1217.7	4.2
30	Pharmaceutical products	1.52.3	3.7
02	Meat and edible meat offal	944.5	3.3
	Top Ten commodities	20,656.9	71.7
	Others	8,141.2	28.3
	Total	28,798.1	100

Source: ASEAN Secretariat

Table 11: Top 10 Items Exported by ASEAN to India, 2019-2020

HS	Item	Value (US\$ Million)	per cent Share
85	Electrical machinery, parts, articles	8452.9	17.5
27	Mineral fuels, mineral oils, products of their distillation, bituminous substances, mineral waxes	8420.9	17.4
84	Nuclear reactors, boilers, Machinery and mechanical appliances, parts thereof	4523.1	9.4
15	Animal or vegetable fats, oils etc	4463.1	9.2
39	Plastics and articles thereof	2256.6	4.7
29	Organic chemicals	1968.9	4.1
72	Iron and steel	1562.1	3.2
74	Copper and articles thereof	1475.4	3.1
71	Natural, cultured pearls, Precious, semi-precious stones, Precious metals etc.	1443.6	3.0
40	Rubber and articles thereof	1217.0	2.5
	Others	35,794.2	74.1
	Total	48299.7	26.9

Source: ASEAN Secretariat¹¹⁸**Table 12: Trade between ASEAN and India, Values in US\$ Billion
(From India to ASEAN)**

Year	Export	Import	Total Trade
1996-1997	2.90	2.93	5.84
1997-1998	2.46	3.40	5.86
1998-1999	1.63	4.32	5.95
1999-2000	2.24	4.63	6.87
2000-2001	2.91	4.15	7.06
2001-2002	3.46	4.39	7.84
2002-2003	4.62	5.15	9.77
2003-2004	5.82	7.43	13.25
2004-2005	8.43	9.11	17.54
2005-2006	10.41	10.88	21.29
2006-2007	12.61	18.11	30.72
2007-2008	16.41	22.67	39.09
2008-2009	19.14	26.20	45.34
2009-2010	18.11	25.80	43.91
2010-2011	25.63	30.61	56.24
2011-2012	36.74	42.16	78.90
2012-2013	33.01	42.87	75.87
2013-2014	33.13	41.28	74.41
2014-2015	31.81	44.71	76.53

2015-2016	25.13	39.91	65.04
2016-2017	30.96	40.62	71.58
2017-2018	34.20	47.13	81.34
2018-2019	37.47	59.32	96.80
2019-2020	31.55	55.37	86.92
2020-2021	31.49	47.42	78.91

Source: Data obtained from Export Import Data Bank, Government of India

5.3 Connectivity between ASEAN and India

5.3.1 India's Official Position on Transport and Connectivity linking India and Southeast Asia

Starting from the decade of 1990a, India has officially participated in a number of meetings with ASEAN officials and discussed ways to enhance connectivity with the region. This includes deliberations through summits, expert groups, technical committees, finance committees, working groups and a host of other meetings. As a part of stock-taking of partnerships between ASEAN and India, this is inevitable that we take a note of India's official position on transport and connectivity linking these two regions in sequential order.

1996: Joint Press Release on the First ASEAN-India Joint Cooperation Committee Meeting: New Delhi 14-16 November 1996

ASEAN-India Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) was established as a key mechanism to provide content and implementation programmes to ASEAN-India partnership and the first meeting of JCC was held in November 1996. In that meeting, India made a presentation on the potential of India-ASEAN cooperation in infrastructure in railways, ports and highways. JCC decided to establish focal points for each of these areas to obtain direct contacts between the possible stakeholders.¹¹⁹

2002: Statement by External Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha at the first India-ASEAN Business Summit, Brunei, 1 August 2002

“There is a need to strengthening our physical connectivity as well. This holds the key to greater flows of trade, investment and tourism. India regards the development of highways and railway networks very important in this connection”.¹²⁰

2002: Inaugural Address by Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee at the first India-ASEAN Business Summit, New Delhi, 17 October 2002

“... Initiative for ASEAN Integration..... we have offered our assistance for a communications network involving highways, railways, river navigation and port facilities”.¹²¹

2002: Joint Statement of the First ASEAN-India Summit, Phnom Penh, November 5, 2002

“India expressed support for the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) and its commitment to participate in IAI projects, especially in HRD, and assist ASEAN new members in various forms, including through joint programme with the older ASEAN members. India also expressed its readiness to consider early granting of preferential tariff treatment to new ASEAN members States. They reaffirmed their common interest in developing the Programme of Action for the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation focusing on important areas of cooperation, such as tourism, culture, education and transport and communication. India also attached importance to and agreed to look into possible participation in regional and sub-regional development programs, such as ASEAN Mekong Basin Development Cooperation (AMBDC), and the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS).¹²²

2002: India’s Participation in STOM and ATM, ASEAN

In November 2002 during the ASEAN Summit, India, along with China, Japan and ROK participated In the ASEAN transport sector meeting in Phnom Penh. In this meeting, ASEAN and India decided to work together in the development of Mekong Basin, particularly for its transport linkages.¹²³

India had also participated at the 14th ASEAN Senior Transport Officials Meeting (STOM) and 8th ATM (ASEAN Transport Ministers) meeting in September in Indonesia. ASEAN-India joint cooperative activities included transport and infrastructure development in the region.¹²⁴

2003: Press Interaction of Foreign Secretary Kanwal Sibal in Connection with Prime Minister’s Visit to Indonesia to attend India-ASEAN Summit, New Delhi, 3 October 2003

“... trilateral highway project between India, Myanmar and Thailand. We hoped that we would be able to complete it in two years’ time but it has not happened. There are two committees that have been formed, the Technical Committee and the Finance Committee.”¹²⁵

2004: Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh’s Address at Third India-ASEAN Business Summit, October 19, 2004, New Delhi¹²⁶

“Our requirements of capital in infrastructure are indeed very large. The requirements of our airports and railways will alone amount to over \$55 billion in the next ten years. Our power sector needs \$75 billion and the telecom sector \$25 billion over the next five years. We believe the Indian economy can absorb up to \$150 billion of foreign investment in

the infrastructure sector over the next ten years. There is, therefore, a large window of opportunity for ASEAN businessmen to invest in our country.

Equally, Indian business must invest in South-East Asia. We have some attractive examples of successful Indian enterprises in the region. But we need more, especially in the newly industrializing economies of ASEAN where opportunities for new investment are presenting themselves. Indian businessmen must be more proactive in exploring markets and investment opportunities in South-East Asia and to build long-term durable relationships across the countries of the region.

Our State governments should also be proactive in developing mutually beneficial cooperation with the ASEAN region. The development of ports in West Bengal, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu can re-build maritime links of the Coromandel Coast with South-East Asia. While in the North-East, the Central government is committed to developing the infrastructure of trade and development, there is much that our State governments can do to promote trade and commerce with countries of South-East Asia.”

2004: ASEAN-India Partnership for Peace, Progress and Shared Prosperity, Vientiane, 30 November 2004

“Give high priority to development of regional infrastructure and road, rail, sea and air transportation links to increase physical connectivity that would facilitate greater movement of goods and people”.¹²⁷

2004: Plan of Action to Implement the ASEAN-India Partnership for Peace, Progress and Shared Prosperity, 30 November 2004¹²⁸

Forge closer cooperation to enhance transportation infrastructure, networks and operations, including air, maritime, road and rail to improve ASEAN-India trade and tourism-related transport connectivity, including through supporting the implementation of the Kuala Lumpur Transport Strategic Plan (ASEAN Transport Strategic Plan) 2016-2025.

Deepen cooperation on technical, economic and regulatory matters of aviation, including the convening of ASEAN-India Working Group Meeting on Regional Air Services Arrangement.

Promote maritime transport cooperation between ASEAN and India, and encourage potential private sector participation in the development of seaports, maritime logistics network and maritime services in order to create greater efficient linkages.

2007: Shri Pranab Mukherjee’s Address at Chulalongkorn University on “India’s Look East Policy: Implications for Thailand and South East Asia”, Bangkok, 14 September 2007¹²⁹

“In April 2002, India, Myanmar and Thailand agreed to cooperate in the construction of a trilateral highway that would link the two countries. The road alignment for the highway, which that would be 1400 kms. in length, has been completed. While work has started, it could - in our view - move much faster.

The idea of a road link between India and Thailand cannot but captivate one's imagination. For India, it would mean road connectivity with all of ASEAN. For Thailand, it would mean road connectivity with a market of more than a billion people. For both countries, the trilateral highway would be a highway to greater prosperity. The eight North Eastern States of India are often described as land locked. They are joined to the rest of India by a narrow land corridor that skirts the north of Bangladesh. This land corridor is only 21 to 40 kms in width and is known as the Chicken's Neck. This has been a serious impediment for the development of the region, which has lagged behind the rest of the country in terms of infrastructure and industrial development. In recent months, Thailand has taken some important steps to forge a closer relationship with this region of India and we in India are committed to cooperation with Thailand in this endeavour”.

2007: Chairman's Statement of the 6th ASEAN-India Summit, Singapore, 21 November 2007¹³⁰

“We recalled Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's proposal for dialogue on an Open Skies Agreement at the 5th ASEAN-India Summit in Cebu in January 2007 that would fully liberalise air services between ASEAN and India and foster greater interaction and movement between the peoples of Southeast Asia and India. We welcomed India's keen interest to join the ASEAN countries in an Open Skies regime, even as we look forward to the implementation of ASEAN's own liberalisation of air services within the ASEAN region from 2008.

We also looked forward to further integration of shipping, road and rail links between Southeast Asia and India to create an “Arc of Advantage” for our region. In this regard, we welcomed the proposal to construct the Indian-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway”.

2008: ATM-India Meeting, November 2008

In November 2008, at the ASEAN Transport Ministers Meeting (ATM)-India meeting in Philippines, the ASEAN-India Framework on Civil Aviation Cooperation was adopted. This was a milestone event as one of the early cooperation frameworks between ASEAN and India in the field of transport and communication.¹³¹

2009: Prime Minister's Statement at the 7th India-ASEAN Summit, October 24, 2009¹³²

“In keeping with the theme of the ASEAN Summit of "Enhancing Connectivity, Empowering Peoples”, I would propose the following initiatives to further strengthen the links between us:-.... Intensification of negotiations on an open skies policy, further

simplification of the visa regime to encourage business and tourist travel, a much larger number of youth exchange programmes, and commencement of exchanges of Parliamentarians between India and the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly.”

2009: Media Briefing by Secretary (East) on the 7th India-ASEAN Summit, October 24, 2009¹³³

Question: I have a query on the Open Skies Policy. We already have our Open Skies Policy in force in India. What exactly is the subject of negotiation or intensified negotiation?

Secretary (East): The ASEAN countries themselves are negotiating an Open Skies Policy for implementation in the year 2010. We have a kind of a qualified Open Skies Policy with ASEAN already. They can fly to tourist sites; they can fly to capital cities: no restrictions and all. The idea of this intensification of negotiations is that we would like to continue our negotiations with ASEAN in parallel with their own so that when their negotiations are complete, when they have their open skies policy, our position is also ready, and we are not losing any time at that particular moment so that we can also then go ahead and decide on this open skies policy with ASEAN which would be based on their own 2010 or whatever agreement that they reach. But we go on in parallel. The idea is not to lose time. That is it.

Question: Can you enlighten us about the status of the Trilateral Highway Project?

Secretary (East): The Trilateral Highway Project passes through - as you would know - India, Thailand and Myanmar. Thailand has offered to construct a certain portion inside Myanmar so that the connectivity at the border regions can be made a little earlier than what has been planned. This offer is under examination in Myanmar. As far as we are concerned our connection to Myanmar is reasonably okay. Once we enter Myanmar, it should basically end up in Bangkok via Mandalay and Yangon and then coming down.

2010: Chairman’s Statement of the 8th ASEAN-India Summit, 30 October 2010¹³⁴

“ASEAN Leaders appreciated India’s continued contribution to the development of transportation networks between ASEAN and South Asia particularly through the construction of the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway and looked forward to its extension to Laos and Cambodia as well as the development of a new India-Myanmar-Laos-Viet Nam-Cambodia highway. ASEAN leaders also called for further engagement of India in the ASEAN Connectivity Initiative, both in the hardware and the software linkages. In this regard, we also welcomed India’s offer to support realisation of ASEAN Master Plan for ICT connectivity and noted with appreciation the specific proposals made by India in its Concept Paper. We also appreciated India’s continued support to ASEAN countries in capacity development by offering scholarships through Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme and Mekong-Ganga Cooperation Programme.”

2012: Speech by the External Affairs Minister S.M. Krishna at the plenary session of the Second East Asia Summit (EAS) Foreign Ministers Meeting. Phnom Penh, 12 July, 2012¹³⁵

“We have recently agreed, at Myanmar’s request, to undertake repair of 71 bridges on the Tamu-Kalewa Friendship Road and also upgrade the Kalewa-Yargi road segment to highway standard, thereby contributing to the connectivity from Moreh in India to Mae Sot in Thailand. We are also in discussion with Lao PDR on surface connectivity”.

2012: Opening Remarks by Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh at 10th India-ASEAN Summit. Phnom Penh, 19 November, 2012¹³⁶

“We have also held discussions with ASEAN in the Land Transport Working Group, the Maritime Transport Working Group and the ASEAN Connectivity Coordinating Committee. The Trilateral Highway Task Force met in New Delhi and resolved to establish connectivity from Moreh in India to Mae Sot in Thailand by 2016. These are welcome steps in implementing the vision of India-ASEAN connectivity. We await route alignments on the extension of the Trilateral Highway and the proposed new highway to Vietnam so that these can be examined in an integrated manner. I look forward to early completion of the feasibility studies.”

2018: Delhi Declaration of the ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit to mark the 25th Anniversary of ASEAN-India Dialogue Relations, January 25, 2018¹³⁷

“Reaffirm our commitment to enhance physical and digital connectivity in line with the MPAC 2025 and the AIM 2020 by, among others, availing of the US\$1 billion line of credit announced by India to promote physical infrastructure and digital connectivity.”

2018: EAM at Delhi Dialogue, July 19, 2018¹³⁸

“Our vision of the Indo-Pacific, not only involves physical inter connectivity, but also entails building bridges of trust, based on mutual respect, giving due regard for sovereignty and territorial integrity, consultation, transparency, viability and sustainability. Finally, there is an imperative need to eschew protectionism, nationalism and avoid a return to great power rivalries”.

