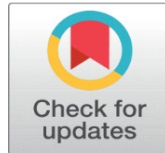


INDIA AT THE EAST ASIA SUMMIT: STRENGTHENING REGIONAL SYNERGIES

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ABSTRACT

India's participation in the East Asia Summit (EAS) represents a crucial element of its foreign policy. This research paper delves into India's involvement in the East Asia Summit (EAS) and its efforts to enhance regional synergies in the context of evolving geopolitical dynamics. As a key player in the Indo-Pacific region, India has implemented an "Act East Policy" to strengthen relationships with ASEAN and other EAS partners. India's multifaceted role within the East Asia Summit (EAS), underscoring its significant contributions to economic integration, security cooperation, and regional stability. This research emphasizes the necessity of multilateral cooperation in tackling shared challenges such as climate change, maritime security, counter-terrorism, and geopolitical stability. It advocates for a collaborative framework that fosters resilience and sustainable development across member states. India's proactive approach in the EAS not only enhances its influence in East Asia but also contributes to broader efforts towards a stable and prosperous Indo-Pacific region.

Keywords: East Asia Summit, ASEAN, Regional Cooperation, Economic Integration, Connectivity, Indo-Pacific

1. INTRODUCTION

In the aftermath of the Cold War, the global geopolitical landscape underwent significant transformations due to China's emergence as a dominant power, the United States' strategic rebalancing efforts, and India's adoption of Look East/Act East policy (LEP/AEP). These changes pave the way for new security frameworks in the Indo-Pacific region. This signified that established frameworks like the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) might become less significant, while newer structures such as the East Asia Summit (EAS) and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) began to gain prominence (Singh, 2022). Amitav Acharya proposed an alternative framework for Asian security, known as the "Consociational Security Order" (CSO). Acharya elucidates that in a Consociational Security Order (CSO), both competitive and cooperative behavior coexist, and the group is united by a collective desire to avert system collapse (Acharya, 2014). Indeed, it is remarkable that India envisions itself as a key player in shaping the regional security framework.

The Asian financial crisis of 1997-98 intensified the trend towards multilateral alliances. Despite the ongoing crisis in ASEAN countries, the United States did not provide sufficient aid to help the affected countries. At that time, China

emerged as a significant supporter, providing US\$ 4 billion in aid and refraining from devaluing its currency to sustain the ASEAN economies. Despite Japan also grappling with the repercussions of the financial crisis, it provided significant financial aid to ASEAN countries as part of its rescue efforts (Chetty, 2012). The formation of ASEAN+3 in 1997 directly stemmed from the financial crisis. East Asian countries established the East Asia Summit (EAS) to address concerns over US dominance in the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). China and Malaysia discussed the possibility of forming a group within APEC to protect their interests. The East Asia Summit (EAS) was officially established on December 14, 2005, during its inaugural meeting held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The concept of the East Asia Summit can be traced back to the early 1990s when Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad first proposed the idea of an East Asia grouping (Muni, 2006). This proposal aimed to create a platform for regional dialogue and cooperation among East Asian nations to address common challenges and promote collective prosperity. The concept gained momentum during the ASEAN +3 summit held in Vientiane in 2004. At this summit, leaders from the ASEAN member states (Malaysia, Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, Singapore, Laos, Thailand, Brunei, Myanmar, and Cambodia) met with representatives from China, Japan, and South Korea to discuss the need for a broader regional forum. The decision to formalize the EAS was made at this summit, leading to the inclusion of additional countries in subsequent meetings.

