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### **1. Third ASEAN Digital Ministers meeting approves India-ASEAN Digital Work Plan 2023 ( Feb. 11, 2023 )**

**India-ASEAN Digital Work Plan 2023** was approved at the **third ASEAN Digital Ministers meeting in New Delhi** February 10.

#### **An overview of the news**

- The Minister of State for Communications **Devusinh Chauhan**, and **Ivan John E Uy**, Secretary, Department of Information and Communication Technology, Philippines co-chaired the meeting.
- The meeting was held on a virtual platform with the theme of "**Synergy Towards a Sustainable Digital Future**" to strengthen India-ASEAN ties in the field of Information and Communication Technology.
- The action plan includes capacity building and knowledge sharing in emerging areas of information and communication technology such as artificial intelligence in cyber security.
- In 2022, the ASEAN India Friendship Year was celebrated, commemorating the 30th anniversary of the establishment of dialogue relations with ASEAN.
- It furthers the **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP)** in ASEAN and India.

#### **India-ASEAN Digital Work Plan 2023**

- The India-ASEAN Digital Action Plan 2023 was approved in the ministers' meeting.
- **The action plan includes-**
- **Capacity building** and knowledge sharing in emerging areas of information and communication technology such as artificial intelligence in cyber security.
- Application of **IoT and AI in Next Generation Smart City** and Society 5.0.
- **Sustainable data and transport networks** for the future: standards and applications.
- **5G technologies** for IoT and future trends,
- **Role of ICT** in implementation of digital health and safety and assessment for future networks, etc.

### **2. Vietnam President Nguyen Xuan Phuc resigns amid allegations of corruption and scandals ( Jan. 18, 2023 )**

**Vietnam's** President **Nguyen Xuan Phuc** has submitted his resignation on January 17 after the ruling Communist Party found him responsible for **corruption, scandals and wrongdoings**.

### **An overview of the news**

- The anti-corruption campaign has led to the sacking of several ministers in Vietnam.
- Earlier, **two deputy prime ministers** who served under President Phuc had quit.
- The resignation of the President requires approval from the **National Assembly**.
- Former Prime Minister **Phuc** had assumed the office of **President from 2021**.
- Phuc, 69, served as Vietnam's prime minister **from 2016 until April 2021**, when he was elected president.
- Vietnam is a country with **single party rule** and any political changes are very carefully managed for political stability and continuity.
- However, it is not clear who will be the new President.

### **About Vietnam**

- It lies in **South East Asia** and it is a member of **Association of Southeast Asian Nation (ASEAN)**
- Capital: **Hanoi**
- Currency: **Dong**

### **3. Shalini Kumari received first prize in 3rd ASEAN India Grassroots Innovation Forum ( Dec. 22, 2022 )**

**Ms Shalini Kumari** from India received **first prize** in the **Grassroots Innovation Competition** at the **3rd ASEAN India Grassroots Innovation forum** for her innovation '**Modified walker with adjustable legs**'.

### **Important facts**

- The first prize winner from India Ms Shalini Kumari at the forum, a resident of **Patna in Bihar**; she was first recognized by the National Innovation Foundation (NIF) – India.
- The technology was transferred to the industry, **Vissco Rehabilitation Aids**, a leading manufacturer of orthopaedic products in the country.
- It is available for purchase through Brick and Mortar stores and also through marketplaces like Amazon India for purchase by common people of the country.
- Ms Shalini Kumari received the prize from **H E Dr Hul Seingheng**, Cambodia COSTI Chairman and Director General, General Department of Science, Technology & Innovation

under the Ministry of Industry Science, Technology & Innovation (MISTI), Kingdom of Cambodia.

- She has won the cash prize of **USD 1,500** by virtue of being the winner of first prize.
- The **second and third prizes** were won by innovators from the **Philippines and Myanmar**, who won US\$1000 and US\$500, respectively.
- A total of 45 innovators participated and represented 9 nationalities in the competition.
- The **first and second prize** in the **Student Innovation competition** has been won by participants from **Thailand** whereas the third prize has been won by the student from **Lao PDR**.