2021: Summit on Future of ASEAN-India Connectivity Partnership, 14 September 2021

Union Minister for Ports, Shipping & Waterways and AYUSH Shri Sarbananda Sonowal has addressed the summit on the future of ASEAN-India Connectivity Projects in September 2021 on virtual mode. In this summit, he informed the participants about the challenges in seamless connectivity between ASEAN and India which includes delays in repairing of around 70 bridges in Myanmar due to several reasons including political disturbances in the country and the delay in the Motor Vehicle Agreement between India, Myanmar and Thailand. He recommended forming National Transport Facilitation Committees to ensure even and seamless connectivity between the three countries involving in Trilateral Highway.¹³⁹

2021: ASEAN-India Joint Statement on Cooperation on the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific for Peace, Stability, and Prosperity in the Region, October 28, 2021

“Connecting the connectivities through exploring key priority areas of cooperation to reinforce the existing MPAC 2025 and promote prosperity and development in the Indo-Pacific region; and exploring potential synergies with sub-regional frameworks, such as, the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), the Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA), Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT), Mekong sub-regional cooperation frameworks, including Ayeyawady- Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS)”.

5.3.2 Developments in the Transport and Connectivity Projects

In 2008, at the 14th ASEAN Transport Ministers Meeting, ASEAN and India discussed about the Open Skies Agreement covering ASEAN-India Air Transport Agreement. The framework covers aspects like airline cooperation, air navigation, aviation safety and security and human resource development. As part of the institutional mechanism, ASEAN Air Transport Working Group (ATWG) is the negotiating platform with representatives from India and ASEAN. The ATWG focuses on the finalisation of the ASEAN-India Air Services Arrangement as priority.¹⁴⁰

Through the PoA between India and ASEAN, 2010-2015, both sides had identified three connectivity projects linking India with Southeast Asian countries- (I) India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway (TH), (II) extension of the TH till Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia and (III) a new highway linking India and Vietnam as a part of Mekong-India Economic Corridor (MIEC).

In July 2012, India was invited to present the status of the TH at the 21st ASEAN Land Transport Working Group (ALTWG) meeting in Laos. In this meeting it was noted that the India-Myanmar Friendship Road was being extended till Tamu and Kalewa. Indian side had already promised to undertake repairing of 71 bridges on Tamu-Kalewa road and up-gradation of 120 km stretch between Kaleya and Yargyi. Myanmar side also committed to work on the up-gradation of Yargyi-Monya stretch. India had also initiated DPR for construction of Chaungma-Yinmabin section (30 km); and upgradation from single lane to double lane of Yinmabin-Pale-Lingadaw section (50 km).

To implement the project, a Joint Task Force was formed between India, Myanmar and Thailand. The first meeting of the revived Task Force was conducted in Delhi in September 2012 and they decided to work towards seamless connectivity on the TH and also agreed to complete the Highway by 2016. Few days prior to this meeting, at the 6th Mekong Ganga Cooperation meeting, the ministers agreed to expand the TH till Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia.¹⁴¹

In 2012 ASEAN Post Ministerial Meeting with India, the group recognised and welcomed Cambodia’s proposal to set up Joint Committee on Connectivity between ASEAN and India to coordinate connectivity and transport related activities between the two sides.

On the side of India, New Delhi had already established a central inter-ministerial Group involving relevant ministries and departments to study different proposals on connectivity projects linking India with the ASEAN countries.

In October 2012, India also participated in the 24th ASEAN Maritime Transport Working Group (MTWG), held in Yangon, Myanmar. ASEAN Member States while welcoming India's proposals on ASEAN-India maritime transport cooperation also requested India to provide clear objectives of the proposals given under maritime transport cooperation. ASEAN Member States also reiterated that ASEAN-India collaborative projects should be undertaken in sync with ASEAN Strategic Transport Plan or Brunei Action Plan and transport-related measures under the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC). Later India also attended the 25th ASEAN Maritime Transport Working Group Meeting in Mandalay on 12-14 March 2013.¹⁴²

Both India and ASEAN had also decided to deliberate on ASEAN-India Highway project at the 12th ASEAN Highway Sub-Working Group meeting in Lao PDR in May 2013.

Regarding the extension of the TH, the inaugural ASEAN Connectivity Coordinating Committee (ACCC) –India meeting became crucial as Vietnam proposed its possible routes for the extension. The meeting was conducted in June 2013 in Indonesia. Some of the recommendations of the First ACCC-India meeting were as follows;

(i) the establishment of a Working Group on Maritime Cooperation under the Maritime ASEAN Transport Working Group (MTWG)-India Meeting; (ii) welcoming the idea of developing special activities to strengthen the economic corridors linking various modes of transport in ASEAN, including cross-border procedures and enabling policy frameworks for trade and transit; (iii) explore ways to give economic viability and sustainability to the geographic corridors of connectivity on land and sea; (iv) promoting a mutually beneficial business visa regime, including grant of long term multiple entry business visa and stay permit for professionals and their families.

By 2016, India was also a part of MGC Working Group to enhance maritime cargo transportation and other transport and connectivity related issues which will directly benefit the connectivity between India and Southeast Asia.¹⁴³ Under the POA, 2021-2025, ASEAN and India have convened the ASEAN-India Working Group Meeting on Regional Air Services Arrangement.

In November 2017, ASEAN-India Connectivity Summit was organised by ASEAN India Center and CII in New Delhi. This was a celebratory event organised prior to the Commemorative Summit, 2018. The primary objective of this summit was to identify issues of concerns in transport and connectivity between India and ASEAN and recommend ways to enhance the same.¹⁴⁴

In December 2018, Gen. (Dr) V. K. Singh (Retd) in a Rajya Sabha question responded that construction of 69 bridges on the Tamu-Kyigone-Kalewa (TKK) road section in Myanmar was behind the schedule and had started in 2017. Construction of Kalewa-Yagyi road section in Myanmar started in May 2018. The minister also informed about Myanmar's comprehensive review to be undertaken for the IMT Motor Vehicles Agreement which caused further delay in the MVA.¹⁴⁵

In 2019, the TH again witnessed noteworthy diplomatic developments as the 7th Joint Commission Meeting was held between India and Thailand at the sidelines of the 35th ASEAN Summits and related events in Bangkok. Both countries reiterated their commitment for early completion of the Trilateral Highway and the IMT Motor Vehicles Agreement.¹⁴⁶ For further details on ASEAN-India connectivity projects, refer to Boxes 5, 6 and 7.

Box 5: Mechanisms to enhance People-to-People Connectivity as part of the ASEAN-India Socio-Cultural Cooperation

- Students Exchange Programmes
- Special Course for ASEAN Diplomats
- Delhi Dialogue
- International Conference on Cultural and Civilisational Links
- Media Exchange Programmes
- Young Farmers Exchange Programmes
- ASEAN- India Youth Summit
- Network of Think-Tanks
- Exchange of Parliamentarians between ASEAN and India
- ASEAN-India PhD fellowship Programme

Box 6: Physical Connectivity Projects between India and ASEAN

- **India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway (TH):** TH started in 2002 as one of the flagship programmes linking India and ASEAN. This is a 1360 kms long highway where India has undertaken construction of two sections in Myanmar- construction of 120.74 km Kalewa-Yagyi road section, and construction of 69 bridges along with the approach road on the 149.70 km Tamu-Kyigone-Kalewa (TKK) road section. Government of India has already released 188.32 crore out of the approved cost of Rs. 1459.29 crore for the Kalewa-Yagyi road section and Rs. 4.84 crore out of the approved cost of Rs. 371.58 crore for the 69 bridges along with approach road on the TKK Road section. Three countries are discussing on the IMT Motor Vehicles Agreement. India and ASEAN have plans to extend TH to Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam as this connectivity will generate an estimated US\$70 billion in incremental GDP by 2025.
- **Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project (KMMTTP):** At the cost of \$484-million, KMMTTP aims at developing bilateral connectivity between India and Myanmar on land and water. KMMTTP connects Kolkata in India to Sittwe and Paletwa in Myanmar by sea and river respectively. Alongside this initiative, India has contributed to build a sea link via Sittwe port in Myanmar in order to enable an alternative transit route through Bangladesh.
- **ASEAN-India Maritime Links:** India is exploring to build connectivity between Andaman & Nicobar and Sabang in Indonesia and also between Vishakhapatnam, Chennai and Kolkata in India and Ranong port in Thailand. India intends to establish direct shipping routes between India and Vietnam.
- **ASEAN-India Aviation Cooperation:** It includes Open Skies Agreement and Air Transport Agreement on ASEAN-India Protocols. Under the POA, 2021-2025, ASEAN and India have convened the ASEAN-India Working Group Meeting on Regional Air Services Arrangement.
- **Digital Villages in ASEAN Countries:** In 2018, Prime Minister Narendra Modi offered to assist the CLMV countries in initiating the Digital Villages pilot project. In India, the Digital Village (DigiGaon) campaign has already been started with the motto of connecting the villages digitally and making every villager digitally literate. For ASEAN, the Telecommunications Consultants India Ltd. (TCIL) was selected as the advisor from India and Cambodia was chosen as the first country to implement the pilot project. Strengthen this point

Source: Indo-Pacific Defence Forum and Digital Village¹⁴⁷

Box 7: Points Related to Connectivity in ASEAN-India POA, 2021-2025

- Enhance cooperation to strengthen the ASEAN Connectivity agenda, through the implementation of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025.
- Continue to undertake consultations and dialogue, as necessary, between ASEAN and India on connectivity issues through the ASEAN Connectivity Coordinating Committee (ACCC) and other relevant ASEAN sectoral bodies, as appropriate
- Work closely to promote physical connectivity in the region by completing the missing links between South and Southeast Asia, including, but not limited to, expediting the completion of relevant sections of the India-Myanmar-Thailand trilateral highway and supporting steps to build an economic corridor along it and its extension to Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Viet Nam; and encouraging private sector participation in the development of roads and railways and relevant logistics networks.
- Promote quality, sustainable and transparent infrastructure development of robust standards to achieve a seamlessly connected and integrated ASEAN and to ensure sustainable socio-economic growth and development.
- Increase the supply of investment-ready infrastructure projects in ASEAN Member States by supporting project planning and preparation facilities, enhancing investment and business environments and providing targeted technical assistance and capacity building.
- Facilitate access towards sustainable and innovative financing as well as supporting sustainable urbanisation to contribute to the implementation of MPAC 2025

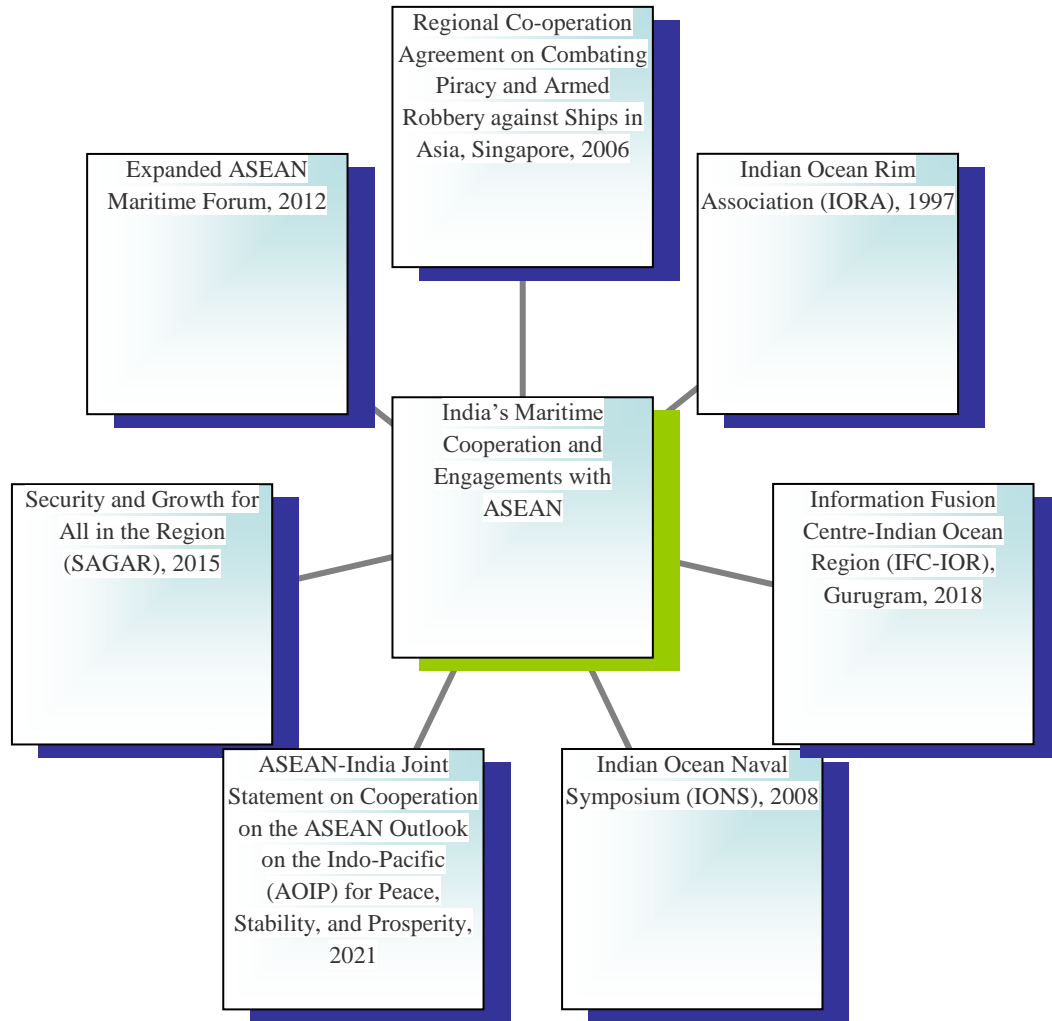
5.3.3 The Future in the Indo-Pacific: The Indian Take:

In March 2015, Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited the island nations of Seychelles, Mauritius and Sri Lanka where he unveiled India's strategic vision on maritime safety, security and connectivity- SAGAR, elaborated as Security and Growth for All in the Region. SAGAR visualizes a climate of trust, respect for international rules on maritime safety and security, peaceful resolution of maritime disputes, adherence to the norms of sovereignty and maritime cooperation. SAGAR has the potential to enhance India's presence in the Indo-Pacific by offering a network of stakeholders (governments, shipping industries, naval forces, disaster management forces, national and international maritime law and policy makers and others) and work towards maritime security and connectivity. SAGAR also supports and complements India's bilateral and multilateral partnerships in the Indian Ocean Region including India's involvement with the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and ASEAN (and ASEAN led platforms like ARF and EAS). Towards the direction of India's thrust in the domain of maritime safety, security and connectivity, New Delhi decided to dedicate some of its endeavors in enhancing maritime cooperation with its ASEAN partners as well. In 2018, the

ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit in New Delhi housed a Leaders Retreat on the theme of maritime security and cooperation and in the same year, Delhi Dialogue was themed on Strengthening ASEAN-India Maritime Cooperation. In the same year, Prime Minister Modi mentioned in the Shangri La Dialogue in Singapore, “When the oceans are open, the seas are secure, countries are connected, the rule of law prevails and the region is stable, nations, small and large, prosper as sovereign countries.”¹⁴⁸ India is also a part of the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF), which is a forum to discuss maritime cooperation among the EAS member countries. Established in 2012, ASEAN holds meetings with Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum on a regular basis at Track 1.5 level. Figure 3 depicts India’s involvements in maritime cooperation with ASEAN countries. The idea of security and prosperity for all as envisaged in the SAGAR framework and the above narrative indicates a close connection with Kautilyan idea of *yogakshema*. Yoga means acquisition of things and Kshema means secure possession of things. Together, they mean well-being and security for all.¹⁴⁹

As far as the convergence of interests between India and ASEAN are concerned in the vast strategic space of Indo-Pacific, India has achieved success in declaring one of its well-articulated maritime strategy- India’s Indo-Pacific Ocean Initiative (IPOI) at the 14th EAS Summit on November 4, 2019. The IPOI recognizes seven basic features of maritime cooperation and collaboration, namely, (1) Maritime Security; (2) Maritime Ecology; (3) Maritime Resources; (4) Capacity Building and Resource Sharing; (5) Disaster Risk Reduction and Management; (6) Science, Technology and Academic Cooperation; and (7) Trade Connectivity and Maritime Transport. In 2021, the ASEAN-India Joint Statement on Cooperation on AOIP for Peace, Stability and Prosperity was announced at the 18th ASEAN-India Summit. This offers a cooperative framework to focus on the complementarities between AOIP and IPOI in the areas of maritime connectivity, maritime cooperation and many other aspects including regional peace, sustainable development and trade.¹⁵⁰ At least three aspects of complementarities are important between AOIP and IPOI. First, they serve as guidelines to strengthen cooperation in the Indo-Pacific and help the community building process. One may refer to the ASEAN Community or Bay of Bengal Community building processes in this regard which can be benefitted from the stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific. Second, both AOIP and IPOI mention about the importance of rule based order and security in the region to address the common challenges together. This can be possible through more confidence building measures and furthering economic partnerships between the countries in the Indo-Pacific. Third, Sustainable Development Goals and other contemporary areas like fintech, EdTEch, Digital Health etc. are other areas of convergence and complementarities between AOIP and IPOI vis-à-vis ASEAN and India.