The East Asia Summit (EAS) is a vital platform for fostering regional cooperation and integration among nations in the Indo-Pacific region, addressing a broad spectrum of political, economic, and security concerns. Initially consisting of 16 member countries, the EAS formally welcomed the United States and the Russian Federation during its sixth summit held in Bali, Indonesia, on November 19, 2011 (Chetty, 2012). This expansion underscored the growing recognition of the EAS as a critical platform for addressing geopolitical issues in the Indo-Pacific region. The East Asia Summit currently comprises 18 member states, prominently featuring the ten ASEAN nations: Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam, Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Brunei. Furthermore, key participants include India, China, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Russia, the Republic of Korea, and the United States. ASEAN initiated the EAS and operates on the principle of ASEAN centrality. As of 2023, the member nations of the EAS collectively represented approximately 53% of the global population and accounted for nearly 60% of the world's gross domestic product (GDP). This forum is led by ASEAN, with the chairmanship rotating annually among its member states. In October 2024, the Laos officially transferred the ASEAN Chair responsibilities to Malaysia following the conclusion of the ASEAN Summits. For the year 2025, Malaysia has designated the theme "Inclusivity and Sustainability" to guide its agenda as Chair of ASEAN (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade [DFAT]). The annual meetings of the EAS are typically convened subsequent to the meetings of ASEAN leaders. By integrating these two forums, member states can effectively address both regional security issues and economic development objectives within a unified framework.

India's contribution to the East Asia Summit is not merely an act of diplomacy but a strategic imperative, designed to bolster its regional influence and promote greater integration within the region. India actively participates in the EAS due to shared security concerns that transcend national borders. Addressing complex challenges like maritime security, counter-terrorism, and cyber threats necessitate collective efforts among member states. India has positioned itself as a proactive and responsible stakeholder, advocating for collaborative approaches to address these challenges while upholding the principles of sovereignty and mutual respect. This study aims to provide a nuanced analysis of India's position in the East Asia Summit, with a focus on its strategic objectives, contributions to regional stability, and efforts to deepen its partnerships with EAS nations.

2. STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS WITHIN THE EAS

India's engagement with individual East Asia Summit (EAS) members is crucial for strengthening regional synergies and fostering collaborative relationships based on mutual interests. India's strategic interests in East Asia have developed significantly over the past few decades, particularly with the implementation of the "Act East Policy". This policy underscores India's dedication to strengthening its engagement with East and Southeast Asia, recognizing the region's importance in terms of economic growth, security cooperation, and geopolitical dynamics. This engagement encompasses both bilateral relations and active participation in multilateral initiatives, allowing India to address shared challenges and enhance cooperation across various sectors. The following sections will delineate the primary strategic interests that India seeks to advance in East Asia, with a focus on economic engagement, security cooperation and regional stability.

Economic Engagement: India's economic interests in East Asia are diverse. East Asia has some of the world's fastest-growing economies, making it a crucial partner for India's economic ambitions. As India strives to strengthen its position

in the global economy, its engagement with East Asia becomes increasingly significant. India is negotiating trade agreements with East Asia Summit (EAS) countries to enhance economic cooperation and improve trade flows. The cornerstone of this effort is the ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA), which was implemented in January 2010. Under AITIGA, India and ASEAN member countries have agreed to gradually lower and eliminate tariffs on 76.4% of goods, liberalizing tariffs on over 90% of goods traded between them. This agreement has significantly boosted merchandise trade between India and ASEAN, with exports increasing by approximately 23% and imports by 55% over the past decade (Negi, 2022). Despite these advances, trade imbalances have become a significant concern. For instance, between FY 2009 and FY 2023, imports from ASEAN to India surged by 234.4%, while Indian exports grew only by 130.4%, leading to an expansion of India's trade deficit from approximately US \$7.5 billion annually at the inception of AITIGA to about US\$ 44 billion in 2023 (Bhowmick & Paul, 2024). To address this imbalance, India is negotiating revisions to tariff structures and market access for key sectors such as automobiles and agriculture. In addition to AITIGA, India has engaged in various Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with individual ASEAN countries. Singapore was the first country to sign a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) with India. On January 1, 2010, India and South Korea established a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA). Similarly, India and Malaysia completed a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) in 2011. During Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to Japan in October 2010, Japan and India finalized a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA). This agreement holds significance as it represents Tokyo's first-ever pact with a major economy. Former Prime Minister of Singapore, Goh Chok Tong, has emphasized that finalizing Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreements (CECAs) with different East Asian nations would substantially boost mutually beneficial partnerships (Parashar, 2024). India and Australia maintain a significant relationship through the Australia-India Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA), which aims to enhance trade relations and address mutual security concerns in the Indo-Pacific region. These agreements not only facilitate trade but also encourage joint ventures and collaborations between Indian and Southeast Asian businesses.