### Grassroots Innovation Competition

1st Prize	India - Ms Shalini Kumari	Modified walker with adjustable legs
2nd Prize	Philippines - Mrs Meriam Bouquia	Multi purpose Fiber Stripper
3rd Prize	Myanmar - Mr. Myo Thaw	GreenToddy's Plamyra palm coconut

### Student Innovation Competition

1st Prize	Thailand - Ms. Napaschol Inthapan	ORA (Osteoarthritis Rehabilitation Assistant)
2nd Prize	Thailand - Mr. Tanapat Charunworaphan	The HealthTech that keeps your heart in checked
3rd Prize	Lao PDR - Mr. Phonsena Chanthavong	Intelligent boat for a cleaner river

### 4. India-Indonesia Investment and Business Forum meeting held in Port Blair ( Dec. 21, 2022 )

A meeting of the Joint Task Force Committee of "India-[Indonesia](#) Investment and Business Forum" to identify new areas of cooperation, develop infrastructure, tourism, trade and connectivity to enhance business relations was held in **Port Blair**, Andaman and Nicobar on 20 December 2022.

This is the second meeting of the Task Force Committee. The first meeting was held in the Indonesian Capital of **Jakarta** on November 25, 2019.

Indonesia's **Sabang port in Aceh** is around 90 nautical miles from Andaman and Nicobar Islands. India is keen to expand trade and tourism with Indonesia.

The meeting with Indonesian delegates was attended by Andaman and Nicobar Lieutenant Governor **D K Joshi**, Director for South and Central Asian Affairs of the Indonesian government, Jatmiko Heru Prasetyo.

During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Indonesia in 2018, he called for a Joint Task Force Committee from both sides to boost bilateral investments.

According to the Ministry of External Affairs Indonesia is the **second largest trading partner of India** amongst the ASEAN (Association of SouthEast Asian Nations). Singapore is the largest trading partner of India amongst ASEAN countries.

India is one of the **largest buyers** of coal and crude palm oil from Indonesia and imports minerals, rubber, pulp & paper and hydrocarbons reserves. India exports refined petroleum products, commercial vehicles, telecommunication equipment, bovine meat, animal feed, agriculture products, steel and plastics to Indonesia.

## **5. Joint HADR Exercise Samanvay - 2022 to begin at Air Force Station Agra ( Nov. 25, 2022 )**

Joint HADR Exercise Samanvay - 2022

**The Indian Air Force** is conducting the annual Joint Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) exercise '**Samanvay 2022**' from November 28, 2022 to November 30, 2022 at **Air Force Station Agra**.

### **Important facts**

- The exercise will include a seminar on disaster management, a '**multi-agency exercise**' aimed at assessing the effectiveness of institutional disaster management infrastructures and contingency measures.
- There will also be static and flight demonstrations of various **HADR assets and a 'table top exercise'**.
- Representatives of **ASEAN countries** will also participate in the exercise along with the participation of various stakeholders from the country.
- Defence Minister **Rajnath Singh** will be the chief guest for the capability demonstration events to be conducted during the exercise on 29 November 2022.
- **Samanvay 2022** will promote a joint approach of various national and regional stakeholders including civil administration, armed forces, NDMA.

- The exercise also aims to provide a unique platform for exchange of domain knowledge,
- experiences and best practices with ASEAN member countries.

## **6. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh co chair the first India ASEAN defence ministers meeting in Cambodia ( Nov. 22, 2022 )**

first India ASEAN defence ministers meeting

Indian defence minister **Rajnath Singh** arrived in [Cambodia](#) on 21 November 2022 to participate in the to co-chair the **first India-ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting** and attend the **9th ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM Plus)**. This year, India and Cambodia are celebrating 70 years of diplomatic ties.

On 22 November he along with the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence of Cambodia General **TEA Banh** co-chaired the first **India-ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting** to commemorate the 30 years of ASEAN-India Dialogue Relations. Also the year 2022 is being celebrated as the **ASEAN-India Friendship Year** to commemorate the 30 years of ASEAN-India Dialogue Relations.

He will also attend the **9th ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM Plus)** to be held on 23 November 2022.

Cambodia is the **current chairman of the ASEAN** (Association of South East Nation) and all ASEAN related summits and conferences are being hosted by it. Both the 9th ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM Plus) and India-ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting will be held at **Siem Reap**, Cambodia. Siem Reap is the second largest city of Cambodia after its capital Phnom Penh.