Figure 3: India’s Maritime Engagements with ASEAN



Source: Author’s own (based on primary data available)

Figure 4: Outcome Analyses of ASEAN-India Relations

Indicator	Report	Status
Strategies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> LEP/AEP Indo-Pacific Ocean’s Initiative 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> primarily perceptive, Exists in principle Exists in document and in principle

Guiding Principles	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Historical/civilisational contacts 2. Plans of Action 3. Vision Statement 4. Delhi Declaration 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Based on historical data, information and narrations 2-4. Exists in document, in principle
Organisational and Institutional Mechanisms	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. With only ASEAN- Ministerial Meetings, SOMs, Working Groups 2. ASEAN and beyond- ARF, EAS, ADMM Plus, EAMF, BIMSTEC, IORA 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Meetings are regular 2. India and ASEAN share same platforms in the inter-regional and sub-regional groupings
Projects and Programmes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Trilateral Highway, and Trilateral MVA, 2. Extension of Trilateral Highway, 3. Review of FTA in Goods, Success of FTA in Services and Investments, 4. Track 1.5 and Track 2 level Partnership in P2P, B2B etc. 5. Funds 6. Thematic/Sectoral cooperation in various areas 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1-3. Mostly work in progress and continued works in Points 1-3. 4. Regular -(Delhi Dialogue, ASEAN-India Youth Exchange Programmes, ASEAN-India Media Exchange Programmes, ASEAN-India Civilisational and Cultural Conference etc.) 5. ASEAN-India Fund, ASEAN-India Green Fund, ASEAN-India S&T Fund etc. 6. Thematic cooperation in agriculture, economy, space, Science and Technology etc. are ongoing.
Major Outcomes Based on Above Indicators	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Summit Partnership 2. Strategic Partnership 3. IPOI 4. India's Quick Impact Projects and support for Initiative for ASEAN Integration 	Already existing and continuing

Source: Based on Author's observations

Table 13: ASEAN Country Coordinators for India (2012-2024)

Brunei	2012-2015
Vietnam	2015-2018
Thailand	2018-2021
Singapore	2021-2024

Source: ASEAN¹⁵¹

Table 14: List of ASEAN Secretary Generals

Sl. No.	Name of the Secretary General	Years	Country
1	Hartono Dharsono	1976-1978	Indonesia
2	Umarjadi Notowijono	1978-1978	Indonesia
3	Ali Abdullah	1978-1980	Malaysia
4	Narciso G. Reyes	1980-1982	Philippines
5	Chan Kai Yau	1982-1984	Singapore
6	Phan Wannamethee	1984-1986	Thailand
7	Roderick Yong	1986-1989	Brunei
8	Rusli Noor	1989-1993	Indonesia
9	Ajit Singh (ms)	1993-1997	Malaysia
10	Rodolfo Severino Jr.	1998-2002	Philippines

11	Ong Keng Yong	2003-2007	Singapore
12	Surin Pitsuwan	2008-2012	Thailand
13	Le Luong Minh	2013-2017	Vietnam
14	Lim Jock Hoi	2018- present	Brunei

Source: ASEAN¹⁵²

6. Conclusion

In the last three decades, ASEAN and India have managed to develop their relations from the level of sectoral partnership to the level of strategic partnership. Over the years, both the sides have identified the potential areas of cooperation and reviewed the existing ones. The review process helps India and ASEAN to identify the drawbacks in planning and programmes and recommend ways to overcome the challenges. The current paper has sketched the ASEAN-India relations through the prism of 3Cs consisting of culture, connectivity and commerce. Recommended by the former Indian External Affairs Minister, Smt. Sushma Swaraj and the present Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, the 3Cs have been useful to look at ASEAN-India relations from three different perspectives. It also shares deepened correlation with the three pillars of ASEAN community building exercise comprising of political-security, economic and socio-cultural aspects. Connectivity also comes as a cross-sectoral field within the ambit of ASEAN and therefore, occupies an important position in India-ASEAN partnership.

The findings of the study are as follows;

- The International Relations Perspective: In the perspective of international affairs, both ASEAN and India represent two greatest civilizations across the shores of the Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean with the potential to impact the geopolitics, geo-economics, geo-environment and security in the Indo-Pacific in the modern times. Therefore, the more ASEAN and India will connect with each other, the better they will serve the interests of mutual trust, sustainable development, cooperation and peace building in the Indo-Pacific.
- The Civilizational Aspect: The paper also indicates the positive approaches and optimism ASEAN and India hold for each other. The historical connections in art and literature, religion, scriptures and architecture stand for the deep civilisational bonding between Southeast Asia and India. Those are articulated and manifested in modern meaning as both ASEAN and India are looking at contemporary challenges and concerns together under the umbrella of ASEAN Centrality concept on the one hand and the vast geo-strategic construct of Indo-Pacific on the other hand. India's AEP perfectly fits in this scenario.
- The Indo-Pacific Perspective: The efforts in the Indo-Pacific (such as IPOI and AOIP) are complimentary to each other. This indicates a paradigm shift for both ASEAN and India signaling transition to the Indo-Pacific based on rules based order, peace and stability. ASEAN's community building exercises and India's initiatives like SAGAR are thus significant for the emerging Indo-Pacific order and transition.

- Importance of Multilateralism: Both India and ASEAN uphold the principle of multilateralism. Within the broad umbrella of multilateralism, India and ASEAN also have the space to widen their cooperation in the areas of culture, trade and investment, connectivity, environment, defence and security, maritime security, digital technology, health, education, tourism and so on. The existing institutionalism between India and ASEAN need to be stronger, meetings need to be regular, projects need to be implemented on time and reviews are to be done continuously. This establishes the need for a combination of bilateralism, plurilateralism and multilateralism in a positive way. India's efforts with select island countries in the Indian Ocean region and CLMV nations exemplify that relation.
- The Primary Content Analyses: The content analyses of the statements, documents and annual reports obtained from the ministry websites and libraries indicate that both India and ASEAN like to translate their relationship as a mature and comprehensive one. Leaders from both sides have highlighted the necessity of sharing trust and interests in the preparations for the future. Towards that direction, work on sustainability has been focused by both sides on multiple occasions. In ASEAN-India partnership, the POAs are also important as they provide directions and also narrate an opportunity to look at the review process in a holistic manner.
- P2P Perspective: The people-to-people contacts between ASEAN and India have already been strengthened. However, this needs to be more focused to generate awareness about the projects and programmes undertaken by different funding mechanisms and institutions from ASEAN and India. In this context, new emerging areas like EdTEch, Fintech and Digital Health also need to be prioritized.
- Outcome Analyses: Finally, The brief outcome analysis of ASEAN-India relations in Figure 4 further helps to understand the existing scenario and the scopes for improvement, particularly in projects and programmes involving both the sides. This also offers a synopsis of 30 years journey that India and ASEAN have crossed together in partnership.

Annexure of Statements and Speeches

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1. Singapore Deputy Prime Minister holds Talks with Finance Minister, 1992
2. A Seminar on India-ASEAN Relations, 1992
3. Statement of the leader of the Indian Delegation, Foreign Secretary, Shri J. N. Dixit, at the ASEAN-India Joint Sectoral Cooperation Committee Meeting in Bali, 6-8 January, 1994
4. ASEAN Regional Forum: Text of Official Spokesman's statement issued in New Delhi on Jul 26, 1994 on ASEAN Regional Forum
5. SAARC - ASEAN meet on Bio-Diversity, 1994
6. Statement by Shri Pranab Mukherjee, Minister for External Affairs on the Implications of India becoming a full Dialogue Partner of ASEAN, 1996
7. India-ASEAN Eminent Persons Lecture Series, 1998
8. Joint statement of the First ASEAN-India Summit, 2002
9. Speech of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee at ASEAN Business and Investment Summit, New Delhi, October 7, 2003. "The India-ASEAN Partnership and beyond"
10. ASEAN-India Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat International Terrorism. Bali (Indonesia), October 8, 2003
11. Prime Minister of India's speech at the flagging off of Indo-ASEAN Car Rally, November 22, 2004, Guwahati
12. PM's address at the 5th India-ASEAN Summit, January 14, 2007, Cebu, Philippines
13. Prime Minister of India's opening statement at Plenary Session of India-ASEAN Commemorative Summit, December 20, 2012, New Delhi
14. Speech of External Affairs Minister at the launch of ASEAN India Centre. New Delhi, June 21, 2013
15. Opening remarks by the PM (of India) at the Plenary Session of the INDIA- ASEAN Commemorative Summit (January 25, 2018), January 26, 2018
16. Delhi Declaration of The ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit to Mark the 25th Anniversary of ASEAN-India Dialogue Relations, New Delhi, 2018

Singapore Deputy Prime Minister holds Talks with Finance Minister

The following is the text of a press release issued in New Delhi on Mar 23, 1992

A high-powered business delegation led by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade and Industry of Singapore, Brigadier General (Res) Lee Hsien Loong called on the Union Finance Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh here today. During the talks, Dr. Singh expressed confidence that India's becoming a sectoral dialogue partner of ASEAN should help forge greater cooperation between the two countries, which would benefit the region as a whole. The Finance Minister expressed the hope that the delegation, which includes MD, Economic Development Board and Chairman, Trade Development Board of Singapore, would hold talks with their counterparts to consider ways of increasing investment in India and setting up more joint ventures. Dr. Singh invited Singapore's investment in our capital market, for which procedures have been liberalised. The Deputy Prime Minister of Singapore said his country would be happy to cooperate with India in these matters. He also expressed happiness over India's becoming a sectoral partner of ASEAN and hailed the recent economic reforms initiated by the Government. Earlier, the Finance Minister apprised the visiting dignitary about the country's attempts to integrate India's economy with the global economy. Dr. Singh mentioned the partial convertibility of rupee, reduction in customs tariffs and tax reforms in this regard. The Finance Minister also reiterated Government's determination to contain fiscal deficit and control Government expenditure. The Singapore Deputy Prime Minister is leading a High Powered Business Delegation, which would interact with the Indian Business Delegation for fostering greater economic cooperation between the two countries.¹

A Seminar on India-ASEAN Relations

The following is text of press release issued in New Delhi on Oct 20, 1992: A seminar on "India and ASEAN" was organised by the Ministry of External Affairs, on 20th October 1992.

Chaired by Shri Eduardo Faleiro, Minister of State for External Affairs, the seminar was addressed by leading intellectuals, academicians, former diplomats, members of the Joint Consultative Committee of Parliament. In his opening statement, Shri Eduardo Faleiro said that in the context of India having become a sectoral dialogue partner with ASEAN our relations with that region needs to be refocussed. ASEAN has been a dynamo of growth in the last 25 years since its birth. It has also been a model of peaceful co-existence and constructive cooperation

among the member nations who are essentially of diverse sizes and level of economic development. It has been a success story whether due to the policies of the individual countries or due to the fact of its common grouping. The measure of ASEAN's success today lies in everybody wanting to be associated with it either as a member, observer or dialogue partner. Shri Faleiro highlighted that traditionally the region has had very close cultural links with India, traces of which can be seen even today. Though we do not have cultural exchange programmes with these countries, there have been regular exchange of cultural troupes, films etc., which have mainly been left to the market forces to operate. Shri Faleiro also said that in the post-cold war period, South East Asia has been abuzz with apprehensions of a security vacuum, in the wake of the US decision to scale down its military presence in the region. There have been considerable uneasiness about regional powers such as China, Japan and India being tempted to fill the vacuum. In the course of the Seminar, a lot of area was covered, with many of the participants urging that in the changed global environment, India should pay closer attention to its relations with its Asian neighbours. Despite our close traditional links and geographical proximity, we are still on the outskirts of the ASEAN process, a situation which needs to be remedied. One way of doing this would be by fostering closer dialogue at all levels including the unofficial level whether through the universities or research centres institutes. There was a felt need to supply more information to the establishments of these countries so that our point of view is put across effectively. With India having become sectoral dialogue partner of ASEAN in areas of trade, tourism, technology and manpower at the time when we are vigorously involved in the process of liberalising our economy at home, this is a good time to intensify our trade and economic links with South East Asia. At the moment, we have positive trade balance with 4 of the ASEAN countries and an equivalent negative balance with Malaysia and Singapore. For ASEAN countries, prosperity is a common obsession. We have to get out of the strait jacket of commodity exports by diversifying our export structure, graduate into the services sector, trade generating ventures and encourage investments. ASEAN could also be used as a springboard to the global market. On the security aspect, oil and narcotics are important factors in determining the security profiles of the region. With the prospect of dwindling oil reserves in the oil-producing South East Asian countries as in the rest of the world, access to potential oil reserves and sea lanes such as the South China Sea have come to increasingly determine the policy decisions of these countries. ²

Statement of the leader of the Indian Delegation, Foreign Secretary, Shri J. N. Dixit, at the ASEAN-India Joint Sectoral Cooperation Committee Meeting in Bali, 6-8 January, 1994

The following is the text of a press release issued in New Delhi on Jan 07, 1994 on a statement of the leader of the Indian delegation Foreign Secretary, Shri J. N. Dixit, at the Asean India Joint Sectoral Cooperation Committee Meeting in Bali:

Mr. Chairman, Dato Ajit Singh, Ladies and Gentlemen, It is a matter of pleasure and satisfaction for me and my delegation to participate in this first ASEAN-India Joint Sectoral Cooperation Committee meeting in Bali. This most beautiful and enchanting island brings back memories of the close and mutually rewarding relations that India and the Sub-region of ASEAN have had in the past - a past that enriched both of us, gave substance to our mercantile exchanges and impacted on our cultural heritage. It is only fitting that the new and particular relationship that we are working towards should have its first substantial exchanges and understandings in Bali. We are particularly conscious that what we are embarking on today will signify a new and productive phase in our ties with the ASEAN. Geographical proximity, cultural affinity and a shared ethos have come together to define a distinct Asian personality for all of us and this effort at coming together of India and ASEAN, two sub-regions of Asia, is an affirmation of our recognition of a common destiny.