Investment is also an essential element of India's economic engagement in East Asia. Indian businesses are increasingly investing in sectors such as technology, pharmaceuticals, and manufacturing across the region, contributing to mutual economic growth. The rise of digital technologies and innovation hubs in countries like Singapore and Vietnam presents significant opportunities for Indian firms looking to expand their operations abroad. The GOI has actively encouraged East Asian nations such as Singapore, Japan, and South Korea to invest substantially in infrastructure projects. Japanese companies, which previously invested less than Rs. 2000 crore annually in India, significantly increased their investment to Rs. 9000 crore in 2007. Surveys showed that 70 percent of Japanese firms considered India as their preferred investment location (Chaudhuri, 2010). Prime Minister Modi has shown great enthusiasm for attracting Japanese investment in various infrastructure projects. He has commended Japan for contributing significantly to India's modernization. Modi is confident that Japan's technical expertise and economic capabilities can significantly contribute to India's progress, particularly by strengthening its infrastructure and manufacturing sectors. India and Japan have collaborated on significant infrastructure projects, including the "Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail Corridor", which is Japan's first Shinkansen (bullet train) project abroad. Japan's investment value experienced significant growth, rising from US\$ 1.7 billion in 2014 to US\$ 4.7 billion during 2016-17 (Kesavan, 2020). Between 2000 and June 2023, Japan has invested approximately US\$ 39.94 billion in India, positioning Japan as the fifth-largest source country for foreign direct investment (FDI) into India (MEA, 2023). Japanese FDI has predominantly flowed into sectors such as automobiles, telecommunications, chemicals, electrical equipment, financial services (particularly insurance), and pharmaceuticals.

South Korea's investments in infrastructure and manufacturing sectors are on the rise. In recent years, South Korean FDI into India has seen a consistent upward trend, reaching US\$ 5.71 billion by the end of 2018 (Kesavan, 2020). South Korea has significantly impacted India's automobile and electronics sectors, with Hyundai Motors, Samsung, and LG leading the way. These companies have established a strong reputation among Indian consumers, becoming widely recognized and trusted household names across the nation. Singapore encourages its citizens to explore investment opportunities in India, while also seeking investments from Indian companies in Singapore. By 2007, Singapore had attracted a substantial presence of over 2500 Indian companies, ranking as the fourth largest foreign contingent in the country. The presence of Indian corporations in Singapore has expanded considerably, with approximately 8,000 Indian companies now registered there (High Commission of India). India-China relations are complex and multifaceted. Despite political tensions, China remains a key trading partner for India. Bilateral trade reached approximately US\$ 118.4

billion in 2023-24 (Joshi, 2024). However, India has expressed concerns over trade imbalances and has implemented measures to regulate Chinese investments amid security concerns.

India aspires to establish itself as a significant alternative manufacturing hub within regional supply chains. Initiatives like “Make in India” encourage foreign companies to set up manufacturing bases in India while providing access to the vast domestic market (Rao, 2024). This strategy not only enhances India's manufacturing capabilities but also strengthens its integration into regional supply chains. India has been negotiating Bilateral Investment Treaties (BITs) with several EAS member countries to facilitate smoother investment flows. These treaties aim to protect investors' rights and provide a stable regulatory environment for cross-border investments. By ensuring legal protections for investments, India can attract more foreign direct investment (FDI) from East Asia.

