



Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



DPG POLICY BRIEF

The 2022 ASEAN and East Asia Summits

Author

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Cover Photographs:

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankar participates in the 17th East Asia Summit. Source ANI

U.S. President Joe Biden poses with other leaders during the 2022 ASEAN summit in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, Nov. 12, 2022. Radio Free Asia

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar and Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen held discussions on ways to further enhance bilateral ties, including in areas like human resource, de-mining and development projects. Source :PTI

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The 2022 ASEAN and East Asia Summits

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The 2022 ASEAN and East Asia Summits

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The 20th ASEAN-India Summit

The **ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit**¹ was held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia on November 12, 2022. The Summit marked the 30th Anniversary of ASEAN-India dialogue relations, and the 10th Anniversary of the establishment of the ASEAN-India Strategic Partnership. During the Summit ASEAN and India agreed to celebrate 2022 as the 'ASEAN-India Friendship year'.

The Indian participation in the Commemorative Summit was led by the Vice President of India, Mr Jagdeep Dhankhar. During the Summit ASEAN and India agreed to upgrade their ties and establish a 'Comprehensive Strategic Partnership'.



Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar at the ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit in Phnom Penh, Cambodia on November 12, 2022. Source ANI

¹ November 13, 2022. Joint Statement on ASEAN-India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. Asean.org <https://asean.org/joint-statement-on-asean-india-comprehensive-strategic-partnership/>

The Joint Statement issued at the end of the Commemorative Summit laid down the roadmap for the future development of ASEAN-India relations. It was agreed to enhance cooperation in countering terrorism and cyber security, building maritime connectivity, promoting cross cultural exchanges with Southeast Asia, strengthening the digital economy including capacity building in digital skills and innovation, encouraging smart agriculture to ensure future resilient food supply, strengthening the partnership between the ASEAN Smart City Network (ASCN) and India's 'Smart City Mission', strengthening healthcare and promoting ASEAN-India Space cooperation by building ground stations in Vietnam and Indonesia. ASEAN and India acknowledged deep civilizational linkages with each other and resolved to work together for the revival of tourism.

ASEAN and India will also review the Trade in Goods Agreement that came into force in 2010 in order to make it more user-friendly and to introduce single window facilitation. Between 2010 and 2021 trade between ASEAN and India doubled to reach US \$ 87 billion in 2019-20. Trade turnover however, declined to US \$ 79 billion during 2020-21.

During the Summit Vice President Mr Jagdeep Dhankhar announced an additional US \$ 5 million as a contribution to the 'ASEAN-India Science and Technology Fund' to expand cooperation in public health, renewable energy and smart agriculture.

ASEAN Summit

On November 11, 2022, ASEAN released the, "**ASEAN Leaders Statement on the 55th Anniversary of ASEAN**"². The statement catalogued the achievements of ASEAN since its founding in 1967 and reviewed the work in progress towards the building of the ASEAN Community. The statement listed as significant achievements the 'Treaty of Amity and Cooperation', ASEAN's contribution to peace and stability in the region, the growing interest of other powers to engage in dialogue with the ASEAN, the ratification of the ASEAN Charter, the 'Declaration of the Zone of Peace Freedom and Neutrality' (ZOPFAN), the 'Declaration of the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapons Free Zone' (SEANUFZ), the 'Declaration of the Principles for Mutually Beneficial relations' (issued by the EAS) and the 'ASEAN Outlook o the Indo-Pacific'.

² November 11, 2022. ASEAN Leaders' Statement on the 55th Anniversary of ASEAN.

Asean.org

<https://asean.org/asean-leaders-statement-on-the-55th-anniversary-of-asean/>

ASEAN noted the progress in several areas including building an 'ASEAN Community, encouraging the spirit of ASEAN 'Addressing Challenges Together – A.C.T', strengthening adherence to the 'People of ASEAN Charter', promoting ASEAN Centrality, realizing ASEAN connectivity, the maintenance of peace and stability in region through TAC and AOIP, developing a resilient and rule based ASEAN Political and Security Community, narrowing development gaps within the ASEAN, promoting the digital economy, addressing the socio economic impact of COVID , working towards financial inclusion, encouraging the blue economy, adhering to carbon neutrality and strengthening cross border payment systems.