2. To us it appears natural that this process of intensifying economic cooperation between ASEAN and India should come at a time when the ASEAN itself has been moving towards intensified cooperation and greater consolidation as a regional entity. While our formal relationship with ASEAN as a regional grouping is only beginning, India's long standing, multi-faceted and substantial relationship with individual ASEAN countries provides a sound basis for a quantum leap in Indo-ASEAN relations. Another convergence which augurs well for our dialogue is the economic and trade liberalisation policies that India has been vigorously pursuing. In this, we are emulating the trade, technology and investment driven growth models so successfully demonstrated by the ASEAN countries. We are heartened that India is now emerging as an economic powerhouse, with the world's fifth largest economy.

3. Economic liberalisation in India has already succeeded in bringing economies of scale, quality competitiveness and an accelerated movement towards integrating the economy into the global economy. Inflation has been brought down to manageable levels. The tariff structure is down from peaks of 350% to 85% and the average tariff is 65%. In the core sectors of the economy which will invigorate developmental and productive capacities, the tariff structures are even lower with an average of 30% to 37%. The intention is to bring tariffs down to the most competitive developing country levels. This almost naturally means that they should be down to ASEAN levels at the end of the next 2 to 3 years. A greater degree of harmonisation of trade and investment policies is a distinct and logical possibility between us. India is offering considerable incentives to attract private investments in infrastructure and strategic industrial areas. This

provides ample opportunity for linkages to develop between ASEAN countries and India. In turn Indian investment regulations for Indian investors in third countries have been significantly liberalised. This includes automatically taking investment decisions and for investment capital in equity. This should encourage setting up of joint ventures. I would like to reaffirm here that the economic reforms process in India is truly irreversible and on course.

4. India's technological growth and capacity to undertake large projects on a quality and price competitive basis offers an opportunity that should also be seriously looked at. India's large and growing middle class that on a purchasing power parity basis is today conservatively put at over 150 million, offers a major market opportunity which is attracting a rapidly rising trend in foreign and domestic investment. The middle class is rising again on a conservative basis at 20 million per annum.

5. At the establishment of ASEAN-India Sectoral dialogue relations in New Delhi in March 1993 we made a good and practical beginning by focussing on specific areas of cooperation in regard to the themes of trade, investment and tourism as well as science and technology. At this meeting our attempt should be to develop these areas of cooperation further, establish institutional linkages between India and ASEAN in these areas and as required set up mechanisms to follow up and implement what has been agreed to.

6. Trade liberalisation and facilitation is central to the charter of ASEAN. We would like our dialogue to promote a mutually beneficial interface between that and India's own process of trade liberalisation. Identification of trade opportunities and complementarities, combined with trade facilitation and liberalisation would enormously increase the efficiency and market scale of our respective economies. This in turn could enable us to operate with strength in the global market place. Our trade must build on, complementarities in respect of commodities, manufacturers and services that India and ASEAN have or may develop. Our cooperation must of necessity, include standardisation and quality management as well as an active and special consideration in the participation in projects. The dialogue on trade would also encompass consultations as required on issues relating to the multilateral trading system and our place in it with a view to evolving shared perceptions of our common interest and joint action. This calls for regular and wide-ranging interaction between India and the ASEAN - at the governmental, business, academic and expert levels. Investment is increasingly becoming a motive force behind trade as the economic actors and market forces gravitate toward technological innovation, cost reduction and market expansion, thereby enhancing their comparative advantages. There is considerable scope for building our collective comparative advantages in relation to the rest of the world through stimulation of investment flows, joint ventures and intra industry trade. If I may digress a little, India is fast becoming a major destinations for foreign direct investment and capital market flows. When the economic reform process commenced foreign direct investment jumped from US dollars 72 million in 1990 to US dollars 230 million in 1991. In the 1992 this reached over dollar 1.5 billion approval in the first 11 months of 1993 have already crossed the dollar 3 billion

mark. These figures relate to commitments on equity and do not take into account the loan capital factor which would be close to 1: 3.5. Since 1992 when we took the first steps to permit institutional investment in our capital markets, a significant trend in capital flows has emerged. In 1993 the number of foreign financial investment institutions registered has risen to over 300 and an inflow of US Dollars 1.0 billion has been achieved. This is understandable. India's market capitalisation is today at US Dollars 75 billion. This is more than four times the comparable figure for China. India has 22 stock markets which are attracting foreign portfolio investments. While talking of the Indian economy, which today stands poised to achieving a dramatic upturn and growth, I must, however, mention that the reforms and liberalisation process has further areas in which it has to advance. The process of rationalisation and a further deepening of the reforms is proceeding in a phased manner. Here we can certainly take a leaf out of the experience of the ASEAN countries. It is a matter of some satisfaction to see that in 1993 we have three ASEAN states among the first fifteen investing nations in India. This is a welcome trend, a beginning, which we would like to encourage.

8. Another area of our cooperation, tourism, is part trade and part investment but in fact tourism is much greater than the sum of its parts. It is about bringing together of peoples, of sensitizing one another about national specificities and cultural heritages and yet, as the success stories of ASEAN in this are heritages and yet, as the success stories of ASEAN in this area have shown, the realization of the full potential of this sector of the economy depends on effective and comprehensive modernisation of the services and technological infrastructure. We hope that our collaboration in this area will indeed lead to even greater tourism among our countries and a closer networking of our travel trade and hotel industry.

9. India-ASEAN cooperation in trade, investment and tourism requires a strong underpinning of cooperation in the area of science and technology. We are very happy that science and technology - an important sector - has now become a part of our dialogue. We would indeed work on the technologies of the future such as advanced materials, bio-technology and information technology, so as to give our cooperation that cutting edge that we need in today's world, to meet the challenges of accelerated growth and development. In addition to those three areas, we see potentialities in pooling resources and exchanging experiences in laser technology, robotics and fibre optics for our mutual benefit.

10. We are aware that in this enhanced economic interaction between India and the ASEAN, the governments are enabling factors and that the real actors are the entrepreneurs in our trade and industry. It is they who will have to translate what we decide here into concrete action. We are resolved to extend maximum cooperation to our entrepreneurs on both sides to meet frequently and as meaningfully as possible, as well as to provide all support to their endeavours. We hope that as a result of such constructive cooperation between the government and the private sector at one level and the entrepreneurs of India and the ASEAN at another level, we will bring about a major involvement of our countries in trade, investment, tourism and science & technology.

11. Finally, may I suggest that we view this new enterprise as one where we will bring to bear our national and regional development experiences and activate cooperation with the objective of enhancing our strengths and creating as well as responding to the new opportunities that an increasingly globalised world economy offers. If we do succeed in this marriage of the most dynamic growth region of the world, ASEAN and one of the largest markets of the world, India, - we would be writing a new chapter in the history of Asian development.³

ASEAN Regional Forum

The following is the text of Official Spokesman's statement issued in New Delhi on Jul 26, 1994 on ASEAN Regional Forum

In response to a query on ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the Official Spokesman replied that it was natural for India to be interested in the ASEAN region, which lies in India's contiguous neighbourhood. India shares maritime boundaries with important ASEAN members and has had strong historical and cultural links with the region. India has been discussing the nature and scope of the ARF. Our interest to participate in discussion on regional, political and security issues has evoked encouraging response. Some press reports that India had launched an active campaign to become a member of the ARF are not true. He explained that India's interest in interacting with ASEAN in all spheres was evident as it was admitted ASEAN's Sectoral Dialogue Partner on Trade & Investment at the Fourth Summit of the ASEAN member states in Singapore in 1992. In March 1993, the inaugural talks of the sectoral dialogue were held in New Delhi, while the first substantive meeting took place in Bali in January this year when our Foreign Secretary led a delegation to represent India there.⁴

SAARC - ASEAN meet on Bio-Diversity

The following is the text of a press release issued in New Delhi on Aug 18, 1994

An International Consultation on Biological Diversity is being organised at Bangalore on August 22 and 23, 1994 jointly by the Ministry of Environment and Forests and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Delegates from SAARC, ASEAN and other countries of the region would be attending. Observers from several international organisations and some non-governmental organisations are also expected to participate. The Minister of Environment and Forests, Shri Kamal Nath would inaugurate the two-day Conference at the Indian Institute of Science. The Chief Minister of Karnataka, Shri Veerappa Moily will be the Chief Guest. The countries invited to attend are

China, Myanmar, Japan, Afghanistan, Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, Phillipines, Thailand besides the hosts India. The main objective of the Conference is to evolve mechanisms for regional cooperation on issues related to biological diversity, keeping in view the provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity signed at the Earth Summit. This region is rich in genetic resources and vast traditional knowledge of local communities. But, because of the rapid developments of biotechnologies and the changing Intellectual Property regimes, the probability of the economic gains going to technology rich and already developed countries can't be ruled out. In this scenario, countries of the region should not be merely providers of genetic resources. The Consultation would seek cooperation among countries of the region to ensure that its due share in information of genetic material to economic wealth is ensured on a long term basis. In other words the benefits must flow back to the gene rich countries and local communities. The consultation will be conducted largely in two Working Groups. Working Group - I will address issues related to scientific and technical cooperation. Working Group - II will deal with matters pertaining to mechanisms for regional cooperation. It is expected that the delegates from all the countries assembled at Bangalore will participate in both Working Groups. The delegations of the participating countries are also expected to present their country papers. The recommendations of both the Working Groups will be brought to the Plenary Session for approval. The Plenary Session will also adopt Bangalore Declaration. Articles 5, 14 and 17 of the Convention specifically provide for regional cooperation among the member parties. This assumes significance in view of the fact that many components of biological diversity are common among neighbouring countries as natural ecosystems are spread over political boundaries. Moreover, several of the floral and fauna species are endemic to the region.⁵

Statement by Shri Pranab Mukherjee, Minister for External Affairs on the Implications of India becoming a full Dialogue Partner of ASEAN

The following is the text of a press release issued in New Delhi on Feb 01, 1996 regarding statement by Shri Pranab Mukherjee, Minister for External Affairs on the implication of India becoming a full dialogue partner of ASEAN

I have been informed by the Foreign Minister of Indonesia, His Excellency Ali Al Athas and the Chairman of the ASEAN Standing Committee that the ASEAN have decided to offer India Full Dialogue Partner Status. This decision was taken at the 5th ASEAN Summit held in Bangkok on 17-18 December, 1995 and represents an upgradation of the partnership from the Sectoral Dialogue level which we have had with ASEAN since 1992. We welcome this decision and have readily clasped this hand of friendship and understanding that the ASEAN have extended to us. What does this mean for India? First and foremost it represents a redefinition of our neighbourhood, as we draw closer to our dynamic South East Asian neighbours, with each of whom we have good, substantial and rapidly expanding and intensifying economic and political

relationship. These bilateral relationships will now get a further impetus because we will now be interacting with them more substantively also on the ASEAN plank. We must remember that this is only logical and in the best interest of our relations with South East Asian countries because ASEAN is assuming a cohesive and overarching role both as a political and economic entity in South East Asia. The last Summit gave a further impulse to ASEAN's march towards an ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA), set the framework for liberalisation of trade in services and presaged an ASEAN Free Investment Area. In political and strategic terms too the ASEAN is emerging with a clearly defined common agenda and personality in the region, as well as internationally. Secondly, Full Dialogue Partnership with ASEAN will mean that we will engage with the ASEAN in a wide-ranging, high-level and regular dialogue on all matters of common interest and concern. We expect both governments and concerned business and technical sectors to be fully involved. This will, we hope, clarify issues and lead to policies and decisions that are conducive to taking Indo-ASEAN economic relations to the crest. Imagine the synergies that we can generate together with this fastest growing, technologically dynamic and globally competitive group of countries. The trade, investment and technological cooperation opportunities for us in ASEAN and for ASEAN in India are unlimited as our large, diversified and increasingly competitive and outward-looking economy charts a high growth path. Thirdly, the dialogue will provide mechanisms for making more contemporary the age-old, cultural, religious and people-to-people affinities. There is much, for example that can be done in the area of tourism where the ASEAN success story can be an inspiration and a new basis for partnership. This along with the ongoing cooperation in science & technology will, no doubt, reinvent the closeness of ideas and peoples that we have had for centuries with South East Asia. Finally, as ASEAN is the core and prime mover in many regional and international initiatives, our partnership is bound to give us a vantage point in relation to those initiatives whether they be the APEC or the ASEM. By electing us for this special relationship, the ASEAN have recognised the role and contribution that India, as a major Asian country and economy, can play and make in the larger Asian and global stage. In immediate and practical terms, our Full Dialogue Partnership will involve our participating in meetings of the Dialogue Committee that would be set up for this purpose and that would replace the Sectoral Dialogue Committee. The agenda would not be limited to discussions on 4 sectors of trade, investment, tourism and science & technology but cover the entire gamut of cooperation. We will also participate in the Post-Ministerial Consultations that are held after the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting (this year in July at Jakarta). The Full Dialogue Partnership between India and ASEAN is the culmination of intense diplomatic efforts that have been undertaken at the highest political levels as well as at official and business levels since 1991. It is a response to the way our economic relations with ASEAN have surged in the last 3-4 years. It is an acknowledgement of the potential that India and ASEAN represent for each other.⁶

India-ASEAN Eminent Persons Lecture Series

Following is the text of a Press Release issued by the Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi on Sep 11, 1998 regarding India-ASEAN Eminent Persons Lecture Series:

The India-ASEAN Eminent Persons Lecture Series was launched in December 1996 by the Government of India with the objective, to promote awareness about the reality and potential of the India-ASEAN partnership into the 21st century. Under this programme, eminent leaders and opinion makers, senior academics and media personalities, technologists and captains of trade and industry are invited to give public lectures on different aspects of economic, political and cultural ties between ASEAN countries and India. The Lecture Series aims to update the image that ASEAN and India have of each other, and ensure that the image has a dynamic quality. The first India-ASEAN Lecture was delivered by the Prime Minister of Malaysia Dato Seri Mahathir Mohamad on the 21st December 1996. The second lecture was delivered by Dr. Bernado Malvar Villegas of the University of Asia and the Pacific, Philippines on 17th June, 1997. The third lecture in the series was delivered by Dr. Thaksin Shinawatra, former Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand on 12th May, 1998 in New Delhi. The fourth lecture was delivered by Mr. Kavi Chongkittavorn, Executive Editor, "The Nation", Bangkok, on 13th August, 1998. The lecture on 12th September, 1998 by Dr. J. Soedradjad Djiwandond, former Governor of Bank of Indonesia is the fifth in the series in India. From the Indian side eminent space scientist Professor U.R. Rao delivered lectures in Malaysia. Similarly, Dr. R. A. Mashelkar, Director General of CSIR delivered lectures in Thailand under this programme. A number of other lectures by visiting eminent persons from ASEAN in India as well as by Indian experts in ASEAN countries have been planned for the period 1998-1999. Research and Information System for the Non-Aligned and Other Developing Countries (RIS) has been designated by the Government of India as the nodal institution to organise this lecture series.⁷

Joint statement of the First ASEAN-India Summit

ASEAN-India Cooperation in the 21st Century November 6, 2002, Cambodia

The Heads of State/Government of the Member States of ASEAN and the Prime Minister of the Republic of India expressed satisfaction that ASEAN-India relations had been rapidly developed and enhanced since the establishment of the Sectoral Dialogue Partnership in 1992 and especially since India became a full Dialogue Partner in December 1995 and subsequently participated in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in July 1996. They were convinced that the strengthening of their relations, which were rooted in close historical and cultural ties served the fundamental interests of their respective peoples and peace, stability and prosperity of the Asia-Pacific region.