3. SECURITY COOPERATION

India recognizes that security challenges in East Asia—such as maritime security, terrorism, and cyber threats—require collective action. The East Asia Summit (EAS) provides a vital platform for India to engage with other nations on these pressing issues, fostering a collaborative approach to enhance regional stability and security. The relationship between India and Japan has developed into a Special Strategic and Global Partnership, with a focus on key sectors including infrastructure development, technology transfer, and defense collaboration. The defense ties between India and Japan have strengthened significantly, with both countries participating in joint military exercises such as “Dharma Guardian”. These exercises enhance interoperability between their armed forces and demonstrate a shared commitment to maintaining regional security. During the 20th ASEAN-India Summit in 2023, Prime Minister Modi highlighted the significance of enhancing economic and strategic ties with Japan, especially in the fields of digital transformation and sustainable development. The two nations are also exploring collaboration in emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence and robotics, which are vital for future economic growth. India and Australia have acknowledged the significance of security cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region. The “Australia-India Joint Declaration on a Shared Vision for Maritime Cooperation” emphasizes collaboration on maritime security, counter-terrorism, and cyber threats. India-Australia relations are further strengthened through participation in the Quadrilateral Dialogue (Quad) with the United States and Japan, which enhances collective security efforts in the Indo-Pacific region. India and South Korea have maintained a strong partnership since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1973, which was elevated to a “Special Strategic Partnership” in 2015. This relationship has evolved significantly, particularly within the framework of South Korea's “New Southern Policy”, which seeks to enhance ties with Southeast Asian nations and India (Kumar, 2023). India has supported South Korea in addressing the North Korean nuclear threat, participating in multilateral forums such as the “Vancouver Dialogue”, aimed at denuclearization efforts. The two countries have also conducted joint military exercises to strengthen their defense cooperation. The recent “Korea-India Foreign Policy and Security Dialogue” reflects the growing convergence between their strategic interests (Invest India, 2023).

Maritime security is a cornerstone of India's strategic interests in East Asia, especially given its extensive coastline and significant maritime interests in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). The IOR is not only crucial for India's trade routes but also serves as a vital area for regional and global maritime commerce. India emphasizes the importance of safeguarding sea lanes from piracy and upholding freedom of navigation, especially amidst rising tensions in the South China Sea. The South China Sea is a critical maritime corridor through which approximately US\$3 trillion in trade passes annually. India's commitment to maintaining open sea lanes aligns with its broader Indo-Pacific strategy, which advocates for a rules-based international order. The Indian Navy has significantly increased its operational presence in the region. For instance, the Eastern Fleet's deployment to the South China Sea illustrates India's proactive stance on maritime security. This deployment included visits to ports in Southeast Asian countries like Vietnam and the Philippines. These visits showed India's commitment to working with regional partners and improving maritime security together (Singh A., 2024). India actively participates in multilateral naval exercises such as Malabar, alongside the United States, Japan, and Australia. These exercises enhance interoperability among navies while addressing common maritime security challenges such as illegal fishing, piracy, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) operations (Siddiqui, 2024). Such collaborations are essential for building trust and confidence among regional partners. India advocates for the establishment of cohesive maritime security architectures within the region. The Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) aims to promote cooperation on issues such as maritime domain awareness, anti-piracy operations, and sustainable fisheries management. India welcomed the 6th EAS Conference on Maritime Security in July 2024, focusing on enhancing regional collaboration in combating illicit naval activities and fostering resilience against emerging

maritime threats (Ministry of External Affairs, 2024) . This conference brought together experts from EAS member countries to discuss critical issues related to maritime security and cooperation.

Maritime cooperation has recently gained prominence as an important sphere of collaboration. Following the Prime Minister's announcement at the 12th East Asia Summit in November 2017, the 3rd EAS Conference on Maritime Cooperation was held on June 7-8, 2018, in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. This conference focused on maritime safety, security, and the blue economy. On September 7, 2023, the Prime Minister participated in the 20th ASEAN-India Summit and the 18th East Asia Summit in Jakarta. He underscored the importance of the EAS framework, reaffirmed India's commitment to ASEAN centrality and advocated for a rule-based approach in the Indo-Pacific.

Counter-terrorism is another critical focus area for India within the EAS framework. India has been vocal about the need for a concerted approach to counter-terrorism at various EAS summits. In 2017, during the EAS in Manila, member states adopted declarations aimed at countering terrorism in all its forms. These declarations emphasized the importance of suppressing terror financing and developing comprehensive strategies to combat radicalization (The Times of India, 2017). India promotes intelligence sharing among EAS member countries as a vital component of counter-terrorism efforts. By establishing mechanisms for information exchange, countries can better understand and respond to transnational terrorist threats. This collaboration is crucial in addressing networks that operate across borders.

