

# India and ASEAN: Partners in Making Asia Safer



ASEAN INDIA  
Pravasi Bharatiya Divas  
6-7 JANUARY 2018  
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The partnership between India and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is critical for realizing the vision of the Asia Regional Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction. The idea of such a partnership and its details can be taken up at the upcoming Pravasi Bhartiya Diwas being celebrated in Singapore on January 6-7, 2018. Similarly, this idea can also be taken up at Indo-ASEAN Commemorative Summit, to be held on January 25, 2018.

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is one of the most important annual celebrations organized by the government of India to commemorate the achievements and goodwill of the Indian diaspora across the world.

The Indo-ASEAN Commemorative Summit will consolidate the 25 year old partnership between India and ASEAN as well as celebrate the millennia old human, maritime, cultural, commercial and religious bonds between the people of India and those of the ASEAN nations.

The Asia Regional Plan (ARP) for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) was accepted and launched at Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (AMCDRR) in Delhi in India, November 2016, under the leadership of Shri Kiren Rijiju, Union Minister of State for Home Affairs of India who is now energetically championing the implementation of ARP.

International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) of the United Nations from Bangkok office is monitoring and facilitating the implementation of ARP.

An Asia that is resilient to disaster and climate risks would be immensely beneficial for both India and the ASEAN countries. As Asian

economies scale newer rates of growth, it is important to protect that prosperity from the ravages of disasters. The partnership between India and ASEAN not only has the potential of making Asia resilient but also the potential of firmly putting its economies on a path to green growth and sustainability.

Apart from the obvious economic ties of trade, investment and business, India and ASEAN also share strong cultural and social links. Leveraging these links can offer co-benefits to both the parties at substantially lesser costs. All these factors have poised India and ASEAN to shape the future of economic prosperity and human progress in Asia.

The following are India's key five DRR Achievements:

- National Disaster Management Plan of India is in line with Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.
- Disaster Management Guidelines for more than 25 disasters and cross cutting issues such as in school safety and child centred disaster risk reduction with UNICEF support.
- Disaster Management Plans at National, State, District and sub-district level such as in Assam.
- Well trained and well equipped National and State Disaster Response Forces such as in Andhra Pradesh.
- State of the art Emergency Operation Centres at all levels such as in Gujarat.

ASEAN's key five DRR achievements include:

- ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM) for regional activity.
- ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) for joint action.

- ASEAN Vision 2025 on Disaster Management for direction.
- ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre) for response.
- ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) for dialogue and informing decisions.

Singapore has a keen interest in national security (which includes making schools safer); promoting (and protecting from disaster and climate risk) trade and industry; and collaborative foreign affairs (including responding in humanitarian crisis).

India is keen to promote (and protect investments and assets) in shipping, transport and highways; show case Assam and North East as a destination for investment (and make such investment safe from disaster and climate risks); and invite investments in rapidly growing coastal economy of Andhra Pradesh (that is climate and disaster risk resilient).

What India and ASEAN can jointly take up as key areas for cutting edge action under ARP are: one, finding ways to address the increasing challenges of disaster related displacement in Asia; two, using digital technology to develop comprehensive school safety and security programme for Asia; three, encouraging local leaders to initiate local disaster risk reduction planning to reduce the loss of life and livelihoods in Asia; and four, ensure system wide penetration of risk transfer and insurance in Asia.

India's Foreign Minister Smt. Sushma Swaraj and Singapore's Deputy Prime Minister Shri Teo Chee Hean will thus play their historic roles in making Asia safer and more prosperous at these two events. ■ - AIDMI Team