They recognized the pluralistic nature of their societies, encompassing major religions of the world, and a wealth of diverse cultures. They agreed that this affinity constituted a special asset for the further development of their relations.

Given new developments and challenges arising in the 21st Century, the Leaders of ASEAN and India resolved to further advance their cooperation to a new height to address common challenges confronting the region and the world. Based on the foundation of their close cooperative relationship and recognizing the importance of concerted efforts, they had convened the First ASEAN-India Summit in Cambodia in accordance with the decision of the ASEAN Leaders at the 7th ASEAN Summit in Brunei Darussalam in November 2001.

Promoting Regional Peace and Stability

ASEAN and India committed themselves to jointly contribute to the promotion of peace, stability and development in the Asia-Pacific region and the world, and respond positively to the challenges of a dynamic regional and international environment.

They affirmed that the Charter of the United Nations, the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in South-east Asia, the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence and other universally recognized principles of international law should serve as basic norms governing their relations. They reaffirmed in particular their respect for each other's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, and the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other states as well as the principle of mutual benefit in international cooperation.

They agreed to enhance cooperation at various regional and international fora. They resolved to intensify cooperation in the ARF, including combating terrorism comprehensively to make the region a safer place for all, and agreed that Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) should be further deepened as a foundation of the ARF process in its future steps forward.

They also exchanged views and perspectives on non-traditional security threats, and on the inter-linkages among transnational crimes, such as trafficking in illegal drugs, people smuggling including trafficking in women and children, sea piracy, terrorism, arms smuggling, money laundering, economic crime and cyber crime. In this context, they agreed to develop concrete programmes of cooperation.

ASEAN appreciated India's recognition of and her willingness to accede to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC)

India welcomed the entry into force of the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) Treaty, which represented an important contribution of ASEAN towards strengthening security and stability in the region, as well as in contributing to the process of global nuclear disarmament.

Fostering Closer Economic and Development Cooperation

Acknowledging that economic progress would also enhance regional peace, security and stability, they shared the view that continued economic cooperation between the two sides would promote the dynamism and prosperity of the Asia-Pacific region. In this regard, they agreed on the importance of enhancing their close economic cooperation and to work towards India-AFTA Linkages. They welcomed the adoption of an India-ASEAN Regional Trade and Investment Area as a long-term objective at the First ASEAN-India Economic Ministers' Consultations, held at Brunei Darussalam, on September 15, 2002. They also noted the decision to set up an ASEAN-India Task Force on Economic Linkages, which is to prepare a draft Framework

Agreement to enhance ASEAN-India Economic Cooperation, for submission to the next meeting of ASEAN-India Economic Ministers at Phnom Penh in October 2003.

They expressed their deep gratification over the course of ASEAN-India cooperation thus far, particularly in the wide range of areas in science and technology. They expressed their determination to strengthen these and other forms of cooperation.

India expressed support for the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) and its commitment to participate in IAI projects, especially in HRD, and assist ASEAN new members in various forms, including through joint programme with the older ASEAN members. India also expressed its readiness to consider early granting of preferential tariff treatment to new ASEAN members States. They reaffirmed their common interest in developing the Programme of Action for the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation focusing on important areas of cooperation, such as tourism, culture, education and transport and communication. India also attached importance to and agreed to look into possible participation in regional and sub-regional development programs, such as ASEAN Mekong Basin Development Cooperation (AMBDC), and the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS).

ASEAN Leaders expressed their high appreciation for the continued economic and technical cooperation with India. ASEAN member States and India agreed on the need to consolidate and enhance their close economic relations by promoting trade and investment, facilitating market access, improving the flow of technology and enhancing the flow of and access to trade and investment-related information. They also agreed to cooperate in the World Trade Organization (WTO), in particular towards the early entry of Cambodia, Lao PDR and Vietnam in the WTO.

New Directions in ASEAN-India Relations

With a view to fostering an enhanced partnership, they noted in particular the importance of dialogue at high level and decided to hold ASEAN-India Summits annually.

Given a dynamic surge of ASEAN-India cooperation, they acknowledged the importance of contacts between the peoples of ASEAN and India. In this regard, they agreed to further promote people to people interaction not only through dialogue at the level of policymakers but also through exchange programmes of youth, media personnel, academics, business people, government officials and artists. Interaction among these groups of people would help promote better understanding and lasting friendship which will be important in forging greater cooperation between ASEAN and India. They also agreed to support the development of an ASEAN-India network of think tanks to provide long-term perspectives on the development of ASEAN-India relations.

They tasked the ministers and senior officials to look into the implementation of the above decisions and to present a report card on the progress of the implementation at the next ASEAN-India Summit.⁸

Speech of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee at ASEAN Business and Investment Summit. New Delhi, October 7, 2003. “The India-ASEAN Partnership and beyond”

It is a great pleasure to be here among eminent business representatives from ASEAN, East Asia and India. I congratulate the organizers of this first ASEAN Business and Investment Summit. Events like these provide valuable opportunities for interaction among business and industry of

our countries and for exchange of perspectives between Governments and industry. Friends, While the 20th century economy was driven by capital accumulation, manufacturing technologies and labour power, the 21st century is defined by knowledge and human capital. It is this that gives strength to the Asian identity. There is an emerging perception that this will be the century of Asia's pre-eminence. The brain power of Asian scientists and engineers, the dynamism of our businessmen and industrialists, our intellectual and human resource capital – all these support this perception. The growing economic weight of Asia is strengthened by favourable demographic trends, and is no longer constrained by Cold War divisions. India, ASEAN and the countries of East Asia are a part of this trend. ASEAN is already in an advanced stage of economic integration. With each of China, Japan and Korea also, ASEAN has a well-developed and diverse economic relationship. India has lagged behind, for a variety of political and economic reasons, which are now history. However, this situation is changing rapidly, and it is the exciting potential of the future India-ASEAN partnership that I propose to put before you today. Over the last 12 years, the Indian economy has maintained an average annual growth of over 6%, which is better than that of most other countries. Our interest rates are falling, inflation has been kept down, and foreign exchange reserves are growing rapidly. India remained unaffected by the Asian financial crisis a few years ago. We have targeted an 8% growth over the next five years. As our economic base is large, there is considerable untapped potential for India's continued – and even accelerated – economic growth. Friends, Perceptions shape decisions. Often they are flawed. Sometimes, they are incomplete. The rich cultural diversity and spiritual traditions of India are well known, but they constitute only one aspect of India. There is another India, the India of the 21st century, which is still not so well known, with its many strengths:

- One, an inherently strong economy driven primarily by indigenous skills and domestic enterprise.
- Two, a growing and accessible domestic market, with import and investment barriers falling away. To take just one random example of the growth of the market: in the last few months, it has been absorbing about 2 million mobile phones a month. Import duties are moving towards ASEAN levels, and sectoral caps on foreign investment are rising.
- Three, a rich pool of human resources – English speaking, with R&D skills, technological training and managerial capabilities.
- Four, some special capabilities in state-of-the-art technologies. India is one of only three countries – the others are USA and Japan – to have indigenously designed and manufactured supercomputers. It is one of only 6 countries, which can build and launch its own satellites.
- Five, global leadership in technologies of the Knowledge Economy. India's pre-eminent position in IT and IT-enabled services has led global companies to set up captives in India or to outsource their operations to quality Indian service providers.
- Six, a sound and transparent financial system, with well-managed banking and insurance sectors, and vibrant capital markets. Our paperless, computer-driven National Stock Exchange is the third largest in the world, in terms of number of annual transactions. India is today a country

on the move. We are experiencing many revolutions simultaneously. There is, of course, the IT revolution. This in turn has unleashed a socio-cultural revolution, which has empowered hundreds of millions of our citizens, strengthening our democracy and stimulating our creativity. We are experiencing a demographic revolution, where the numbers of young people are increasing. Already, 54% of our population is below 25 years of age. This has created a revolution of expectations, where a powerful new force of young people, full of optimism and ambition, fired by boundless energy, is actively seeking opportunities for wealth, success and prosperity. The combined effect of these has been a psychological revolution, in which a defensive, introverted approach has given way to an outward-looking, self-confident attitude, willing to accept challenges and take risks, rejecting fear and shunning fatalism. It is this India that seeks to partner ASEAN in this era of globalization. India's trade and economic interaction with the ASEAN countries has been steadily growing, but not fast enough. A year ago at the First India-ASEAN Business Summit, I had said that the India-ASEAN trade of less than 10 billion dollars does not do justice to our combined population of one and a half billion people, producing a trillion and a half dollars worth of goods and services annually. Our trade has since grown by about 25%, but my comment remains valid. We have recognized this fact in the India-ASEAN Framework Agreement for Comprehensive Economic Cooperation, which we have been negotiating over the past year. We are working on eliminating trade and investment barriers to facilitate business. At the same time, India is conscious of the concerns of the new ASEAN members. We are offering unilateral tariff concessions on items of export interest to the CLMV countries. We are also seeking to incorporate an Early Harvest scheme to provide the incentive for a long-term engagement. If we proceed along this course, we can target a trade turnover of US\$ 30 billion by 2007 and a Free Trade Area within 10 years. A study, commissioned by our apex commerce & industry organizations, has highlighted five main areas with maximum promise for growth: - Indian IT enabled services create multiple opportunities for collaboration in embedded software or joint development of industry specific solutions. ASEAN countries can outsource their operations to quality Indian service providers at competitive prices. Today, South East Asian countries import most of their IT products from the West. The irony is that most of these products are actually created by Indian sub-contractors. The result is a double disadvantage: you pay much more, and India gets much less. - The Indian financial services industry is growing rapidly, driven by deregulation of insurance and investment in the banking sector by private companies and foreign banks. ASEAN investors will find attractive opportunities in personal financial services, insurance and corporate banking. India is poised to emerge as an additional global hub for financial transactions. - The Indian pharmaceutical industry has achieved global recognition. The strength of this industry is low cost, high quality generics. Branded and patented medicines are also beginning to emerge as an important segment of the industry. ASEAN can source its imports of low cost generics from India, or shift manufacturing base to India. - Indian entertainment business has benefited from deregulation and export opportunities. Joint ventures for TV content production and animation software exports present attractive opportunities for India and ASEAN. India has placed special emphasis on

infrastructural development to stimulate rapid economic growth. This includes de-regulation of all segments of our telecom industry and up-gradation of highways, bridges, ports, airports and convention centres. Many ASEAN companies are already present in these and other sectors. There are many other opportunities here for Asian business. For free trade and open economic interaction, we must review, improve and harmonise our travel-related regulations and restrictions, including visa regimes. We have to upgrade our air, sea, road and rail links in capacity and quality, to meet new demands. To improve the profitability of business activities and tourist ventures, we should develop cross-regional links of tourist centres to enhance the synergy of Asian destinations. I will say a brief word about India's investment regime. It is liberal and transparent, as befits a democracy like ours. We may occasionally have some problems, because of the difficulties in reconciling competing interests and concerns. This is normal in an open, democratic set-up. We are constantly trying to refine our regulations and procedures. All the same, if you analyse the experience of our foreign investors, returns on investments in India are generally higher. Repatriation of profits is also much easier than in many other countries. Investors have to understand that India's continental size and diversity are unique. Marketing or investment strategies that may have worked well elsewhere may need to be tailored differently for India. Those who understand this do well. Companies that have taken the trouble of finding the right keys to unlock the doors of the Indian consumer's mind have done well for themselves. People tell me that successful investors often paint a deliberately pessimistic picture to discourage competitors from entering a lucrative market! In spite of the stalemate at the Cancun Ministerial Conference, a rule-based and fair multi-lateral trading system should remain our goal. But while we search for this ideal, regional trading arrangements offer immediate advantages, particularly for geographically contiguous regions. They can provide our domestic industry and agriculture with a valuable learning period, before being exposed to the far greater competition of global free trade. Friends, Non-Asians view Asia as the principal market of the future. But it will also emerge as a manufacturing hub and a global provider of services. In the next 50 years, as the population of the developed world ages, a younger and better-educated work force will emerge in Asia to fill the breach. This generation will drive the future growth of the global economy. Asian countries should work towards strengthening their mutual synergies, so that they are strategically placed to derive maximum benefit from the emerging opportunities. The India-ASEAN partnership should energise this process to move us closer to our shared goal of making this truly the Asian century. Thank you.⁹

**ASEAN-India Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat International Terrorism. Bali
(Indonesia), October 8, 2003.**

The Governments of Brunei Darussalam, the Kingdom of Cambodia, the Republic of Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, the Union of Myanmar, the Republic of the

Philippines, the Republic of Singapore, the Kingdom of Thailand, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Member Countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and the Republic of India, hereinafter referred to collectively as “the participants”; Mindful of the 2001 ASEAN Declaration on Joint Action to Counter Terrorism, which, inter alia, undertakes to strengthen cooperation at bilateral, regional and international levels in combating terrorism in a comprehensive manner and affirms that at the international level the United Nations should play a major role in this regard;

Reaffirming their commitment to counter, prevent and suppress all forms of terrorist acts in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, international law and all the relevant United Nations resolutions or declarations on international terrorism, in particular the principles outlined in United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1373, 1267 and 1390;

Viewing acts of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, committed wherever, whenever and by whomsoever, as a profound threat to international peace and security, which require concerted action to protect and defend all peoples and the peace and security of the world; Rejecting any attempt to associate terrorism with any religion, race or nationality;

Recognising the principles of sovereign equality, territorial integrity and non-intervention in the domestic affairs of other States; Acknowledging the value of cooperation on security, intelligence and law enforcement matters, and desiring to enter into such a cooperation to combat international terrorism through the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime, as a leading ASEAN body for combating terrorism, and other mechanisms;

Recognising the transnational nature of terrorist activities and the need to strengthen international cooperation at all levels in combating terrorism in a comprehensive manner; Desiring to enhance counter-terrorism cooperation between the relevant agencies of the participants’ governments; Solemnly declare as follows:

Objectives:-

1. The participants reaffirm the importance of having a framework for cooperation to prevent, disrupt and combat international terrorism through the exchange and flow of information, intelligence and capacity-building.
2. The participants emphasize that the purpose of this cooperation is to enhance the efficacy of those efforts to combat terrorism. Scope and Areas of Cooperation:
3. The participants stress their commitment to seek to implement the principles laid out in this Declaration, in accordance with their respective domestic laws and their specific circumstances, in any or all of the following activities:
 - i. Continue and improve intelligence and terrorist financing information sharing on counter-terrorism measures, including the development of more effective counter-terrorism policies and legal, regulatory and administrative counter-terrorism regimes.