4. CONTRIBUTIONS TO REGIONAL STABILITY

India's contributions to regional stability in East Asia are multifaceted, encompassing diplomatic efforts to promote peaceful resolutions, support for ASEAN centrality, and proactive humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) initiatives. These efforts reflect India's commitment to fostering a stable and secure regional environment, essential for economic growth and cooperation among East Asian nations. India's dedication to ASEAN is reflected in its active engagement in multiple ASEAN-led initiatives, such as the East Asia Summit (EAS), the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus), and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). These platforms allow India to engage with Southeast Asian nations on security issues while promoting dialogue and consensus-building. The joint statements from recent summits highlight India's acknowledgement of ASEAN's pivotal role in sustaining peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region.

While India shares complex relations with China, it seeks constructive dialogue through platforms like the EAS to manage differences and promote stability. India has consistently advocated for dialogue with China to address bilateral tensions, particularly concerning border disputes and maritime security issues in the South China Sea. Through diplomatic channels, India aims to establish mechanisms for conflict resolution that respect international norms and promote regional stability. India's approach towards China reflects a desire to balance its strategic interests while maintaining peace in the region. By engaging constructively with China within multilateral frameworks like the EAS, India seeks to mitigate tensions and foster a collaborative atmosphere conducive to stability (Pant, 2024). While India is not directly engaged in the territorial disputes, the region holds significant importance for its strategic and commercial interests in the Indo-Pacific. India has consistently emphasized the need for peaceful dispute resolution in adherence to international law, particularly the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and has highlighted the critical role of freedom of navigation and overflight in this essential trade corridor linking the Indian and Pacific Oceans. India's strategy focuses on fostering maritime collaboration, enhancing regional connectivity, and working with like-minded nations to promote stability and security across the Indo-Pacific.

India has demonstrated its commitment to regional stability through proactive humanitarian assistance and disaster relief efforts during natural disasters. India has been at the forefront of providing humanitarian assistance during crises in East Asia, showcasing its readiness to assist neighbors in times of need. Following Typhoon Yagi in 2024, India quickly mobilized resources to provide aid to affected countries like Myanmar, Vietnam, and Laos. The Indian Navy dispatched ships loaded with essential supplies such as food, water purification kits, blankets, and medical assistance (The Economic Times, 2024). This rapid response demonstrates India's capability and willingness to act as a first responder in humanitarian crises. India's commitment to HADR is not new; it has a history of providing assistance during natural disasters across Southeast Asia. For instance, during the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, India played a crucial role in rescue operations and relief efforts across affected countries like Sri Lanka and Indonesia, solidifying its reputation as a reliable partner in times of crisis (Banerji, 2023).

5. GEOPOLITICAL TENSIONS

The evolving geopolitical landscape poses significant challenges for India's engagement at the EAS. Rivalries between major powers, particularly the China and United States, can complicate diplomatic efforts and hinder consensus-building among member states. China's growing influence in the region is a primary concern for India and other EAS members. China's assertive claims over territories in the South China Sea (SCS) have heightened tensions, particularly among ASEAN countries that have competing claims. This assertiveness raises questions about maritime security and regional stability.

The strategic competition between the United States and China significantly impacts India's positioning within the EAS. As India seeks to balance relations with both powers, it must navigate the complexities of their rivalry without alienating either side. The U.S.-China rivalry has led to increased military presence and strategic partnerships among regional players, including India. India's involvement in the "Quad" partnership, alongside the U.S., Japan, and Australia, highlights its shared strategic interests with the U.S. in addressing China's growing influence in the Indo-Pacific region (The Indian Express, 2024). However, this alignment may also provoke a backlash from China, which perceives such coalitions as attempts to contain its rise. Tensions between major players like the US and China, as well as disputes like the China-Japan rivalry, pose challenges to the EAS. Japan is concerned about China's potential dominance within the EAS, while China sees it as an opportunity to reshape the regional political landscape. For ASEAN, the EAS represents a chance to draw the attention of major powers to Southeast Asia and leverage their influence for concessions.

