



INDO-PACIFIC CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM

#06/2023/July-September, 2023

ASEAN-India Summit 2023

Enhancing Prosperity and Strengthening Ties

The Indo-Pacific Civil Society Forum (IPCSF) is an informal coalition of civil society organisations (NGOs, think tanks, etc.) working across the region toward realising a shared vision of peace, security, stability, and prosperity.

<https://cuts-wdc.org/indo-pacific-forum.htm>

The 20th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)-India Summit was held in Jakarta, Indonesia, on September 07, 2023, and was chaired by the President of the Republic of Indonesia Joko Widodo. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi had a detailed discussion with the ASEAN members about strengthening the future of the ASEAN-India partnership.

Modi placed a special emphasis on the ASEAN centrality in the Indo-Pacific region. He also highlighted the coordination between India's Indo-Pacific Ocean Initiative and ASEAN's Outlook on the Indo-Pacific. He also underlined the entail of completing the review of the ASEAN-India Free Trade Agreement at the earliest possible time.

Emphasising the significance of the ASEAN-India Summit Modi said "Meeting ASEAN leaders is always a pleasure. The summit is evidence of our cooperation and common vision for the future. We anticipate cooperating in cutting-edge fields that advance human progress."

During the summit, Modi provided a 12-point proposal for enhancing the cooperation and partnership between ASEAN and India which covered a wide range of areas of cooperation. To increase the connectivity with the ASEAN, the establishment of multi-modal connectivity and economic corridor that links Southeast Asia-India-West Asia-Europe has been proposed.

Modi also offered to share India's Digital Public Infrastructure Stack with the ASEAN counterparts. Adding to it, he emphasised the graveness of the free and open Indo-Pacific and the importance of amplifying the voice of the Global South. He said that ASEAN is the most significant pillar of India's Act East Policy.

The Joint Statement on Maritime Cooperation has shown the support of India and ASEAN in finalising an effective and substantive Code of Conduct in the South China Sea following international law and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Apart from all these, Modi invited ASEAN partners to cooperate in addressing global challenges and issues such as terrorism, climate change and resilient supply chains for essential items.

Leaders of both parties also encourage economic cooperation between both regions. After the pandemic, there is an urgent need to strengthen the strategic and economic engagement between the two. The bilateral trade between India and ASEAN in 2022-2023 has reached up to US\$131.5bn, which is 11.3 per cent of India's overall trade. This bilateral trade is expected to become more robust soon.



INSIDE

- A Trans-Europe-Asia Express Journey **2**
- G7 United against China's Indo-Pacific Sea Aggression **3**
- Members' News **4**

A Trans-Europe-Asia Express Journey

The Europe-West Asia-India Transit Corridor reinforces Europe's shift away from Russian energy sources in favour of supply from the Persian Gulf, a part of which is processed in India for re-export. The corridor also establishes an alternative to the Suez Canal, which is emerging as a choke point for just-in-time global supply chains.



A rail bridge between the Mediterranean and the Indo-Pacific should improve access to manufacturing planning a shift out of China, thereby supporting India's ambition of increasing its share of goods trade. *(ET, 11.09.23)*

Economic Revival via IPEF Engagement

This framework for economic cooperation strengthens ties between the US and the Indo-Pacific region to promote and facilitate trade, improve supply chain resiliency, enable the clean economy transition, combat corruption and improve tax administration.

In addition, by establishing high-standard labour, environmental and accountability commitments as well as facilitating coordination across borders, the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) puts workers and consumers at the centre of foreign economic engagement. *(USDC, 31.07.23)*

India Seeks Bigger Role in Indo-Pacific

Modi has given a 'guarantee' that during his third term, India will become the third largest economy, one place below China, a country with which India has been having bilateral issues for quite a while now.

The diplomatic crisis between India and China reached borders multiple times, the latest being in 2020 and both nations are trying to diffuse the situation at appropriate levels. *(Livemint, 08.08.23)*

Strengthening Indo-Pacific Trade

In a significant development that promises to bolster trade and commerce in the Indo-Pacific region, eight chambers of commerce from various countries have agreed to collaborate under a unified platform.

This collaborative effort is expected to stimulate economic activities in the region which already accounts for nearly US\$47tn annually. The proposal for this association was introduced at the Indo-Pacific Economic Conclave and received an enthusiastic response. *(GR, 29.09.23)*

UK to Join Indo-Pacific Trade Group

Kemi Badenoch, Business and Trade Secretary of the UK has formally signed the treaty to accede to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for the Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) trade group in New Zealand, kickstarting the UK's membership of a modern and ambitious trade deal spanning 12 economies across Asia, the Pacific, and now Europe.

The signing comes as a new government report reveals one in every 100 UK workers was employed by a business headquartered in a CPTPP member nation in 2019, equating to over 400,000 jobs across the country. *(GUKPR, 16.07.23)*

Crucial Part of the US Indo-Pacific Strategy

In international relations, strategic turnarounds are not uncommon and embedded in the very tapestry of anarchical structural realities. Yet, even by those standards, the immediacy and scale of the volte-face in relations between the US and Vietnam since the Cold War has been remarkable.