- ii. Enhance liaison relationships amongst their law enforcement agencies to engender practical counter-terrorism regimes.
 - iii Strengthen capacity-building efforts through training and education; consultations between officials, analysts and field operators; and seminars, conferences and joint operations as appropriate.
 - iv. Provide assistance on transportation, border and immigration control challenges, including document and identity fraud to stem effectively the flow of terrorist-related material, money and people.
 - v. Comply with United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1373, 1267, 1390 and other United Nations resolutions or declarations on international terrorism.
 - vi. Explore on a mutual basis additional areas of cooperation. Participation:
 - 4. Participants are called upon to become parties to all 12 of the United Nations conventions and protocols relating to terrorism.
 - 5. The participants are each called upon to designate an agency to co-ordinate with law enforcement agencies, authorities dealing with countering terrorism financing and other concerned government agencies, and to act as the central point of contact for the purposes of implementing this Declaration. Disclosure of Information:
 - 6. The participants expect that no participant would disclose or distribute any confidential information, documents or data received in connection with this Declaration to any third party, at any time, except to the extent agreed in writing by the participant that provided the information. Implementation:
 - 7. All the participants are urged to promote and implement in good faith and effectively the provisions of the present Declaration in all its aspects.
 - 8. Adopted by the Heads of State/Government of ASEAN Member States and the Republic of India on this Eighth Day of October 2003 in Bali, Indonesia.¹⁰
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Prime Minister of India's speech at the flagging off of Indo-ASEAN Car Rally

November 22, 2004, Guwahati

"It gives me great pleasure to be present at the commencement of the First India-ASEAN Car Rally today. In flagging off this event, we are doing more than setting in motion a rally car that will go through nine countries traversing over 8,000 kilometres through some of the most picturesque regions of the world. The importance of this Rally is much more than that. Historically, we belong to an integrated region with many complementarities. Our cultural and civilisational ties run deep in time. These have been further strengthened by economic and trade links. Until colonialism intervened, this region was an integrated whole. With the passage of time, we are rediscovering the essential oneness and unity that bond our countries together.

Our countries are endowed with tremendous human talent and natural resources. The challenge before us is to put in place, cooperative regional activities that will promote development and collective security for all our people.

Geographical contiguity is not merely the absence of physical distance. It enables a participative exercise for building a community of prosperity based on goodwill and enterprise. In an era of globalisation, inter-connectivity, whether within a region or between regions, has to be comprehensive, covering all dimensions - human, infrastructural, economic, technological and cultural. By building such bridges of understanding and interaction will we increase and widen the circles of prosperity and growth.

Our North-Eastern States are India's gateway to ASEAN. This is true not just in terms of physical connectivity but also in terms of economic outreach and cultural affinities. The National Common Minimum Programme highlights the determination of our Government to give special assistance to upgrade and expand infrastructure in the North East. The North East Council will be strengthened and given adequate professional support. Being an MP from this region, I feel special affinity and responsibility to ensure the effective implementation of these commitments.

The development of the North-East and its integration with the larger regional processes is one of the prime determining factors of India's engagement with regional cooperation as under ASEAN or sub-regional cooperation as under BIMSTEC. My first official visit abroad as Prime Minister was to attend the BIMSTEC Summit in Bangkok. India's 'Look East' policy was initiated by the Congress Government in the early 1990s. We have made considerable progress with ASEAN since India was admitted as its Sectoral Dialogue Partner in 1992 and full Dialogue Partner in 1995. We have since held two Summit level meetings with ASEAN.

I look forward to representing India at the third India-ASEAN Summit next week, which will be held in Vientiane. I understand that this phase of the Car Rally will conclude in Vientiane, to coincide with the India-ASEAN Summit. I will have the pleasure of witnessing the flag-off of its last phase - upto Indonesia.

Our growing interaction with ASEAN is critical to fulfilling the promise of the 21st century being an Asian Century, with the main engines of the world economy emerging in the Asia-Pacific Region. We want our North Eastern States to be in the forefront of these interactions and to reap the benefits of enhanced peace and prosperity.

I am confident that this Car Rally will capture the imagination of our people, in demonstrating the essential oneness of our integrated region. I see this Car Rally as a journey into the future, demonstrating the possibilities that can come about in trade, tourism, and people-to-people contact by bringing our countries together.

I wish to express my appreciation for all those who have contributed to this Car Rally. We are pleased that the Secretary General of ASEAN is present here along with members of the diplomatic corps representing the ASEAN countries, the State Governments of Assam, Nagaland and Manipur, through which this Car Rally would pass, the Confederation of Indian Industry and the Federation of Motor Sports Club of India. I am confident that the success of this Rally will prompt a sense of adventure among our car enthusiasts and generate interest to make this a regular event.

I wish the participants of the First India-ASEAN Car Rally all success."¹¹

PM's address at the 5th India-ASEAN Summit
January 14, 2007
Cebu, Philippines

"Your Excellency, Madam President, Your Majesty, Excellencies,

Madam President, I thank you for your warm words of welcome and for your gracious hospitality. I am very happy to be here in the Queen City of the South Philippines.

It is always a pleasure to be with friends. With ASEAN countries, we have special bonds of kinship as well as age-old cultural linkages. I, therefore, value this opportunity to be at this distinguished gathering once again for the annual India - ASEAN Summit.

India's "Look East" policy, when it was initiated a decade and a half ago, marked a strategic shift in our perspective. It coincided with the beginning of our economic reform process and provided an opportunity for significantly enlarging our economic engagement. At the same time, it was also a renewal of time-tested linkages with our neighbours in South East and East Asia. Our zeal and determination to pursue this renewal and reach our goal of fashioning the Asian Economic Community, remains unshaken.

This is amply demonstrated by the intensification of political dialogue and the steadily enlarging people-to-people contact encompassing all the countries of the region. Our bilateral cooperation with the countries of ASEAN has myriad facets and covers cooperation in diverse areas such as agriculture, fisheries, health, information technology, space technology, energy, defence and combating international terrorism.

The results of India's "Look East" policy are also amply demonstrated in our growing economic interaction with the region. India's trade with ASEAN has risen from US\$ 2.4 billion in 1990, to US\$ 23 billion in 2005. Our trade with the countries of the East Asia Summit has, similarly, risen from US\$ 8 billion in 1990, to US\$ 67.6 billion in 2005. This accounts for nearly 30% of our external trade. At the same time, the period has also seen an increase in FDI flows, both from India to the region and from the region into India.

Today, India is very different from the India of 1991. It is now a vibrant market-place. Our entrepreneurs are aggressively investing overseas. India has also emerged as a productive and profitable investment destination. We have a US\$ 700 billion economy that is growing at 7 - 8% every year. In the first half of the current year, economic growth reached 9.1%. We have actively pursued external liberalization by cutting down customs duty rates. The current peak rate, at about 12.5% is quite close to ASEAN levels. We have a policy objective of aligning our duty rates with ASEAN levels.

While India has seen many changes, so has the region. The most significant has been the process of ASEAN economic integration, and a similar process for deepening economic integration between ASEAN and its dialogue partners. The convening of the East Asia Summit last year was a historic development. We acknowledge ASEAN's valuable contribution in being the driving force for this positive development and for inviting India to be there at the start.

In the present phase of our "Look East" policy, we in India seek to deepen our economic integration by entering into Free Trade or Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreements, both with ASEAN as a whole and with individual countries of the region. Such agreements are already under different stages of discussion or implementation with Singapore, Thailand,

Malaysia and Indonesia. This web of mutually beneficial partnerships can, we believe, be brought together in a Pan Asian FTA that could light up the future of this region.

India - ASEAN trade recorded an impressive growth of 30% last year. This leaves us in little doubt about our ability to achieve, and even surpass, the target of US\$ 30 billion by 2007.

I believe that the India-ASEAN FTA will impart even further momentum to this growth in trade. We are strongly committed to its early conclusion and implementation. I am glad to note that at the India-ASEAN Trade Ministers' meet a few days ago, progress has been made on resolving outstanding issues relating to exclusion lists and tariff concessions. We should direct our Trade Ministers to expedite the negotiations so that the FTA can be finalised, as agreed, by July 2007.

Greater connectivity is also central to the idea of regional economic integration. The initiative taken in 2003 to liberalize air services has led to a significant increase in flight connections between India and ASEAN, with concomitant benefits in trade and people-to-people contact. I recall, at our last Summit, the Prime Minister of Singapore had proposed that we now look at an open skies policy. We have examined this proposal and I am happy to announce that we would be willing to engage ASEAN authorities in a discussion on such a policy.

Excellencies,

Science & technology is an area in which cooperation between India and ASEAN has added much substance to our relationship. The Technology Summit jointly organized by India and ASEAN, in New Delhi in November last year has been an important milestone in this cooperation. It shows that we can pool our knowledge, and together add to it, to create wealth and improve the well - being of our peoples.

The Technology Summit discussed the establishment of an India - ASEAN Science & Technology Development Fund. I propose that we take steps for the early operationalization of the Fund. The Fund should support the development of strategic alliances between Indian and ASEAN researchers and lead to further collaborative R&D by our countries. Our officials should be mandated to deliberate and decide upon the details of the structure and financing of the Fund.

I would also like to use this opportunity to re-iterate that India remains committed to continuing its support for the Initiative for ASEAN Integration. We are happy, in this context, that the India - Cambodia and India - Vietnam Entrepreneurship Development Centres became operational last year. The India - Laos Centre has been operational since November 2004. We also have a wide ranging programme of cooperation with Myanmar, which is our gateway to ASEAN. Such cooperation is, indeed, heartening as it demonstrates the benefits that the India - ASEAN relationship can bring to common people.

Human resource development is central to bridging the development gap. I am happy that cooperation in this area has proceeded well during the course of this year. We are particularly gratified with the positive response to the 1st training course for ASEAN diplomats, that was organized by the Foreign Service Institute in New Delhi recently. I propose that such cooperation be institutionalized on an annual basis.

The year 2007 marks the 40th anniversary of the founding of the ASEAN and the 60th anniversary of India's attainment of independence. Together the anniversary numbers total 100, a perfect square. I would like to offer our young friends from ASEAN countries an invitation to visit India. We will host 10 students from each of the 10 member countries of ASEAN on a trip of the sights and sounds of modern and ancient India. Centres of IT excellence in India will figure prominently in the itinerary.

The age-old India - ASEAN linkages have been about our peoples mingling and interacting with each other. This dimension has been given a renewed thrust with the impressive growth of connectivity and the ever-increasing flows of tourism between India and ASEAN. This should, I believe, remain a priority area of cooperation and, in fact, be given even further impetus. We would, in this context, be launching special tourism campaigns in ASEAN countries during the course of this year. We would also be happy to facilitate similar campaigns in India from ASEAN countries.

Excellencies,

This is my 3rd Summit Meeting with ASEAN colleagues. I have always been struck by the warmth and friendship that all of you bear for my country and me. I am personally committed to the deepening of the India - ASEAN relationship. I look forward to working closely with all of you for the shared vision of well being and prosperity for the peoples of our countries.

I thank you."¹²

**Prime Minister of India's opening statement at Plenary Session of India-ASEAN
Commemorative Summit
December 20, 2012
New Delhi**

It is a great honour and privilege for me to welcome you and your delegations to India. This is the first time that leaders from all ten ASEAN countries are with us here in Delhi. It is a historic moment for us and our region. We are commemorating not only twenty years of Dialogue Partnership and ten years of annual summits between India and ASEAN; we are also celebrating something more enduring and precious.

India and South-east Asia have centuries-old links. People, ideas, trade, art and religions have long criss-crossed this region. A timeless thread of civilization runs through all our countries. While each one of us has a unique and rich heritage, there are abiding linkages of culture and custom, of art and religion and of civilization, all of which create a sense of unity in the diversity and pluralism in our region. In addition, given that together we constitute a community of 1.8 billion people, representing one-fourth of humanity, with a combined GDP of 3.8 trillion U.S. dollars, it is only natural that India should attach the highest priority to its relationship with ASEAN.

We see our partnership with ASEAN not merely as a reaffirmation of ties with neighbouring countries or as an instrument of economic development, but also as an integral part of our vision of a stable, secure and prosperous Asia and its surrounding Indian Ocean and Pacific regions. The breadth and intensity of India's engagement with Southeast Asia is unmatched by any of our other regional relationships. We have institutionalized annual summits; many of our sectoral dialogues have been elevated into ministerial consultations; and nearly 25 mechanisms for dialogue and cooperation between us cover virtually every field of human endeavour.

This engagement has flourished particularly in the area of trade. India-ASEAN trade has grown over ten times in the ten years since we launched the annual summits. Following the implementation of our FTA in Goods, trade grew by 41% in Indian fiscal year of 2011-12. Two-way flows in investments have also grown rapidly to reach 43 billion U.S. dollars over the past decade. As ASEAN investments into India have multiplied, ASEAN countries too have emerged as major destinations for Indian companies. From energy resources to farm products, from materials to machinery, and from electronics to information technology, Indian and ASEAN companies are forging new partnerships of trade and investment.

It gives me great pleasure, therefore, to see that our Commemorative Summit today coincides with the conclusion of negotiations for the FTA in Services and Investments. This represents a valuable milestone in our relationship. I am confident it will boost our economic ties in much the same way the FTA in Goods has done.

Excellencies, the India-ASEAN engagement began with a strong economic emphasis, but it has also become increasingly strategic in its content. Our political dialogue has grown, our consultations in regional forums have intensified, and our defence and counter-terrorism cooperation have expanded. Naturally, this partnership is important because our histories are intertwined. Equally, I feel, our future is inter-linked and a stable, secure and prosperous Indo-Pacific region is crucial for our own progress and prosperity. There is, therefore, mutual benefit in these aspects of our engagement.