6. FUTURE PROSPECTS FOR INDIA AT THE EAS

India's future prospects at the East Asia Summit (EAS) are shaped by its strategic objectives to enhance regional connectivity, leverage technology, and strengthen environmental cooperation. These initiatives align with broader regional goals and reflect India's commitment to fostering sustainable development and collaborative partnerships within the Indo-Pacific region. India's focus on enhancing connectivity through infrastructure projects is critical for promoting economic integration and strengthening ties with EAS member states. Initiatives such as the "Asia-Africa Growth Corridor" aim to foster economic collaboration while promoting sustainable development across regions. Key connectivity initiatives, including "India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway" and the "Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project", are pivotal in strengthening transportation networks connecting India and Southeast Asia. These projects not only facilitate trade but also enhance people-to-people connections, which are essential for regional integration. The completion of these projects is expected to significantly reduce travel time and costs, thereby boosting economic activities in the region. On ASEAN connectivity, during the 6th EAS, Leaders expressed the belief that the effective execution of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) would not only benefit ASEAN but also the broader East Asia region. India's connectivity initiatives dovetail with ASEAN's Master Plan on Connectivity 2025 (MPAC 2025), which aims to enhance physical, institutional, and people-to-people connectivity (MEA). By aligning its projects with ASEAN's vision, India can ensure that its efforts contribute to a more integrated regional economy, facilitating smoother trade flows and investment opportunities. Collaborating on smart city projects can enhance urban development across member states. India's experience in developing smart cities provides a framework for sharing best practices in urban planning, infrastructure development, and sustainable living. Joint initiatives focusing on smart transportation systems, waste management, and energy efficiency can significantly improve urban resilience in the region.

Technological advancements present significant opportunities for collaboration among EAS members. India's expertise in information technology can contribute substantially to regional development initiatives. India has been actively promoting digital trade agreements that facilitate economic growth while addressing emerging challenges such as cybersecurity. The establishment of the "ASEAN-India Cyber Policy Dialogue" is a step towards enhancing digital resilience among member states. This dialogue aims to improve cooperation on cybersecurity measures, ensuring that both India and ASEAN can protect their digital infrastructure from emerging threats. The recent emphasis on cooperation in emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT), Blockchain, and Quantum Computing reflects a shared vision for leveraging technological advancements for economic growth. India's collaboration with ASEAN nations in these areas can lead to innovations that drive economic development while addressing societal challenges.

Addressing climate change is a shared responsibility among EAS members, and India's commitment to sustainable development aligns with regional efforts to combat environmental challenges. Collaborating on renewable energy projects is crucial for achieving energy security while reducing carbon footprints. India has been a proponent of the "International Solar Alliance (ISA)", which aims to promote solar energy adoption globally. By partnering with ASEAN countries on renewable energy initiatives, India can help diversify energy sources and enhance energy access in the region. Joint efforts in disaster resilience can enhance preparedness against natural calamities exacerbated by climate change. India's experience in disaster management positions it as a valuable partner for EAS countries looking to strengthen their disaster response capabilities. Initiatives such as the "Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)" aim to promote resilient infrastructure development across member states, ensuring that communities are better equipped to withstand climate-related disasters.

7. CONCLUSION

The East Asia Summit (EAS) was established in 2005 to provide a platform for key stakeholders in the Asia-Pacific region to engage in open and transparent discussions on matters of mutual interest and concern at the highest level. Since its commencement, ASEAN has played a central role in shaping the East Asia Summit (EAS) framework. The summit operates on principles of openness and inclusiveness while emphasizing ASEAN centrality in regional architecture. As geopolitical dynamics evolve in the Indo-Pacific region, India's efforts to deepen its economic ties with East Asia will play a pivotal role in shaping its future economic landscape. Through its Act East policy, India aims to strengthen ties with ASEAN countries while addressing common challenges such as maritime security and counter-terrorism. India's contributions to regional stability through promoting peaceful resolutions, supporting ASEAN centrality, and engaging in humanitarian assistance exemplify its commitment to fostering a secure environment in East Asia. By actively participating in multilateral forums like the EAS and responding swiftly to humanitarian crises, India enhances its role as a responsible regional power. As geopolitical dynamics continue to evolve in the Indo-Pacific region, India's proactive approach will be crucial in shaping a stable security architecture that addresses both traditional and non-traditional threats effectively. Through these efforts, India not only strengthens its relationships with East Asian nations but also contributes positively to broader regional stability and prosperity.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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