The ASEAN Summit also issued the **"ASEAN Leaders Statement on ASEAN Connectivity Post 2025 Agenda"**³. The objective of the statement was to promote people centric and people oriented approaches towards sustainable development, regional integration and future oriented policies. ASEAN leaders also agreed to promote climate resilience, future sustainable infrastructure, smart cities, digital transformation and supply chain connectivity and resilience.

ASEAN leaders **reviewed the implementation of the "Five Point Consensus" on Myanmar**⁴. The conclusions of the review were as follows: First, ASEAN remains committed to assisting Myanmar to find a peaceful and durable solution to the crisis. Second, Myanmar must comply with commitments made to ASEAN leaders. Third, non-political representation from Myanmar at ASEAN meetings will continue. Fourth, all parties should deescalate tensions. Fifth, all parties should facilitate the work of the ASEAN Secretary General and the 'ASEAN Coordination Center for Humanitarian Assistance'.

The leaders of ASEAN and the US issued a statement on the establishment of the **ASEAN-US Comprehensive Strategic Partnership**⁵. ASEAN and the US will cooperate on climate, environment, energy, health, transportation, gender equality and women's empowerment, maritime issues, good governance,

³ November 11, 2022. ASEAN Leaders' Statement on ASEAN Connectivity Post-2025 Agenda.asean.org

<https://asean.org/asean-leaders-statement-on-asean-connectivity-post-2025-agenda/>

⁴ November 11, 2022. ASEAN Leaders' Review and Decision on the Implementation of the Five-Point Consensus. Asean.org

<https://asean.org/asean-leaders-review-and-decision-on-the-implementation-of-the-five-point-consensus/>

⁵ November 12, 2022. Chairman's Statement of the 10th ASEAN-United States Summit.asean.org

<https://asean.org/chairmans-statement-of-the-10th-asean-united-states-summit/>

human rights, transnational crimes and support for the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI).

President Biden recently announced an assistance package amounting to US \$ 150 million for ASEAN countries. This was in addition to the sum of US\$ 800 million that the US had separately committed to ASEAN. In all the US has committed US \$ 12 billion as Development Aid to ASEAN countries since 2003. This assistance was utilized for disaster relief, temporary food aid and support for refugees.

The US committed support for the AOIP and an open transparent, resilient, inclusive and rules based ASEAN centered regional architecture at the heart of the Indo-Pacific region. The US will play a constructive role in addressing regional issues. Maritime cooperation will be promoted along with the adherence to UNCLOS, initiatives related to maritime domain awareness, search and rescue, sustainable and responsible fisheries, maritime safety, collaboration with the ASEAN Network for Combatting IUU fishing (AN-IUU), people to people connect, support for sustainable development goals, renewable energy development, climate change mitigation and adaptation and health security.

ASEAN and China issued a '**Joint Statement on the 20th anniversary of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea**'⁶. The statement averred that first, the SCS was a sea of peace, friendship and cooperation. Second, the DOC was a milestone in the progress of ASEAN-China Relations'. Third, ASEAN and China were committed to adherence to the relevant international law. Fourth, ASEAN and China were committed to the peaceful resolution of issues.

17th East Asia Summit.

The Chairman's statement of the 17th East Asia Summit⁷ did not have the customary sections on political and security issues. The statement only dealt with "Advancing Women's Empowerment', 'Strengthening Energy Cooperation for a Comprehensive post-COVID recovery and promoting volunteerism for sustainable development".