The path to regional peace and stability is greater coordination, cooperation and integration among our economies. ASEAN has shown the way for the entire region, building a regional mechanism of cooperation and consensus that has become a great force for peace and prosperity. It has also emerged as the principal architect and driver of economic and security structures and institutions that are emerging in the region. ASEAN centrality and leadership are essential elements for the success of these forums and India fully supports ASEAN as the lynchpin of these efforts. We also support the objective of an ASEAN Community by 2015 and will continue to be an active participant in the Initiative for ASEAN Integration and the ASEAN Master Plan on Connectivity.

Excellencies, in so far as the broad lines of cooperation in coming years are concerned, I feel we should intensify our political and security consultations, including in regional forums such as the East Asia Summit, the ASEAN Regional Forum and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus. We should work together more purposefully for the evolution of an open, balanced, inclusive and transparent regional architecture. The growing role and responsibilities of ASEAN and India in global affairs also call for increased consultation on a broader range of international developments.

As maritime nations, India and ASEAN nations should intensify their engagement for maritime security and safety, for freedom of navigation and for peaceful settlement of maritime disputes in accordance with international law. We should also foster regional cooperation to counter piracy and respond to natural disasters.

Naturally, our ability to work together in regional and global contexts will be stronger if we are

able to deepen our own engagement and cooperation. In this context, connectivity – physical, institutional, people-to-people, digital and by sea and air – holds the key to closer partnership between India and ASEAN. Tomorrow’s flagging down of the India-ASEAN Car Rally will not only celebrate a remarkable journey by brave men and women, but also symbolize how connectivity can link people, stimulate trade and generate prosperity across the region. We should, therefore, attach high priority to a quick implementation of the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway and its extension to Lao PDR and Cambodia. We should also launch the second track that would run from India through Myanmar, Lao PDR and Cambodia to Vietnam. Similarly, the Indian Naval Ship INS Sudarshini, which is on a six-month expedition to nine ASEAN countries, not only draws attention to our maritime links, but to the economic potential of sea-based connectivity.

These infrastructure projects demand enormous finances. We should think of innovative ways of financing and executing these projects, which also draw upon the expertise and resources of the private sector.

Improved connectivity will lead to expanded commerce. I am optimistic that our trade will exceed 100 billion U.S. dollars by 2015 and we should aim for the milestone of 200 billion U.S. dollars ten years from now. We should also build on commendable initiatives like the annual India-ASEAN Business Fair and Conclave and energize our Business Council. Linkages between small and medium enterprises, which are central to our economies, should be promoted.

Many of us around this table share common challenges of energy and food security, rapid urbanization, climate change, the empowerment of people through education and skill development. We should use the opportunities available to work together in addressing these. I would like to state that, drawing on the experience of the India-ASEAN Plan of Action and the recommendations of the India-ASEAN Eminent Persons’ Group, we will expand our support for innovative mechanisms like the ASEAN-India Fund, the ASEAN-India Green Fund and the ASEAN-India S&T Fund to take our cooperation forward in diverse fields.

Excellencies, this is a time of great flux and transition, with several unsettled questions and unresolved issues in our region. Our responsibility to work for peace has increased and become more urgent. Our shared values, convergent world views and similarities in approaches to the region should help us make the India-ASEAN relationship more comprehensive and elevate it to a Strategic Partnership for the next decade and beyond.

With these words, I once again wish to thank you, Excellencies, for joining me here in New Delhi. Your participation has already made this Summit memorable. I very much look forward to hearing your valuable views on the future of our relationship.

I would now like to invite my co-Chair, H.E. Mr. Hun Sen, the Prime Minister of Cambodia, to share his views on the future of India-ASEAN partnership.¹³

Speech of External Affairs Minister at the launch of ASEAN India Centre. New Delhi, June 21, 2013

Ambassador Shyam Saran, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen It gives me great pleasure to inaugurate the ASEAN India Centre today, six months after the Prime Minister & ASEAN Leaders directed its establishment in their Vision Statement at the ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit of December 20, 2012. I am happy to see the ASEAN Heads of Missions and their officials, Indian representatives from the ASEAN India Eminent Persons Group, prominent members of the strategic community in India, representatives from the media, and officials from the different Ministries involved in furthering the ASEAN-India Strategic Partnership, join us at this launch. The ASEAN-India Strategic Partnership has strong foundations of shared civilizational bonds, a recent history of common effort towards economic growth and prosperity and a common future that has to be secured not just within the new security and economic architecture of the Asia Pacific but also the Indo-Pacific. Over the last few years, our region has seen a multiplicity of stakeholders and a fraternity of purpose for tackling common challenges. We need to build an architecture that contributes to the geo-strategic importance of the region to global processes and, most importantly, secures economic growth and prosperity for the people in our countries. This is the strength of the ASEAN-India Strategic Partnership as an anchor of stability from the western confines of the Indian Ocean to the shores of the Pacific, from the Straits of Hormuz to the Straits of Malacca. Ladies and Gentlemen, The centrality of the ASEAN and the ASEAN way of progress at a pace comfortable to all has contributed to the unanimity of strategic objectives amongst us and also motivated us to look at greater synergy in our multifaceted relationship. The partnership with ASEAN countries, in fact, constitutes the core of India's Look East Policy, given that the combined population of India and ASEAN is approximately 1.8 billion, around one-fourth of the global population and the combined GDP of the region is approximately US \$ 3 trillion. Today there are very clear achievements in ASEAN-India relations across the three pillars of political and security cooperation, economic integration and socio-cultural exchanges. Last year we saw an intensive engagement across Governments and meetings or programmes between experts, think tanks, private sectors, academia, diplomats, farmers, students, media and, in fact, across professions and ages at the people-to-people levels. We intensified the dialogue in agriculture, trade, tourism, new & renewable energy and environment. In the run up to the Commemorative Summit, our people-to-people and institutional connectivity has strengthened and acquired an annual periodicity. These, together with the ASEAN-India Car Rally 2012 and the sail training ship INS Sudarshini expedition to 9 ASEAN countries and their related business and cultural 'marker' events, proved catalytic to the forging of a consistent partnership which extended into the online space also. Ladies and Gentlemen, Capacity building, development, economic growth and peace and stability have been the characteristics of the ASEAN-India partnership. The numerous projects under finalisation as per the Plan of Action for 2010- 2015 are set to bring a qualitative enhancement in our partnership. From agriculture to space cooperation, from English language

and entrepreneurship development training to capacity building in renewable energy and environment protection, from encouraging SMEs to strengthening our trade and investment linkages, we have now a comprehensive engagement between ASEAN and India. As the deadline for ASEAN Community by 2015 approaches, India has renewed its commitment to support ASEAN's community building efforts, including the Initiative for ASEAN Integration Work Plan II, Narrowing Development Gaps and the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity. And yet, there is still tremendous untapped potential in the ASEAN-India partnership. There are also areas such as the new non-traditional threats to our socio-economic and political systems that need effective redressal. We are looking for ways to combat the fast evolving threat from terrorism and to counter drug trafficking, both of which incrementally threaten the future of our younger generations. We need to add form and substance on the ground to our existing geographic and civilizational connectivity, and to extend it simultaneously towards an integrated and sustainable economic prosperity. We need to ensure that as the ASEAN countries integrate amongst themselves, their integration with India runs apace. We need to take cognizance of the pace of progress in the subsets of the Mekong Ganga Cooperation process and BIMSTEC as also the intra-ASEAN groupings so as to increase intergrative capacities in the region. In short, we need to continue the dynamism in our potential for partnership into the future. Ladies and Gentlemen, I am happy to see that Chairman RIS and former Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran has taken on the task of defining the role for the ASEAN India Centre against this backdrop. In the Vision Statement we resolved to establish an ASEAN-India Centre using existing capacities. The Research and Information Systems for Developing Countries (RIS) is already nodal to several ASEAN-India activities at track 1.5 and track 2 levels and has also been closely associated with strengthening ASEANIndia cooperation in the field of connectivity. RIS Chairman Shyam Saran was the Co-Chair of the ASEAN-India Eminent Persons Group, which had given recommendations towards the Vision Statement, including, inter alia, the establishment of an ASEAN India Centre. So, I daresay, that I have high expectation of the ASEAN India Centre as a key resource to assist us in further defining the contours of the ASEAN-India Strategic Partnership. In terms of its future tasks, I hope it will assist the Governments of ASEAN and India to make a selection, for instance, from the abundance of theoretical constructs and several studies in the last two years about the connectivity corridors and economic processes in our region. The AIC should help us to simultaneously begin the process of putting in place policies and facilitators to drive economic content on these geographic corridors so that by the time the network of roads, maritime and air links are strengthened, the dimension of their economic viability has also been addressed. By helping the Governments find practical ways and means to increase connectivity and strategic content in the ASEAN-India Partnership, the Centre will bridge the knowledge gap that currently limits the opportunities for ASEAN-India cooperation. I would, in particular, like to see Detailed Project Report parameters being built up for the agenda on geographical connectivity on the basis of work at the ASEAN India Centre. The ongoing negotiations on the RCEP and the conclusion of the FTA between ASEAN and India on Services and Investment would provide new opportunities and challenges which need careful

examination, without waiting for the completion of these processes. I would like to see some well anchored ideas on furthering India's contribution to the ASEAN processes of the ADMM+, the ARF and the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum. As the global power dynamics see further shift towards Asia, it is important to understand the dynamics within the Indian Ocean and the Pacific and work towards a security construct that leverages the civilizational linkages to expand cooperation and build partnership across the Indo-Pacific. The setting up of the ASEAN-India Centre is, therefore, recognition of the fact that the ASEAN-India Partnership is not only of long standing but also of great current and future strategic relevance, oriented as it is to economic growth, development, capacity building and peace and security. With this, I formally launch the ASEAN-India Centre and wish the Centre all success. Thank You¹⁴

**Opening remarks by the PM (of India) at the Plenary Session of the INDIA- ASEAN
Commemorative Summit (January 25, 2018)
January 26, 2018**

**Your Excellency Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong
Your Majesty,**

Excellencies,

I am delighted to welcome you all to the ASEAN India Commemorative Summit. Though we are celebrating 25 years of our partnership, our shared voyage goes back thousands of years.

It is a privilege for India to host all the ASEAN Leaders for the second time in five years. Tomorrow, you will be our honoured Guests at our Republic Day celebrations. The presence of my brothers and sisters from all our ASEAN partners at this joyous celebration is unprecedented.

Your collective presence here has also touched the hearts of my 1.25 billion fellow Indians. It highlights the importance of our Strategic Partnership, placing ASEAN at the centre of India's Act East Policy.

Our friendship has been nurtured by our shared cultural and civilizational linkages. The Ramayana, the ancient Indian epic, continues to be a valuable shared legacy in ASEAN and the Indian subcontinent.

We have organised a Ramayana Festival with troupes from ASEAN countries, to showcase our common cultural treasure through this great epic. Other major religions, including Buddhism, also bind us closely. Islam, in many parts of South East Asia has distinctive Indian connections going back several centuries. We have also jointly released a set of commemorative stamps, to celebrate our common heritage.

Your Majesty, Excellencies,

This Summit is the grand finale of our joint year-long commemorative activities, organized in India and in ASEAN countries, which provides us a valuable opportunity to review our journey so far and chart our future path. This objective, in my view, is best served through free and friendly discussion among us.

Your Majesty, Excellencies,

Since 1992, our partnership has evolved from sectoral dialogue to strategic partnership. Today, we have thirty sectoral dialogue mechanisms and seven ministerial level interactions, in addition to annual Summit meetings. We have made excellent progress in implementing the objectives of the ASEAN-India Partnership for Peace, Progress and Shared Prosperity, through five year plans of action.

The progress in implementing our third Action Plan for the period 2016-2020 is commendable. Capacity building projects have been undertaken through the ASEAN-India Cooperation Fund, the ASEAN-India Green Fund, and ASEAN-India Science and Technology Fund.

Your Majesty, Excellencies,

India shares ASEAN's vision of peace and prosperity through a rules-based order for the oceans and seas. Respect for international law, notably UNCLOS is critical for this. We remain committed to work with ASEAN to enhance practical cooperation and collaboration in our shared maritime domain.

During the Retreat Session, we had an opportunity to discuss ASEAN-India cooperation in maritime domain, as one of the key focus areas for growth and development of the Indo-Pacific region. Indeed, Maritime cooperation has been an integral part of our discourse throughout our commemorative activities, with the theme resonating in the ASEAN India Connectivity Summit, in the Workshop on Blue Economy, as well as in regular dialogue mechanisms.

Humanitarian and Disaster Relief efforts, Security cooperation, and Freedom of Navigation will be key focus areas for our Maritime cooperation. The Connectivity Summit was also an affirmation of the linkages that India shares with ASEAN through land, air, maritime, cultural, civilizational and people-to-people relations that date back centuries.

Your Majesty, Excellencies,

Information and Communications Technology will forge new bonds of digital connectivity among us. These could include new areas of cooperation in a regional high-capacity fiber optic network, and a national rural broadband networks to digitally connect remote areas.

India offers to undertake a pilot project on rural connectivity, which would create digital villages in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Viet Nam. Success of this project could be replicated in other ASEAN countries.

We also offer a training programme on Telecom and Networking Technologies, to share best practices in Policy, Regulation and Technological Development for Information and Communication Technology professionals from ASEAN countries.

In order to deepen our understanding and cooperation in financial matters, I propose a dialogue on digital financial inclusion and investment promotion and infrastructure. Combating terror financing jointly is yet another important area where we could work collectively.

Your Majesty, Excellencies,

Our 70 billion dollars trade has grown 25 times over 25 years. Investments from ASEAN and India are robust and growing. We will continue to work with ASEAN to further enhance our trade ties, and facilitate interactions among our business community.

The success of recent events like the Business & Investment Meet and Expo, the ASEAN India Business Council Meeting, the Biznet Conference, the Start-up Festival and Hackathon and an ICT Expo have shown encouraging results. We hope that our Project Development Fund and Quick Impact Projects will help our companies integrate into regional value chains, particularly in textiles and garments, pharmaceuticals agro-processing and electronics.

Your Majesty, Excellencies,

People to people connectivity have been the foundation of our close ties for hundreds of years. The Indian Diaspora has settled far and wide in Southeast Asia. They are warmly accepted in the local community. Earlier this month, the ASEAN-India Pravasi Bharatiya Divas in Singapore recognised their contribution in forging closer ties between us.

Held at the same time in New Delhi, in the first Conference of Members of Parliament and Mayors with Indian heritage, there was a large representation from ASEAN countries. To build on our historical bonds, I propose that we declare 2019 as the ASEAN-India Year of Tourism. We could set up tangible and intangible cultural heritage circuits to further promote tourism. The Buddhist Tourism circuit could be an important part of this to attract tourists and pilgrims from our region.

Your Majesty, Excellencies,

India has participated in restoration works to historical structures which attest our enduring civilizational bonds. It was a privilege for India to play a role in conservation works of temples in Cambodia, Myanmar, Lao PDR and Vietnam. A virtual knowledge portal of ASEAN India network of Museums could curate this shared heritage.

