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Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



सत्यमेव जयते
Ministry of External Affairs
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RIS

Research and Information System
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विकासशील देशों की अनुसंधान एवं सूचना प्रणाली



National
Maritime
Foundation



ASEAN-India Centre at RIS

Seventh EAS Conference on Maritime Security Cooperation

Taj Cochin International Airport Hotel, Kochi, Kerala, India

Date: 05-06 October 2026

(CONCEPT NOTE)

1. The East Asia Summit (EAS) is the premier “Leaders-led” forum that brings together EAS participating countries for dialogue and cooperation on strategic issues of common interest for the overall peace, progress, and prosperity in the region. A critical thrust area of the EAS has been the promotion of maritime cooperation, which is essential to maintaining regional stability, ensuring freedom of navigation, and harnessing the blue economy for sustainable growth. In this context, *the EAS Conference on Maritime Security Cooperation* was initiated by India in 2015 as a Track 1.5 forum to advance the EAS Leaders’ mandate on maritime cooperation. Since its inception, the conference has evolved into an important platform for fostering dialogue, mutual trust, and practical cooperation among EAS participating countries. The conference brings together government officials, strategic experts, think tanks, and maritime stakeholders to deliberate on key issues related to maritime security, safety, connectivity, and the sustainable use of ocean resources.

2. The previous editions of the conference, hosted in collaboration with partner countries such as Australia and Indonesia, have significantly contributed to strengthening regional discourse on maritime issues. They have helped identify pathways for enhancing cooperation in areas such as maritime domain awareness (MDA), blue economy partnerships, and regional mechanisms for ensuring safe and secure seas. These efforts reflect a shared commitment to maintaining the Indo-Pacific as an open, inclusive, and rules-based maritime space.

3. The outcomes of each preceding edition of the conference have informed the deliberations and agenda of subsequent editions, allowing the dialogue to evolve in both breadth and depth. Each

edition has either expanded the range of subjects addressed or offered a greater granularity and focus on specific areas of cooperation, covered more broadly in an earlier edition. This cumulative approach has ensured that the conference remains dynamic, relevant, and responsive to emerging maritime challenges and opportunities.

4. The Year 2025 marked the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the “*2015 East Asia Summit Statement on Enhancing Regional Maritime Cooperation*”. The Statement reaffirmed the importance of the existing maritime regime based on international law, including the **1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)**, and committed EAS participating countries to enhancing cooperation in five broad areas: **(i)** sustainable marine economic development; **(ii)** the advancement of peace, stability, and security in the region; **(iii)** the addressal of transboundary challenges; **(iv)** the development of maritime connectivity; and **(v)** the promotion of cooperation between research institutions.

5. The “Seventh EAS Conference on Maritime Security Cooperation” will take stock of the progress achieved across these five broad areas through existing cooperative mechanisms and initiatives. Through six dedicated sessions, the conference will address key issues pertinent to regional maritime cooperation in the Indo-Pacific.

5.1. **Session 1: Assessing Regional Blue Economy Models and Ocean Governance Frameworks to Promote the Sustainable Use of Marine Resources for Economic Development.** This session will examine regional initiatives and frameworks supporting the regional endeavour to transition from a ‘brown’ to a ‘blue’ economic model. It will delve into key issues, including the conservation of fish stocks to ensure long-term food security; marine and coastal conservation; building resilient coastal and maritime infrastructure for disaster risk reduction; combatting marine and coastal pollution; promoting sustainable marine tourism; sustainable development of offshore renewable energy resources; and regional and global ocean governance frameworks.

5.2. **Session 2: Enhancing Maritime Security and Safety Cooperation for Advancing Peace, Stability, and Security in the Region.** This session will put forth recommendations for strengthening cooperative mechanisms and confidence-building measures among the navies, coast guards, and other maritime law enforcement agencies of the EAS participating countries. It will promote maritime security and safety cooperation, underpinned by a ‘holistic maritime security’ — defined as “the freedom from threats arising ‘in’ the sea or ‘through’ the sea or ‘from’ the sea” — and encourage adherence to the provisions of the 1982 UNCLOS.

5.3. **Session 3: Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) and Regional Information-sharing.** This session will explore ways to strengthen regional frameworks for information-sharing and advance the transition from maritime situational awareness (MSA) to comprehensive

maritime domain awareness (MDA) — a critical pillar in ensuring holistic maritime security, safety, and good order at sea. In recent years, the Indo-Pacific region has witnessed an increase in maritime crimes and illicit activities. The session will identify measures to improve data fusion and dissemination, interoperability, and trust among information fusion centres in the Indo-Pacific.

5.4. **Session 4: Regional Capacity-building and Capability-enhancement for Addressing Transboundary Challenges.** Recognising that capacities and capabilities to combat complex transboundary challenges are not uniformly developed across the region, the fourth session will formulate cooperative measures to strengthen regional capacity-building and capability-enhancement. It will focus on addressing persistent threats, such as contraband smuggling; piracy and armed robbery; illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing (IUUF); irregular human migration, including trafficking in persons and human smuggling; marine pollution; and terrorism impacting maritime supply chains.

5.5. **Session 5: Addressing Emerging Maritime Security Challenges.** This session will examine emerging maritime security challenges arising from evolving geopolitical dynamics, technological innovation, and escalating cyber threats, with a focus on the underwater domain. The growing vulnerability of critical underwater infrastructure — including submarine cables and pipelines — together with the proliferation of autonomous maritime systems poses new risks to regional stability. These challenges are compounded by the dual-use nature of underwater technologies and the absence of clear regulatory norms governing their application. The session will explore cooperative approaches to protect critical maritime infrastructure and manage autonomous maritime systems, with a particular emphasis on technological resilience, multilateralism, ocean governance, and the consensually-derived international legal frameworks in the maritime domain.

6. The tentative agenda is at **Appendix A.**

**Seventh EAS Conference on Maritime Security Cooperation
TENTATIVE AGENDA**

DAY 1

09.30 – 10.00 Registration

10.00 – 10.30 Inaugural Session
(Keynote Addresses by co-chairs)

10.30 – 11.00 Group Photo and Tea/ Coffee Break

11.00 – 11.45 Session 1: *Assessing Regional Blue Economy Models and Ocean Governance Frameworks to Promote the Sustainable Use of Marine Resources for Economic Development*

11.45 – 12.15 Audience Interaction

12.15 – 13.30 Lunch Break

13.30 – 14.15 Session 2: *Enhancing Maritime Security and Safety Cooperation for Advancing Peace, Stability, and Security in the Region*

14.15 – 14.45 Audience Interaction

14.45 – 15.15 Tea/ Coffee Break

15.15 – 16.00 Session 3: *Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) and Regional Information-sharing*

16.00 – 16.30 Audience Interaction

1900 Dinner

DAY 2

10.00 – 10.45 Session 4: *Regional Capacity-building and Capability-enhancement for Addressing Transboundary Challenges*

10.45 – 11.15 Audience Interaction

11.15 – 11.45 Tea/ Coffee Break

11.45 – 12.30 Session 5: *Addressing Emerging Maritime Security Challenges*

12.30 – 13.00 Audience Interaction

13.00 – 13.15 Valedictory Session

13.15 – 14.30 Lunch

FIELD VISIT

End of the Conference