⁶November 12, 2022. Joint Statement on the 20th Anniversary of The Declaration on The Conduct of Parties in The South China Sea. Asean.org
<https://asean.org/joint-statement-on-the-20th-anniversary-of-the-declaration-on-the-conduct-of-parties-in-the-south-china-sea/>

⁷ November 17, 2022. Chairman's Statement of The 17th East Asia Summit. Asean.org
<https://asean.org/chairmans-statement-of-the-17th-east-asia-summit/>

A consensus on political and security issues eluded the EAS meeting on account of irreconcilable differences on the wording of the reference to the Ukraine issue. The Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov confirmed to the media that the US and the west were pushing for “unacceptable language” on Ukraine. Reflecting his frustration at the turn of events Indonesian President Jokowi publicly stated that

“ASEAN must be a dignified region and uphold rules of democracy and humanity. ASEAN should not allow global dynamics to turn into a new cold war in the region.”

The EAS leaders expressed concern at the surge in energy prices, the disruption in supply chains due to the military conflict and the impact of COVID 19 on the global economy. They discussed the imperative for focusing on energy security and sustainable development, the need for developing a long-term energy and climate policy, the desirability of an aspirational target for long-term emissions and search for clean and low carbon energy technologies.

EAS leaders also discussed ways of strengthening mechanisms to deal with matters of regional and international concern, maritime safety, terrorism and non-proliferation.



Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar participates in the 17th East Asia Summit. Source ANI

Vice President Mr Jagdeep Dhankhar⁸, drew attention to the global food and energy shortage, the role of the EAS in promoting a free, open and inclusive

⁸ Nov 14, 2022. At East Asia summit, Dhankhar highlights global concerns on food, energy security. Times of India.

Indo-Pacific with freedom of navigation and over-flights and called upon EAS members to contribute to 'the year of the millet in 2023'. The Ministry of External Affairs described the visit to Cambodia by the Vice President from November 11 to 13, 2023 as 'successful and productive'.

Japanese Prime Minister Kishida⁹ said that

"China is continuously and increasingly taking actions that infringe upon Japan's sovereignty and escalate tensions in the region."

He stressed that ensuring peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait was important for regional peace and stability. He also voiced concern on the human rights situation in Xinjiang, increasing actions by China in the East China Sea that violate Japan's sovereignty and increasing tensions in the South China Sea in the wake of Chinese assertions there.



U.S. President Joe Biden poses with other leaders during the 2022 ASEAN summit in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, Nov. 12, 2022. Radio Free Asia

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/at-east-asia-summit-dhankhar-highlights-global-concerns-on-food-energy-security/articleshow/95495322.cms>

⁹ November 13, 2022. Kishida tells East Asia Summit leaders China infringing on Japan's sovereignty. Reuters.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/kishida-tells-asia-leaders-china-infringing-japans-sovereignty-2022-11-13/>

In his address to the East Asia Summit, President Biden¹⁰ underlined the US's enduring commitment to the Indo-Pacific with the ASEAN at its center. The US will work with allies and partners on strengthening health systems, promoting food security, addressing climate change and accelerating the clean energy transition. The IEPF will drive enduring and broad-based economic growth throughout the Indo-Pacific. Biden highlighted the regional cooperation in MDA related activities, maritime cooperation, efforts to counter illegal fishing and the response to humanitarian disasters. On regional and global challenges Biden said that the freedom of navigation and over-flights must be respected in the East and South China Seas. On Myanmar he urged that ASEAN pressure the military regime to implement the "Five Point Consensus", release political prisoners and restore democracy.

Bilateral Meetings

Biden and Xi Jinping¹¹ had a three-hour bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the G-20 meeting in Bali, Indonesia. Both leaders expressed an openness to restore channels of communication and repairing a relationship that was drawing comparisons with the cold war. The two leaders discussed Ukraine, military tensions in the Taiwan Straits and the North Korean missile tests. While Biden said he had been "blunt" with Xi in expressing his point of view, the Chinese readout of the meeting described the exchanges as "in-depth, candid and constructive". Biden raised concerns on Chinese actions in Xinjiang, Tibet and Hong Kong. Biden objected to Beijing's coercive and increasingly aggressive behavior, which was undermining peace and stability across the Taiwan Straits. After the meeting Biden told the media that there was no imminent attempt by China to invade Taiwan. He added that he had reached important understandings with Xi and was prepared to take concrete actions to put China-US relations back on track. He said that the US would compete vigorously with China, but the competition should not turn into conflict.