An important focus of our commemorative events celebrates the power of our youth, our future. The Youth Summit, the Artist Residency, the Music Festival, and the Start Up Festival for digital commerce among our youth were intended for this. We have given a boost to their spirit by

giving Youth Awards on 24th January.

To further empower our youth in our region, I have the pleasure to announce 1000 Fellowships to students and researchers from ASEAN countries for studying integrated PhD programmes in Indian Institutes of Technology, India's premier institutions of imparting knowledge. We would also like to offer dedicated training courses at the Indian Academy of Highway Engineers for ASEAN Highway Professionals. I also propose that we set up a network of Universities to encourage greater inter-university exchanges.

Your Majesty, Excellencies,

In conclusion, let me again join my people in expressing our profound appreciation to each one of you for kindly accepting my invitation and for joining us at this Commemorative Summit. I now invite Prime Minister of the Republic of Singapore, His Excellency Lee Hsein Loong to please deliver the Opening Remarks in Singapore's capacity as the ASEAN Chair for 2018 and the Co-Chair for this Plenary Session.¹⁵

**Delhi Declaration of the ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit to Mark the 25th
Anniversary of ASEAN-India Dialogue Relations**

New Delhi

WE, the Heads of State/Government of the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Republic of India, gathered in New Delhi, India, on 25 January 2018 to commemorate the 25th Anniversary of ASEAN-India Dialogue Relations under the theme of "Shared Values, Common Destiny";

REAFFIRMING our commitment to guide ASEAN-India Dialogue Relations by the principles, purposes, shared values and norms enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC), the Declaration of the East Asia Summit on the Principles for Mutually Beneficial Relations, and the Vision Statement adopted at the ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit to mark the 20th Anniversary of ASEAN-India Dialogue Relations on 20 December 2012; and supporting the ASEAN Charter;

NOTING the cross-cultural exchanges and civilisational linkages between Southeast Asia and India over several millennia as a strong foundation for cooperation between ASEAN and India in an increasingly inter-connected world;

RECOGNISING with appreciation the achievements made over the past 25 years of ASEAN-India Dialogue Relations across the three ASEAN Community pillars, namely political security, economic and socio-cultural;

NOTING with satisfaction the progress in the implementation of the Plan of Action to Implement the ASEAN-India Partnership for Peace, Progress and Shared Prosperity (2016-2020) and the List of Priorities for 2016-2018 to Implement the ASEAN-India Plan of Action;

APPRECIATING India's support for ASEAN centrality in the evolving regional architecture and its continued contribution to regional peace, security, and prosperity and to ASEAN integration and the ASEAN Community building process, including through the support for implementation of ASEAN 2025: Forging Ahead Together, Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025, and the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) Work Plan III;

COMMENDING various commemorative activities held in ASEAN Member States and India throughout 2017 and the beginning of 2018, which brought the ASEAN-India Strategic Partnership to our communities, including the youth through hosting of the ASEAN-India Youth Summit, the ASEAN-India Youth Awards and Youth Leadership Programme, and ASEAN-India Music Festival;

HEREBY agree to the following:

1. Further strengthen and deepen the ASEAN-India Strategic Partnership for mutual benefit, across the whole spectrum of political-security, economic, socio-cultural and development cooperation, through further strengthening of relevant institutional mechanisms and broadening of the network between government institutions, parliamentarians, business circles, scientists, academicians, think-tanks, media, youth and other stakeholders, for the building of a peaceful, harmonious, caring and sharing community in our regions.
2. Continue to exert efforts and cooperate towards the full, effective and timely implementation of the Plan of Action to Implement the ASEAN-India Partnership for Peace, Progress and Shared Prosperity (2016-2020).
3. Further enhance high-level engagement and cooperation within the existing framework of the ASEAN-India Dialogue Partnership and ASEAN-led mechanisms, such as the ASEAN-India Summit, the East Asia Summit (EAS), the Post Ministerial Conference with India (PMC+1), the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) Plus, and other ASEAN-India ministerial/sectoral mechanisms.
4. Continue to support and contribute to ASEAN integration and ASEAN Community building process, towards the realisation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025. Political and Security Cooperation
5. Reaffirm our commitment to work closely together on common regional and international security issues of mutual concern and ensure an open, transparent, inclusive and rules-based regional architecture through existing ASEAN-led frameworks and mechanisms such as the PMC+1 with India, ARF, EAS, the ADMM-Plus, and ASEAN Senior Officials' Meeting on Transnational Crimes (SOMTC)+India Consultations.
6. Reaffirm the importance of maintaining and promoting peace, stability, maritime safety and security, freedom of navigation and overflight in the region, and other lawful uses of the seas and unimpeded lawful maritime commerce and to promote peaceful resolutions of disputes, in accordance with universally recognised principles of international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and the relevant standards and recommended practices by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO). In this regard, we support the full and effective implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of the Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) and look forward to an early conclusion of the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC).
7. Strengthen maritime cooperation through existing relevant mechanisms including the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF) to address common challenges on maritime issues.
8. Work together to prevent and manage accidents and incidents at sea and promote effective

coordination between ASEAN and India in maritime search and rescue, in accordance with existing processes and practices, including those of the ICAO and IMO, as well as encourage increased engagement between research institutions on maritime issues and collaboration on maritime education, research, development and innovation.

9. Deepen cooperation in combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, violent extremism and radicalisation through information sharing, law enforcement cooperation and capacity building under the existing ASEAN-led mechanisms such as ASEAN SOMTC+India Consultation and the ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group on CounterTerrorism (EWG CT) and frameworks such as the 2003 ASEAN-India Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat International Terrorism, the EAS Statement on Countering Violent Extremism in 2015, and the EAS Statement on Countering Ideological Challenges of Terrorism and Terrorist Narratives and Propaganda, and the EAS Leaders' Declaration on Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Finance of Terrorism adopted in 2017, and the ARF Work Plan on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime. In addition, strengthen cooperation and collaboration to combating other transnational crimes, including people smuggling, trafficking in persons, illicit drug trafficking, cybercrime, and piracy and armed robbery against ships.

10. Support the implementation of the Langkawi Declaration on the Global Movement of Moderates to promote peace, security, upholding rule of law, sustainable and inclusive development, equitable growth and social harmony.

11. Reiterate commitment and promote comprehensive approach to combat terrorism through close cooperation by disrupting and countering terrorists, terrorist groups and networks, including by countering cross border movement of terrorists and foreign terrorist fighters and misuse of Internet including social media by terror entities; strengthen cooperation to stop terrorism financing efforts, and prevent recruitment of members of terrorist groups; support efforts in targeting terrorist groups and sanctuaries; and take further urgent measures to counter and prevent the spread of terrorism, while stressing that there can be no justification for acts of terror on any grounds whatsoever.

12. Work together with the international community to ensure compliance with the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions regarding counter-terrorism, and to note efforts on the negotiations of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT) at the United Nations.

13. Strengthen cooperation between ASEAN and India on cyber-security capacity building and policy coordination, including through supporting the implementation of the ASEAN Cybersecurity Cooperation Strategy, ARF Work Plan on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and the work of ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Security of and in the Use of ICTs and further strengthen regional cyber capacity building initiatives undertaken by the other ASEAN sectoral bodies and build on the discussions at the 2015 ASEAN-India Cybersecurity Conference at the proposed First ASEANIndia Cyber Dialogue in 2018. Economic Cooperation

14. Further strengthen ASEAN-India economic relations, including through the full utilisation and effective implementation of the ASEAN-India Free Trade Area, and intensify efforts in 2018 toward the swift conclusion of a modern, comprehensive, high quality, and mutually beneficial Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP).

15. Cooperate for conservation and sustainable use of marine resources in the Indian and Pacific Oceans in accordance with international law, notably the United Nations Convention on the Law

of the Sea (UNCLOS) and address threats to these resources including illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, loss of coastal ecosystems and the adverse impacts of pollution, ocean acidification, marine debris, and invasive species on the marine environment. In this regard, explore cooperation in the field of blue economy, and take note of India's proposal for a possible framework of cooperation in this regard.

16. Deepen cooperation in the area of aviation under the ASEAN-India Aviation Cooperation Framework adopted at the 14th ASEAN Transport Ministers' Meeting in Manila, on 6 November 2008, including through the convening of air services consultations by the ASEAN-India Working Group on Regional Air Services Arrangements and the establishment of air transport cooperation on technical, economic, and regulatory matters between ASEAN and India. Establish closer ASEAN-India air links to promote tourism, trade, and enhance greater connectivity between ASEAN and India.

17. Promote maritime transport cooperation between ASEAN and India, and encourage potential private sector participation in the development of seaports, maritime logistics network and maritime services in order to create greater efficient linkages; and encourage ASEAN and India to continue discussions on these priority areas.

18. Strengthen cooperation in the area of aviation and maritime transport and look forward to the expeditious conclusion of the ASEAN-India Air Transport Agreement (AIATA) and the ASEAN-India Maritime Transport Agreement (AI-MTA).

19. Strengthen cooperation in ICT to enhance ICT policies, build capacity, improve digital connectivity, infrastructure and services, develop ICT human resources through the establishment of Centers of Excellence in Software Development and Training (CESDT) in some ASEAN Member States, encourage ICT start-ups, and explore emerging technologies for adoption; in synergy with the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025 and the ASEAN ICT Master Plan 2020, respectively.

20. Further promote stable and sustainable growth for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), including through technology transfer, diffusion, adoption and adaptation as well as enhancing capacity building, technical assistance, distribution channels, financing facilities, access to innovation, and opportunities to integrate into the global and regional value chains, as well as utilisation of Project Development Fund and Quick Impact Project Fund, where relevant.

21. Continue to enhance cooperation for ensuring longterm food and energy security in our region through strengthening cooperation in agriculture and energy sectors; work together to promote the development of renewable energy technology through international platforms including the International Solar Alliance (ISA) where applicable.

22. Continue to deepen sectoral relations in science and technology (S&T) through cooperation on the ASEAN-India Innovation Platform, ASEAN-India Research & Training Fellowship Scheme, and ASEAN-India Collaborative Research and Development Programme, in areas aligned with ASEAN Plan of Action on Science, Technology and Innovation (APASTI) 2016-2025, including, among others, nano-technology, materials science and biotechnology; and enhance capacity building on S&T.

23. Continue to collaborate in peaceful exploitation of outer space, through the implementation of the ASEAN-India Space Cooperation Programme, including launching of satellites, their monitoring through Telemetry Tracking and Command Stations and usage of satellite image data for sustainable exploitation of ground, sea, atmospheric and digital resources for equitable development of the region, as well as explore cooperation in R&D in emerging space

technologies such as small satellites, inter-satellite communications, satellite propulsion, and analytics for space data.

24. Continue to promote private sector engagement and strengthen business-to-business relations, including through the ASEAN-India Business Council, and encourage trade events to promote brand awareness of ASEAN and India products and services to further broaden and deepen economic linkages. We also look forward to the establishment of the ASEAN-India Trade and Investment Centre. Socio-Cultural Cooperation

25. Cooperate on the promotion of the civilisational and historical links between ASEAN and India by providing platforms for knowledge exchanges among policy-makers, managers, and the academicians concerned with tangible and intangible cultural heritage; intensify efforts to preserve, protect and restore cultural and historical symbols and structures which are of mutual interest in reflecting the ASEAN-India cultural and historical connection, including through India's proposal on mapping inscriptions along the Mekong river and organising of conferences and activities on ASEAN-India Cultural and Civilisational Links.

26. Encourage health cooperation in areas relevant to the ASEAN Post-2015 Health Development Agenda, particularly in the area of strengthening health system and access to care, as well as safe and good quality medical products and affordable quality medicines, including traditional and complementary medicines.

27. Cement a stronger cultural link by promoting cultural tourism and further enhancing people-to-people contacts, through programmes such as Delhi Dialogue, ASEAN-India Network of Think Tanks (AINTT), ASEAN-India Eminent Persons Lecture Series (AIEPLS), diplomats training courses, as well as exchange programmes for students, parliamentarians, farmers, media, and other youth programmes.

28. Strengthen cooperation in education and youth sectors, in the form of setting up of English Language Training, Entrepreneurship Development and Vocational Training Centres, and granting of annual scholarships; such as Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) scholarships, ASEAN-India Goodwill Scholarship, Nalanda scholarship, and explore the possibility of setting up an ASEAN-India network of universities, and encourage other University to University exchanges, including with ASEAN University Network.

29. Strengthen ASEAN-India cooperation in disaster management and humanitarian assistance, including supporting the work of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) in the realisation of the ASEAN Declaration on One ASEAN, One Response: ASEAN Responding to Disaster as One in The Region and Outside The Region and establishing close partnership between the AHA Centre and its Indian counterpart for better coordination in regional disaster management.

30. Promote dialogue between government officials and relevant stakeholders of ASEAN and India on empowerment of women, the promotion and protection of the rights of women and children, the elimination of all forms of violence against them, and promotion of women entrepreneurs in line with the ASEAN-India Plan of Action (POA) 2016-2020, as well as support relevant ASEAN frameworks and mechanisms on these matters.

31. Promote cooperation in environmental management and climate change, including exploring cooperation to support the implementation of relevant strategic measures as outlined in the ASCC Blueprint 2025, priorities of the ASEAN Senior Officials on Environment (ASOEN), and the ASEAN Working Group on Climate Change (AWGCC) Work Plan 2016-2025.

32. Enhance cooperation in biodiversity conservation and management, through exchange of knowledge and experience, conduct of joint research activities and capacity building programmes to address the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem degradation, including supporting the work of the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB).

33. Explore the possibility of cooperation in alliance building, networking and partnership between ASEAN and India in civil service matters, among others, training the civil servants of ASEAN countries for the purpose of supporting further integration of ASEAN community and implementation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025.

Connectivity

34. Reaffirm our commitment to enhance physical and digital connectivity in line with the MPAC 2025 and the AIM 2020 by, among others, availing of the US\$1 billion line of credit announced by India to promote physical infrastructure and digital connectivity. 35. Encourage the early completion of the India-MyanmarThailand Trilateral Highway Project and extend this Trilateral Highway to Cambodia, Lao PDR and Viet Nam.

Cooperation on Narrowing the Development Gap

36. Welcome and appreciate India's continued support for ASEAN's efforts in narrowing the development gap within and between ASEAN Member States by implementing the IAI Work Plan III.

Adopted in New Delhi, India, on the Twenty-Fifth Day of January Two Thousand and Eighteen.¹⁶

Endnotes

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Considering the work of the ASEAN-India Eminent Persons Group (AIEPG), and its Report with recommendations for forging a closer partnership for peace, progress and shared prosperity, the Heads of the State/Government of ASEAN and India at the ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit 2012, held at New Delhi on 19-20 December 2012, recommended the establishment of ASEAN-India Centre (AIC), which was formally inaugurated by the External Affairs Minister of India on 21 June 2013 at RIS. AIC serves as a resource centre for ASEAN Member States and India to fill the knowledge gaps that currently limit the opportunities for cooperation. AIC is working with the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Government of India to undertake and disseminate evidence-based policy research and provide policy recommendations.

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