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ASEAN-India Centre at RIS

‘एक्ट ईस्ट नीति’ का एक दशक: उपलब्धियां, चुनौतियां और आगे की राह

सोमवार, 14 अप्रैल 2025
जीपी कक्ष, आरआईएस, नई दिल्ली
(हाईब्रिड मोड)

Seminar on Assessing a Decade of ‘Act East Policy’: Achievements, Challenges, and the Road Ahead

Monday, 14 April 2025
GP Hall, RIS, New Delhi
(Hybrid Mode)

Registration Link:<http://bit.ly/4jaeER4>

(Concept Note)

ASEAN is central to India’s vision for regional stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific. Over the years, India-ASEAN relations have evolved into a comprehensive strategic partnership, underpinned by strong economic linkages, security cooperation, and people-to-people exchanges. This evolving partnership traces its origins to the launch of the Look East Policy (LEP) in 1991, which signalled India’s intent to deepen its engagement with Southeast Asia. In 1992, India became a Sectoral Dialogue Partner of ASEAN, laying the foundation for expanding cooperation across economic, political, and cultural domains. The sustained efforts under AEP, culminated in the establishment of a Strategic Partnership between ASEAN and India in 2012. However, as the regional and global order evolved, India recognized the need for a more proactive approach. This led to the transition from LEP to the Act East Policy (AEP) in 2014, signalling a strong commitment to further enhancing strategic, economic, and cultural engagement with ASEAN and the broader Indo-Pacific. AEP emphasized maritime security, connectivity, institutional mechanisms, and an expanded diplomatic and defense footprint.

Over the past decade, AEP has delivered tangible progress. India’s trade with ASEAN has grown, reaching US\$122 billion in FY23, making ASEAN its fourth-largest trading partner. Infrastructure development, digital connectivity, and efforts to integrate into regional value chains have further strengthened economic ties. Security cooperation has also expanded through India’s active participation

in ASEAN-led mechanisms such as the East Asia Summit (EAS), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus). Initiatives like the India-ASEAN Maritime Exercise (2023), and growing strategic engagements with partners like Japan, South Korea, and Australia, reflect India's increasing regional footprint. The Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) complements ASEAN's Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP), reaffirming shared commitments to maritime security, sustainable development, and a rules-based regional order.

Objective of the webinar

As AEP completes a decade, this webinar aims to provide a comprehensive assessment of its impact, identifying key achievements, challenges, and future directions. Bringing together policymakers, scholars, and experts, the discussion will focus on:

- Evaluating AEP's strategic and economic contributions to India-ASEAN and Indo-Pacific relations.
- Assessing challenges, including trade imbalances, connectivity gaps, and evolving security dynamics.
- Identifying opportunities for policy innovation to enhance AEP's effectiveness in the next decade.
- Exploring institutional mechanisms to strengthen economic, security, and cultural ties.

(Tentative Agenda)

10.30 - 11.15 IST: Inaugural

- **Welcome by** *Professor Sachin Chaturvedi, Director-General, RIS, India*
 - **Opening Remarks:** *Ambassador Sanjay Kumar Verma, Chairman, RIS*
 - **Special Remarks:** *Ms. Nabanita Chakravarty, Joint Secretary, IP Division, Ministry of External Affairs, Govt. of India*
 - **Special Address:** *H. E. Mr. Josel Francisco Ignacio, Ambassador of Philippines to India*
 - **Key Note Address:** *H. E. Dato' Muzafar Shah Mustafa, Ambassador of Malaysia to India*
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11.15 - 13.00 IST: Panel Discussion

- **Moderator:** *Ambassador Suchitra Durai, Former Indian Ambassador to Thailand*
- **Speakers:**
 - *Dr. C. Raja Mohan, Non-Resident Distinguished Fellow, ASPI, India*
 - *Dr Joefe B. Santarita, Professor, Asian Center, University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City (online)*
 - *Dr. Amitendu Palit, Senior Research Fellow and Research Lead, Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore (online)*
 - *Dr. Binh Dang Thai, Director, Institute for Indian and Southwest Asian Studies, Vietnam (online)*
 - *Dr. Parbir De, Professor, RIS*
 - *Dr. Thomas Daniel, Senior Fellow, Foreign Policy and Security Studies Programme, Institute of Strategic & International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia (online)*
 - *Dr. Rahul Mishra, Associate Professor, Center for Indo-Pacific Studies, JNU*
- **Open Discussion**
- **Vote of Thanks:** *Dr. Pankaj Vashisht, Coordinator, ASEAN-India Center, RIS*

13.00

Lunch
