

# ASEAN 5 Point Consensus

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**Context-** Recently, the Indonesian Foreign Minister stated that India and other countries should “respect” and follow ASEAN’s “five point consensus” on Myanmar rather than adopting a “different” path.

## Key Highlights

- Commenting about India’s decision to engage the Myanmar military government that came to power in February 2021 after deposing the elected National Unity Government and jailing thousands of leaders, Indonesian Foreign Minister said that it could make efforts of the 10-member Association of South East Asian Nations towards democracy “less effective”.
- Instead, it was urged that India and other countries should follow the ASEAN “five point consensus”.
- The plan calls for an immediate end to violence in Myanmar; dialogue among all parties; the appointment of a special envoy; humanitarian assistance by ASEAN; and the special envoy’s visit to Myanmar to meet with all parties.
- Earlier in the year, ASEAN members and the U.S. had conveyed their concerns to New Delhi and Colombo about their invitation to the Myanmar Foreign Minister for the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) virtual summit in March.
- Government officials have maintained that India’s ties with Myanmar are significant given that they share a porous border with incursions by militants, and need to engage the military leadership as regional rivals like China do.
- India and Indonesia are expected to strengthen their engagement in the next year

given that India has now assumed the presidency of the G-20, and Indonesia is a member of the “troika” as the immediate past president. Indonesia has just assumed chairmanship of the ASEAN grouping as well.

### **What is ASEAN “five point consensus”?**

- An immediate end to violence in the country;
- Dialogue among all parties;
- The appointment of a special envoy;
- Humanitarian assistance by ASEAN; and
- The special envoy’s visit to Myanmar to meet with all parties.

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

- ASEAN is a political and economic organization.
- It was founded in 1967 by the five South-East Asian nations of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.
- Its objective is to promote economic growth and regional stability among its members.
- It has 10 Members at Present i.e.
  - Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

### **ASEAN Plus Three:**

- It is a forum which functions as a coordinator of co-operation between the ASEAN and the three East Asian nations of China, South Korea, and Japan.

### **ASEAN Plus Six:**

- It includes ASEAN Plus Three as well as India, Australia, and New Zealand.

## **Significance of ASEAN for India**

- ASEAN is important for India as the ten countries of South East Asia connect the two great oceans in both the geographical and civilizational sense.
- Central to India’s Pacific vision, the group assumes importance on the backdrop of an increasing Chinese influence in the region.
- While India and China are locked in a bitter standoff along the LAC, New Delhi’s outreach to ASEAN nations will help strengthen much needed diplomatic ties.
- ASEAN is India’s fourth-largest trade partner with about \$86.9 Bn in trade between India and the ten ASEAN nations.
- ASEAN and India share land and maritime borders, and there is a vast scope for enhancing connectivity through land, air and sea.
- India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway is an ongoing effort in order to enhance road connectivity between Northeast India and Southeast Asia.
- ASEAN-India strategic partnership also stands on a strong foundation of shared geographical, historical and civilisational ties.
- India’s Act East Policy, underlining ASEAN centrality, reflects the significance, India attaches to engagement with ASEAN.

- With the growing focus on oceans as providers of resources, the reservoirs of biodiversity, the highways of global trade and the frontiers of scientific research, cooperation in the maritime domain has become increasingly important under the overall rubric of ASEAN-India cooperation.