Biden said that the US and China must work together to address transnational challenges like climate change, macroeconomic stability, debt relief, health and security including food security. On the bilateral relationship Biden repeated

¹⁰ November 13, 2022. Readout of President Joe Biden's Participation in the East Asia Summit. The White House
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/11/13/readout-of-president-joe-bidens-participation-in-the-east-asia-summit/>

¹¹ November 14 2022. Readout of President Joe Biden's Meeting with President Xi Jinping of the People's Republic of China. The White House.
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/11/14/readout-of-president-joe-bidens-meeting-with-president-xi-jinping-of-the-peoples-republic-of-china/>

concerns on China's non-market economic practices and the wrongful detention of US citizens.

In the Chinese readout¹² of the meeting put out by the Xinhua News Agency, Beijing signaled optimism about the Biden-Xi meeting. Foreign Minister Wang Yi said the meeting "augured a new starting point...the US and China should show the world that they can manage and control their differences". Wang Yi added that Biden conveyed that the US would adhere to a "one China policy." He said that "the points of disagreement included sanctions and human rights... the US should stop trying to contain China, stop meddling in China's domestic affairs and stop hurting China's sovereignty, security and developmental interest."

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar's bilateral engagements in Phnom Penh

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar called on Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen¹³ on November 12, 2022. Prime Minister Hun Sen pushed for bilateral cooperation with India in mine clearance so as to realize the goal of being mine free in three years. Cambodia needs US \$ 200 million to achieve this goal. During the meeting Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar announced a US\$426,000/- assistance package for demining three districts and one commune in Cambodia. He also announced an increase in ITEC slots from 200 to 250 and ICCR fellowships from 30-50.

During the meeting four MOUs were signed in the presence of the two leaders – for cooperation in digitizing heritage sites, bio-diversity conservation and sustainable wildlife management, health and medicine and the conservation and preservation of the Wat Bo Pagoda in Siem Reap province.

Vice President Dhankhar called upon His Majesty Norodom Sihamoni¹⁴, the King of Cambodia on November 12, 2022. During the meeting there was a discussion on ways to strengthen bilateral ties. The Vice President also met with

¹² November 14, 2022. President Xi Jinping Meets with U.S. President Joe Biden in Bali. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Peoples Republic of China.

https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/202211/t20221114_10974686.htm

¹³ Nov 13, 2022. VP Dhankhar highlights importance of EAS mechanism in promoting free, open & inclusive Indo-Pacific. ANI

<https://www.aninews.in/news/world/asia/vp-dhankhar-highlights-importance-of-eas-mechanism-in-promoting-free-open-amp-inclusive-indo-pacific20221113141935/>

¹⁴ November 13, 2022. VP Dhankhar calls on Cambodia's king, discusses strengthening of bilateral ties. ANI

<https://theprint.in/world/vp-dhankhar-calls-on-cambodias-king-discusses-strengthening-of-bilateral-ties/1213569/>

the Senate Chairman Say Chuom and discussed ways to bolster exchanges between parliamentarians of the two countries.



Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar and Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen held discussions on ways to further enhance bilateral ties, including in areas like human resource development, de-mining and development projects. Source :PTI

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar had a meeting with Vietnamese PM Pham Minh Chinh on November 12, 2022. Both leaders reaffirmed their desire to work together in the areas of trade, economy, security, culture and on synergies in the international domain.