### **Angkor Wat**

Siem Reap province of Cambodia is home to **Angkor Wat**. It is a world heritage site and is the world's **largest religious structure**, covering some 400 acres. It is dedicated to Hindu gods and goddesses. **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** is helping in the preservation of the Temple.

### **ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM Plus)**

The ADMM-Plus is a platform for ASEAN and its eight Dialogue Partners **Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Russia** and the **United States** (collectively referred to as the "Plus Countries"), to strengthen security and defence cooperation for peace, stability, and development in the region.

The first ADMM-Plus was convened in **Ha Noi, Viet Nam**, on 12 October 2010.

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

It is an association of 10 countries of SouthEast Asia. They are **Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam**. The headquarters of ASEAN: **Jakarta, Indonesia**.

## **7. Vice President Dhankhar calls for free and open Indo-Pacific region at the 17th East Asia Summit in Phnom Penh ( Nov. 13, 2022 )**

Vice President Dhankhar calls for free and open Indo-Pacific

Vice President [Jagdeep Dhankhar](#) speaking at the 17th East Asia Summit meeting being held in the Cambodian capital of **Phnom Penh** on 13 November 2022 highlighted India's concern on food and security and emphasized the role of the East Asia Summit (EAS) in promoting free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific with freedom of navigation and overflight.

The 17th EAS is being hosted by the current ASEAN (Association of SouthEast Asian Nations) chairman Cambodia.

Earlier speaking in the summit the American President **Joe Biden** and the Japanese Prime Minister **Fumio Kishida** also highlighted the aggressive behaviour of China in the South China Sea and called for peace in the Taiwan Strait and ensuring freedom of navigation in the South China Sea.

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar also called upon the EAS members' full contribution to the **International Year of Millets in 2023**.

### **Vice President visit to Cambodia**

The Vice President was on a three day (11-13 November) visit to Cambodia to attend the **19th India-ASEAN summit** meeting which has been designated as the commemorative summit, to mark the 30 years of Indian ASEAN relationship.

This year is also being celebrated as ASEAN-India Friendship Year.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar is accompanying Vice-President Dhankhar on this visit.

### **Observer Research Foundation signs Mou with AVI**

On the sideline of the summit meeting **Observer Research Foundation** (ORF) of India signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with a leading Cambodian think tank **AVI**.

The two institutions engaged in the realm of public policy will endeavour to cooperate more closely to enhance their mutual understanding on a range of issues from geopolitics and international relations to sustainable development and cultural engagement.

### **East Asia Summit**

- The East Asia summit group consists of 18 countries.
- The concept of an East Asia Grouping was first promoted in 1991 by the then Malaysian Prime Minister, **Mahathir bin Mohamad**.
- It was set up in **2005** as a forum to promote strategic dialogue and cooperation on political, security and economic issues of common regional concern in the Asia-Pacific region.
- Initially it consisted of ASEAN members (Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, Philippines and Vietnam) and China, Japan, South Korea, India, Australia and New Zealand.
- The United States of America and Russia were included in 2011.

**8. ASEAN agrees to admit Timor- Leste as its 11th member ( Nov. 13, 2022 )**

ASEAN agrees to admit Timor-

The 10 nations group Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has agreed in principle to admit **Timor- Leste** as its 11th member. This was declared by the ASEAN after its summit meeting held in the Cambodian capital of [Phnom Penh](#) on 11 November 2022 Timor- Leste applied for membership of the ASEAN in 2011.

The other members of ASEAN are **Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.**

Timor- Leste will be initially granted an **observer status** at a high level ASEAN meeting and it will take years before it becomes a full member of the ASEAN group.

The country would be the first new member of the regional grouping in more than two decades, since **Cambodia** was admitted in 1999.

Timor- Leste President **Jose Ramos-Horta** welcomed the decision, saying a membership would strengthen wider diplomatic relations with ASEAN's partners and will help attract more foreign direct investment in the country.

**Timor- Leste**

It was earlier called **East Timor** and was a Portuguese colony till 1975 .After the Portuguese left it was occupied by Indonesia. The people of Timor- Leste waged a freedom struggle to gain Independence from Indonesia.

