



P.L.RAJ IAS & IPS ACADEMY

Building Bureaucrats Since 2006

1. 8th India-Indonesia Joint Commission Meeting International Relations

External Affairs Minister Dr. Jaishankar co-chaired the 8th India-Indonesia Joint Commission Meeting with Foreign Minister of Indonesia, marking continued high-level diplomatic engagement between the two nations.

1. The two countries agreed to advance cooperation in defence, maritime security, digital connectivity, and infrastructure reflecting convergence on critical regional issues.
2. Both nations exchanged perspectives on regional and global developments reaffirming their commitment to closer cooperation across multiple sectors.

1. India-Indonesia Relations – Historical Foundation

Colonial Experience and Post-Colonial Alignment

1. The shared experience of colonialism and common post-colonial goals drove India's friendly bilateral relationship with Indonesia in the late 1940s and 1950s.
2. In 1951, India and Indonesia signed a Treaty of Friendship aiming at perpetual peace and unalterable friendship establishing institutional framework for cooperation.
3. Colonial experiences created shared perspectives on development, independence, and regional autonomy shaping diplomatic alignment.

Founding Non-Aligned Movement

1. India and Indonesia became the voice of independence of Asian and African countries in the UN, which led to the Bandung Conference of 1955.
2. The Bandung Conference directly resulted in the subsequent formation of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1961, establishing the NAM as the primary platform for post-colonial nations.
3. India and Indonesia were among the five founding leaders of NAM along with Yugoslavia, Egypt, and Ghana establishing their role as leading voices in the Global South.

Modern Bilateral Expansion

1. Since the adoption of India's 'Look East Policy' in 1991, and its upgradation to 'Act East' in 2014, there has been rapid development of bilateral relations.
2. Indonesia is the second largest trading partner of India in the ASEAN region after Singapore reflecting strong economic ties.
3. Bilateral trade increased from \$4.3 billion in 2005-06 to \$38.84 billion in 2022-23 and \$29.40 billion in 2023-24 demonstrating substantial commercial integration.
4. India-Indonesia bilateral ties were elevated to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in 2018 with the Shared Vision of India-Indonesia Maritime Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific also adopted.

2. Strategic Significance of Indonesia for India

Policy Alignment and Regional Cooperation

1. India's "Act East Policy" and "Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative" align well with Indonesia's "Global Maritime Fulcrum" vision, creating synergies for regional cooperation in maritime security, connectivity, and economic development.
2. Both nations prioritize similar regional governance approaches emphasizing multilateralism and inclusive development.

Counterbalancing Influence in Indo-Pacific

1. Indonesia's strategic location and growing influence can help counterbalance China's expanding dominance in the Indo-Pacific region, aligning with India's strategic interests.
2. Indonesia's position as the world's largest archipelago gives it disproportionate weight in regional maritime affairs and governance.

Maritime Security Partnership

1. Indonesia's strategic location between the Indian and Pacific Oceans makes it a crucial partner for maintaining maritime security and stability in one of the world's most critical shipping lanes.
2. Shared interest in freedom of navigation and maintaining sea lanes open provides basis for defense cooperation.

Counter-Terrorism Cooperation

1. Cooperation in counter-terrorism efforts is essential given the shared challenges posed by extremism and transnational crime affecting both nations.
2. Joint capacity-building and intelligence-sharing enhance regional security.

Deep-Rooted Cultural Connections

1. Historical and cultural ties, particularly the influence of Hindu traditions and epics like the Ramayana and Mahabharata, foster strong people-to-people connections between the two nations.
2. Hindu temples across Indonesia, Sanskrit influences in Indonesian language, and shared cultural heritage provide unique bonding.

Tourism and Cultural Exchange Potential

1. Shared cultural roots can be leveraged to boost tourism and cultural exchanges strengthening societal bonds beyond government interactions.

3.Challenges in India-Indonesia Relations

Trade Imbalance

1. The trade balance is often skewed in favor of Indonesia, mainly due to high imports of palm oil and coal from Indonesia to India.
2. Both nations are looking for ways to diversify trade to reduce this imbalance and create more balanced bilateral commerce.

Regional Tensions

1. Challenges are posed by regional tensions and the changing dynamics in the Indo-Pacific, particularly with the rise of China creating strategic pressures.
2. Both countries are navigating these pressures while maintaining their strategic partnership balancing competition and cooperation.

4.Way Forward

1. **Deepen Defense Cooperation** - Expand joint military exercises, defense technology sharing, and defense industrial collaboration addressing shared security concerns.
2. **Strengthen Maritime Engagement** - Enhance maritime security coordination through regular patrols, intelligence sharing, and capacity building in naval operations.
3. **Expand Digital Connectivity** - Promote cooperation in 5G technology, digital infrastructure, and e-commerce creating digital bridges between economies.
4. **Diversify Trade** - Reduce trade imbalance by exploring new sectors including manufacturing, services, and technology transfer reducing palm oil and coal dependence.

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