EAM Dr S. Jaishankar accompanied the Vice President on his visit to Cambodia. On the sidelines of the ASEAN Summits and the EAS Dr. S. Jaishankar met with US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken, the Ukrainian Foreign Minister, the Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Phillipines, the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, Canadian Foreign Minister Melanie Jolly and Canadian Trade Minister Mary Ng

During the meeting with Anthony Blinken Dr. S. Jaishankar discussed Ukraine, the Indo-Pacific, energy prices, the G-20 and bilateral relations. During his

meeting with the Ukraine Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba he discussed the Ukraine conflict, the grain initiative and nuclear concerns. He advocated a cessation of the conflict and a return to democracy. During the meeting with Philippines' Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Enrique A Malano he congratulated him on his appointment and reviewed bilateral relations.

Conclusion

It is possible to make some broad assertions on the outcomes of the ASEAN meetings and the East Asia Summit. First, in a significant development India upgraded its ties to the ASEAN to a "Comprehensive Strategic Partnership". The areas of India-ASEAN cooperation are broadening over time and increasingly reflecting the development priorities of both partners. This is what gives them an enduring quality. ASEAN and India are also seeking to expand their trade and investment relations and the decision to review the FTA and promote trade facilitation is a welcome development.

Second, in his address to the EAS, Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar who was the leader of the Indian delegation, drew attention to the global food and energy shortage and expressed support for a FOIP.

Third, during the ASEAN Summit, ASEAN leaders catalogued their achievements in the sphere of international peace and security and noted the growing interest of other powers to engage in dialogue with the ASEAN. They also reviewed the progress in building the 'ASEAN Community'

Fourth, The highlight of the current phase of US-ASEAN relations is the establishment of the, "ASEAN-US Comprehensive Strategic Partnership". The areas in which ASEAN and the US will strengthen cooperation reflect ASEAN's developmental priorities and needs. US President Biden's presence at the EAS underlined the US intent to demonstrate the importance it attached to the ASEAN's role in the regional security architecture at the center of the Indo-Pacific. To further these aims President Biden expressed support of the US for the AOIP. Biden also made it a point to mention the substantial aid given by the US to ASEAN countries since 2003, as also the aid committed during the current period

Fifth, if the Biden administration has made greater efforts to attend ASEAN meetings and to engage bilaterally with ASEAN countries, it is because it wishes to determine what ASEAN is prepared to do with the U.S to cooperate on China. Unless ASEAN members define clear parameters for what they are and are not prepared to do with the U.S. on China, ASEAN centrality will soon become

irrelevant and the U.S. will place even greater priority on the QUAD. Without American attention, China will take ASEAN for granted.

Sixth, ASEAN and China issued a 'Joint Statement on the 20th anniversary of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea'. The Statement demonstrated yet again, ASEAN's tendency to capitulate under Chinese pressure, to bandwagon with China as the Philippines, Cambodia and Laos have done and to join Chinese efforts at legitimizing aggression in the South China Sea through the discussions on the Code of Conduct, which is essentially a derogation from International Law. It is difficult to see how a code of conduct can be effective if it merely ratifies the status quo

Seventh, the ASEAN statement on Myanmar indicates that for the present ASEAN will continue to rely on diplomacy and urge Myanmar to adhere to the "Five Point Consensus". Biden on his part, urged that ASEAN pressure the military regime to implement the 'Five Point Consensus,' release political prisoners and restore democracy.

Eighth, during the Biden-Xi meeting both leaders expressed an openness to restore channels of communication and repair a relationship likened to the cold war. The meeting highlighted differences over the Taiwan issue, DPRK's missile tests, Xinjiang, Tibet and Hong Kong. Biden suggested that both sides could continue to cooperate on meeting transnational challenges. The Chinese readout on the meeting sought to reassure the domestic audience that Biden had not abandoned the "one China" policy – a red line for Chinese diplomacy. Biden too reassured his domestic audience that there was no imminent threat of the invasion of Taiwan.

Ninth, last but not the least, during the bilateral leg of his visit, Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar called upon the King of Cambodia, His Majesty Norodom Sihamoni and Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen. Cambodia and India share a long history of cultural ties. It is not surprising therefore, that the initiatives focusing on cultural cooperation and the preservation of Cambodia's cultural heritage were reflected in the outcomes of the visit. India will also help Cambodia in demining operations in three districts of the country.



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