In the 1999 United Nations supervised referendum the people of Timor-Leste voted for Independence from Indonesia.

It was officially recognised as an independent country by the United Nations in 2022, making it Asia's **youngest country**.

Capital of Timor- Leste: **Dilli**

Currency: **Dollar**

President: **Jose Ramos-Horta**

**9. India and ASEAN relations enhanced to comprehensive strategic partnership level ( Nov. 13, 2022 )**

India and ASEAN relations enhanced

According to the Ministry of External Affairs the India - ASEAN (Association of SouthEast Asian Nation) ties have been upgraded to the **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership level** from the earlier Strategic Partnership. This upgradation of ties signifies a greater level of trust between the two sides and conveys a sense of mutual value, strategic alignment and positive intent to further strengthen ties.

The upgradation of the ties between the two sides was agreed upon during the visit of the Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar to Cambodia to participate in the **19th India ASEAN** summit held on 12 November 2022. The 19th India ASEAN summit has been designated as the **commemorative summit, to mark the 30 years of Indian ASEAN relationship. Cambodia is currently the chairman of the 10 nations ASEAN group.**

He will also participate in the 17th East Asia Summit to be held in the Cambodian capital Phnom Penh.

**The focus area of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership are as follows;**

- Advanced maritime cooperation in areas of maritime security including maritime security, countering piracy, search and rescue operations and humanitarian assistance and disaster management. The two sides will work to implement the Asean Outlook on the Indo-Pacific and India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative.
- Strengthen cooperation in cybersecurity, digital economy and fintech, including the interoperability of digital financial systems.
- Enhanced cooperation in sustainable development with the focus on new and emerging technologies for renewable energy, smart agriculture, healthcare and space.
- Promote the revival of tourism and enhance activities involving youth,
- Work together on regional and international issues of common concern to promote peace, stability and prosperity in the region.

### **Bilateral meeting with Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen**

The Vice President also held a meeting with the Cambodian Prime Minister **Hun Sen**. India and [Cambodia](#) signed 4 memorandums of understanding.

The Indian side announced a grant of **\$426,000** to support Cambodia's efforts to remove mines that were laid from the late 1970s to the 1990s.

### **Background to the India ASEAN meeting**

As per the **Look East foreign policy** of the Narasimha Rao government in 90s, the government of India focussed on increasing trade and investment with East Asia with special focus on ASEAN.

### **Evolution of India -ASEAN relationship**

- India was initially made a **sectoral partner** by ASEAN in 1992. With the increasing depth in the relationships the status was changed to a **Dialogue Partner** in 1996.
- In 2022 the relationship was further upgraded to **Summit level**
- And finally in 2012 it was elevated to **Strategic partnership.**

### **Association of Southeast Asian Nation (ASEAN)**

It is considered to be one of the most successful regional groups in the world.

It was set up in 1967 as a group of South-East Asian nations.

At present there are 10 members in the group. They are



**Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.**

The headquarters of ASEAN: **Jakarta, Indonesia.**

#### **10. India announces additional contribution of '\$ 5 million' to ASEAN-India science and technology fund ( Nov. 12, 2022 )**

India announces additional contribution of '\$ 5 million

The Vice President [Jagdeep Dhankhar](#) on 12 November 2022 announced an additional contribution of **USD 5 million** to the **ASEAN-India Science and Technology Fund (AISTDF)** to enhance cooperation in sectors of public health, renewable energy and smart agriculture.

The announcement came during the three-day visit of Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar to Cambodia for ASEAN-India and East Asia summits.

#### **ASEAN India S&T Development Fund (AISTDF)**

ASEAN-India Science & Technology Collaboration formally started in 1996 with the establishment of the ASEAN India S&T working group (AIWGST).

Initially, the collaborative S&T projects and activities between India and ASEAN were supported through ASEAN India Fund (AIF).

In 2008, a dedicated ASEAN India S&T Development Fund (AISTDF) with an equivalent amount of USD 1 million was established jointly by the **Ministry of External Affairs** and **Department of Science and Technology (DST)** to support Research and Development projects and associated project development activities.

The AISTDF was enhanced to an equivalent amount of USD 5 million through an announcement by the Prime Minister of India on the sidelines of the ASEAN-India Summit in Malaysia in November 2015.