



RIS
Research and Information System
for Developing Countries
विकासशील देशों की अनुसंधान एवं सूचना प्रणाली



Celebrating ASEAN-India Maritime Year 2026

Roundtable Discussion

Fostering Maritime Connectivity and Enhancing Supply Chain Resilience between India and ASEAN

30 April 2026

Venue: Casuarina Hall, India Habitat Centre (IHC), New Delhi (Hybrid)

Concept Note

1. India and ASEAN are maritime neighbours. The maritime space linking India and the member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) represents one of the most dynamic economic corridors in the Indo-Pacific. These waters host some of the world's busiest Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs) carrying a substantial proportion of global trade, energy flows, and manufacturing supply chains. For India and ASEAN, maritime connectivity is not merely a logistical concern but a geoeconomic imperative that underpins regional and national prosperity, and market integration.

2. India's engagement with ASEAN is under the rubric of SAGAR and now MAHASAGAR via its Act East Policy. ASEAN sits atop six critical choke points and major maritime trade routes connecting the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean, while India occupies a pivotal geographic position astride critical SLOCs. This area's centrality within the Indo-Pacific framework highlights the importance of strengthening maritime infrastructure, improving logistical efficiency, and enhancing supply chain resilience.

3. ASEAN-India maritime trade is the backbone of their economic partnership, with the majority of cargo flowing through key sea lanes. While maritime trade, particularly in manufacturing and energy, is high-growth, India faces a widening trade deficit, with imports from ASEAN. A "Maritime Transport Cooperation Agreement" is being negotiated to improve efficiency.

India is enhancing connectivity through initiatives such as port-led industrialization and identifying, such as the India-Myanmar-Thailand trilateral highway which connects to ports. India's bilateral Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreements (CECAs) with some of the ASEAN member states and the ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA) facilitate this maritime flow. In recent years, disruptions caused by geopolitical tensions, pandemics, climate events, and maritime security challenges have underscored the vulnerabilities inherent in highly concentrated and fragile supply networks. These developments have resulted in discussions around diversification, redundancy, and secure connectivity across the region and the broader Indo-Pacific. Together, India and ASEAN possess significant potential to strengthen maritime transport networks, port connectivity, and systems that can support resilient and diversified supply chains. Enhanced cooperation can also reinforce regional production networks, facilitate smoother trade flows, and reduce systemic vulnerabilities caused by supply chain concentration.

4. However, achieving these goals requires addressing several structural and operational challenges. Infrastructure gaps, regulatory fragmentation, maritime security concerns, and uneven digitalization across ports and logistics networks continue to hinder seamless maritime connectivity. Additionally, evolving geopolitical competition in the Indo-Pacific adds further complexity to regional connectivity initiatives. Strengthening maritime connectivity between India and ASEAN therefore requires coordinated policy frameworks, investments in port modernization and multimodal infrastructure, improved customs harmonization, and enhanced maritime domain awareness to name a few.

5. At the same time, emerging opportunities present a strong basis for collaboration. The growing emphasis on supply chain resilience among Indo-Pacific economies, the rise of digital trade platforms, and the development of smart ports and logistics corridors offer avenues for deeper India-ASEAN cooperation. Initiatives focused on sustainable maritime infrastructure, green shipping, and secure digital supply chains can further enhance economic integration while supporting broader regional stability.

6. Against this backdrop, this RTD with two panels aims to examine how India and ASEAN can work together to strengthen maritime connectivity and build more resilient supply chains in an increasingly uncertain geopolitical and

economic environment. By bringing together policymakers, scholars, industry leaders, and maritime practitioners, the discussions will explore practical pathways to enhance connectivity, reduce vulnerabilities, and reinforce economic resilience across the Indo-Pacific maritime domain.

7. Together, the two panels aim to generate policy insights and practical recommendations for strengthening India-ASEAN maritime connectivity and advancing resilient supply chains that can support sustained regional growth and stability. The roundtable discussion will be held at India Habitat Centre (IHC), New Delhi on 30 April 2026. Capt. Sarabjeet S Parmar, Visiting Fellow, RIS will coordinate the roundtable discussion. The tentative agenda is annexed.

8. The roundtable discussion will be attended by researchers, practitioners, maritime experts, diplomats and business people. One of the outcomes of the roundtable discussion is the policy brief to be published by the RIS.