

RECLAIMING THE INDO- PACIFIC NARRATIVE

CONCEPT OF 'INDO PACIFIC'	First time, the term 'Indo Pacific' was used by the Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on Indian soil in 2007. Then, he said that there is a connect between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. India considers two important aspects within the scope of this term: One, centrality of the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), which is necessary to take forward the notion of Indo-Pacific. Second, with respect for international laws, especially the United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea, 1982 (UNCLOS) at the time of disputes, particularly over the South China Sea.
SIGNIFICANCE OF THE INDO PACIFIC REGION	It is a very rich region in terms of natural resources (fisheries, oil, gas) as well as mineral resources. About 3.5 trillion dollars international trade flows through the South China Sea. Trade of some of the major economies like China, Japan, Korea or the west coast of the United States goes through the South China Sea. About 50% of India's trade is conducted through the South China Sea.
What are India's key priorities in this regard?	✓ India views the Indo-Pacific as a geographic and strategic expanse, along with the 10 ASEAN countries connecting the two great oceans. ✓ Inclusiveness, openness, and ASEAN centrality and unity, therefore, lie at the heart of the Indian notion of Indo-Pacific. ✓ Security in the region must be maintained through dialogue, a common rules-based order, and freedom of navigation. ✓ Besides, unimpeded commerce and settlement of disputes in accordance with international law are also the priorities. ✓ More connectivity initiatives, with respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, good governance, transparency, and sustainability should be promoted.
PRESENT CONTEXT	At the 34th summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in Bangkok in June, its member states finally managed to articulate a collective vision for the Indo-Pacific region in a document titled "The ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific".

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	It underlines in the document the need for an inclusive and “rules-based framework” to “help to generate momentum for building strategic trust and win-win cooperation in the region”.
QUAD APPROACH(U.S. JAPAN ,AUSTRALIA,INDIA)	✓ The release of the U.S. Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) strategy report in June — it focusses on preserving a “free and open Indo-Pacific” in the face of a more “assertive China”. ✓ Japan had already unveiled its Free and Open Indo-Pacific concept in 2016. ✓ Australia released its Foreign Policy White Paper in 2017, detailing its Indo-Pacific vision centred around security, openness and prosperity ✓ Prime Minister Narendra Modi articulated India’s Indo Pacific vision at the Shangri-la Dialogue in 2018, with India even setting up an Indo-Pacific wing in the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) earlier this year.
KEY POINTS OF ASEAN STRATEGY	It emphasises development and connectivity, underlining the need for maritime cooperation, infrastructure connectivity and broader economic cooperation. ASEAN’s approach is aimed at placating China by not allowing itself to align with the U.S.’s vision for the region completely.
INDIA’S APPROACH TOWARDS ASEAN OULOOK	India has welcomed the ASEAN’s outlook on the Indo Pacific as it sees “important elements of convergence” with its own approach towards the region. India was categorical that it is “for something” in the Indo-Pacific and “not against somebody” As External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar has suggested that something is peace, security, stability, prosperity and rules”.
CONCLUSION	ASEAN finally coming to terms with its own role in the Indo-Pacific, the ball is now in the court of other regional stakeholders to work with the regional grouping to shape a balance of power in the region which favours inclusivity, stability and economic prosperity.
WAY FORWARD TO INDIA	The new MEA division should also move beyond security and political issues and articulate a more comprehensive policy. Importantly, there are differences between India’s vision and the U.S.’s strategy for the Indo-Pacific hence It will be challenging to maintain a balance between the interests of all stakeholders, simultaneously with an emphasis on “ inclusiveness. ”

QUES:- DISCUSS THE RELEVANCE OF INDO-PACIFIC REGION. HOW ASEAN NEW APPROACH TOWARDS INDO-PACIFIC IS CONCURRENT WITH THE APPROACH OF INDIA'S POLICY TOWARDS INDO-PACIFIC.

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