On September 2023, the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam Central Committee, Nguyen Phu Trong and US President Joe Biden met in Vietnam during Biden's visit, marking a new phase in the bilateral relationship between the two countries. *(TH, 21.09.23)*

Super Garuda Shield 2023 Launched

Super Garuda Shield 2023 was launched on August 31, 2023, following separate opening ceremonies attended by senior US and Indonesian military leaders in East Java.

This year's exercise is the second iteration of Super Garuda Shield, evolved from the Garuda Shield exchanges first held in 2009, and brings together seven participating nations and 12 observing nations for a combined joint multilateral exercise.

(USEPR, 01.09.23)

India-Korea Ties in Indo-Pacific Dynamics

To achieve its ambition of becoming a 'global pivotal state', South Korea is aiming to deepen bilateral engagements, enhance cooperation by undertaking a 'multi-layered and comprehensive approach,' and pursue partnerships with multilateral groupings and regional and global organisations.

The scope of cooperation will extend beyond just Northeast Asia to key regions within the Indo-Pacific such as Southeast Asia, South Asia, Oceania, and the African Coast of the Indian Ocean, as well as Europe and Latin America, where South Korea seeks to 'develop a network of strategic partnerships tailored to each region.' *(ORF, 07.07.23)*

US Weighs New Military Element in Japan

The US is weighing deploying new military elements in Japan to better coordinate with the Japan Self-Defence Forces, as a Taiwan contingency would necessitate a swift collective response.

The 2024 National Defence Authorisation Act – the country's military budget – approved by the Senate in late July includes language requiring the Department of Defence to look into modifying the US command structure in Japan. *(NA, 05.08.23)*

G7 United against China's Indo-Pacific Sea Aggression

Expressing concern about the East and the South China Seas, the G7 members at the Foreign Ministers Meeting strongly opposed China and its militarisation and other provocative activities, and any unilateral provocative actions and efforts to change the status quo by force and coercion.

Further reaffirming the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait, the G7 members called for the peaceful resolution of cross-strait issues.



(Organiser, 20.09.23)

Perth USAsia Centre



The Perth USAsia Centre is a leading foreign policy think tank focused on Indo-Pacific strategy. During the quarter, the Centre published several Indo-Pacific Analysis Briefs, including a timely [report](#) on Australia's upcoming referendum and why an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Parliament matters to Australia's Indo-Pacific relationships. It also launched the [AUKUS Series](#) which provides insights into regional responses to the pact, two years on. The Centre appointed [Kim Heriot-Darragh and Pia Dannhauer](#), whose research will focus on South Asia and Southeast Asia, respectively.

<https://perthusasia.edu.au/>

Centre for Indonesian Policy Studies



CIPS
Center for Indonesian
Policy Studies

CIPS is an independent, non-profit, non-partisan think tank advocating for practical policy reforms informed by evidence-based policy research and analysis. In September 2023, CIPS launched "[Modernising Indonesian Agriculture](#)" a book that touts modernisation as a logical response to the rising challenges facing the Indonesian sector.

www.cips-indonesia.org

Bay Area Council Economic Institute



Bay Area Council Economic Institute is a leading think tank focused on the economic and policy issues facing the San Francisco/Silicon Valley Bay Area. This is one of the most dynamic regions in the US and the world's leading centre for technology and innovation. The Institute has recently published an [article](#) on India-U.S. technology cooperation.

www.bayareaeconomy.org/

Australian Risk Policy Institute

The bilateral project with CUTS to develop an Ethical Governance Frame for 6G is at an exciting stage with a range and diversity of expert opinion about the societal opportunities, safety and technical vulnerabilities plus resilience factors, with ARPI hosting a workshop in January 2024 to outline the big issues and invite further public comment.



www.arpi.org.au

Institute of South Asian Studies

The ISAS was established in July 2004 and is dedicated to research on contemporary South Asia. It seeks to promote understanding of this vital region of the world and communicate knowledge and insights about it to policymakers, the business community, academia and civil society, in Singapore and beyond.



In this quarter, ISAS published some [Briefs](#) and [Discussion Papers](#) about the Indo-Pacific region.

<https://www.isas.nus.edu.sg/>

The Hinrich Foundation

The Hinrich Foundation is a unique Asia-based philanthropic organisation that works to advance mutually beneficial and sustainable global trade. It believes sustainable global trade strengthens relationships between nations and improves people's lives.



During the quarter, it published articles on [FDI](#), [Digital Trade](#), [WTO](#), and [Sustainable Trade](#) among others.

<https://www.hinrichfoundation.com/>

ET: The Economic Times; GR: Good Returns; GUKPR: Gov.UK Press Release; NA: Nikkie Asia; ORF: Observer Research Foundation; USDC: U.S. Department of Commerce; USEPR: U.S. Embassy Press Release



CUTS International, D-217, Bhaskar Marg, Bani Park, Jaipur 302016, India. Ph: +91.141.2282821, Fx: +91.141.2282485, E-mail: cuts-washington@cuts.org, Website: www.cuts-wdc.org