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This special edition of CUTS Occasional News Wrap (ONW) offers a detailed overview of the ASEAN-India and SCO summits, featuring insights from various media sources.

21st ASEAN-India Summit in Laos ***A Defining Moment in Regional Cooperation***

The recent 21st ASEAN-India Summit held in Vientiane, Laos on October 10 marked a significant advancement in regional diplomacy, with leaders from the region leading discussions on critical issues affecting India and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The summit focused on "Enhancing Connectivity and Resilience," with Indian PM Modi unveiling a bold 10-point plan aimed at strengthening bilateral ties.

PM Modi emphasised the importance of shared values and mutual respect among nations, recognising ASEAN members as vital partners in the Global South. The participation of all 10 ASEAN member states, including Myanmar's first high-level representative in three years, underscored the strategic relevance of India-ASEAN relations.

News/Op-ed	Key Takeaway
India and ASEAN in a Changing World <i>C Raja Mohan</i> Institute of South Asian Studies Oct 14, 2024	As India marks the 30th anniversary of the ‘Look East’ policy and the 10th anniversary of Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s ‘Act East’ policy, there is much to celebrate as well as ponder upon. Although there has been progress in the relations between India and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the relationship is well below its true potential. Deepening trade relations and expanding security partnerships remain urgent tasks in India-ASEAN relations in a rapidly changing global context.
India Emerges as ASEAN’s Hedging Bet Against China at Laos Summit <i>Elizabeth Roche</i> The Diplomat Oct 14, 2024	India's growing role as a strategic partner for ASEAN in balancing China's influence was highlighted during the recent ASEAN summit in Laos. India's engagement with Southeast Asia, through trade, security cooperation, and strategic partnerships, offers ASEAN countries an alternative to over-reliance on China. This approach helps ASEAN hedge its geopolitical bets, ensuring that it can maintain sovereignty and regional stability amid rising Chinese assertiveness. India's focus on maritime cooperation and infrastructure development is central to its appeal as a counterbalance to China's influence.
Chairman’s Statement of The 21st ASEAN-India Summit ASEAN main portal Oct 13, 2024	The Chairman's Statement of the 21st ASEAN-India Summit highlights the deepening of ASEAN-India strategic partnership, emphasising shared goals of regional peace, stability, and prosperity. Key areas of collaboration include trade, investment, digital transformation, climate change, and connectivity. The statement reaffirms the importance of multilateralism, maritime security, and cooperation on energy security, and underscores India's role in ASEAN-led mechanisms and support for the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific.
PM Modi unveils 10-point plan to strengthen India-ASEAN relations. The Indian Express Oct 11, 2024	At the 21st ASEAN-India Summit in Vientiane, PM Narendra Modi emphasised the importance of ASEAN-India cooperation amid global tensions, highlighting respect for sovereignty. He announced a 10-point plan to strengthen ties, including initiatives like the ASEAN-India Cyber Policy Dialogue, designating 2025 as the ASEAN-India Year of Tourism, and doubling Nalanda University scholarships. Modi also met Japan's new Prime Minister, Shigeru Ishiba, discussing infrastructure, defense, and cultural linkages.
India’s National Statement at the 21st ASEAN-India Summit delivered by PM PM India Oct 10, 2024	At the ASEAN-India Summit, PM Modi outlined a 10-point plan to enhance ASEAN-India relations, focusing on tourism, cultural exchanges, scholarships, disaster resilience, health, and cyber policy. Key initiatives include declaring 2025 the ASEAN-India Year of Tourism, boosting educational and economic ties, promoting green hydrogen and climate resilience, and institutionalising ASEAN-India health and cyber dialogues. Modi emphasised strengthening regional connectivity, disaster resilience, and cooperation for a secure and sustainable future.



Strengthening Regional Ties and Security in Central and South Asia *SCO Summit*

The 2024 Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit in Islamabad, led by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, highlights shifting dynamics in regional security and cooperation in Central and South Asia. As Pakistan takes the rotating chair of the SCO Council of Heads of Government (CHG), the summit focuses on regional security, economic collaboration, and the fight against terrorism. The involvement of key players like China, Russia, India, and Iran emphasises the importance of this multilateral forum in addressing shared challenges.

News/Op-ed	Key Takeaway
Inclusive Shanghai Spirit guides SCO <i>Qaiser Nawab</i> China Daily Oct 17, 2024	Chinese Premier Li Qiang attended the 23 rd SCO meeting in Islamabad, focusing on economic cooperation, environmental sustainability, and cultural exchanges. Pakistan, led by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, emphasised regional stability and development. The meeting reaffirmed the importance of the Belt and Road Initiative and deepened cooperation in the digital economy, green energy, and agriculture, aligning with China's vision of shared prosperity and multilateralism.
As the SCO summit concludes in Islamabad, PM Shehbaz urges investment in regional connectivity. Dawn Oct 16, 2024	At the 23 rd Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit in Islamabad, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif emphasised investing in regional connectivity and infrastructure projects, including the Belt and Road Initiative. He highlighted the importance of a stable Afghanistan for trade and called for humanitarian support. Sharif also advocated for energy cooperation, poverty alleviation efforts, and the use of mutual currencies for economic stability among SCO members.
SCO member states firmly adhere to traditional values — communique TASS Oct 16, 2024	At the SCO Council of Heads of Government meeting in Islamabad, member states affirmed their commitment to traditional values , cultural diversity, and global dialogue among civilisations. The joint communique emphasised enhancing cooperation in education, culture, tourism, and sports while highlighting the significance of fostering interreligious and intercultural dialogue, especially within the framework of the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions.

News/Op-ed	Key Takeaway
Jaishankar at SCO Summit 2024: It's a 'turbulent world', SCO needs 'to be adept at responding to challenges' Firstpost Oct 16, 2024	During the 23rd SCO meeting in Islamabad, India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar stressed the importance of combating terrorism, separatism, and extremism for cooperation in trade and connectivity. He highlighted the need for trust, good neighbourliness, and adherence to the SCO Charter. Jaishankar also called for reforms in global institutions like the UNSC and criticised cherry-picking global practices, indirectly referencing China. The summit addressed key issues like economic integration, climate action, and security.
Foreign leaders arrive in Pakistan for a regional summit. Anadolu Agency Oct 15, 2024	Foreign leaders from several Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) member states, including China, India, Kyrgyzstan, Belarus, and Tajikistan, arrived in Islamabad for a two-day summit chaired by Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. The summit will address economic cooperation, environmental initiatives, and socio-cultural links. Extensive security measures have been implemented, with 10,000 personnel deployed across Islamabad and Rawalpindi.