



THE INDIAN APPROACH TO THE INDO-PACIFIC REGION IN COVID-19

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Abstract: Karl Haushofer, a German geopolitician, invented the phrase "Indo-Pacific" in the 1920s. It is referring to the Indian and Pacific Oceans. The Indo-Pacific region includes 38 nations, 44 percent of the world's surface area, 65 percent of the world's population, 46 percent of goods commerce, 55 percent of container trade, and much more. As a result, this area is vital for all countries worldwide. The major stakeholders in this region are India, China, Japan, Australia, and ASEAN. Many countries, including the United States, the United Kingdom, France, ASEAN, and small island states, see India as a counterweight to China's dominance in the Indo-Pacific. Because India has a coastline of over 7,500 kilometres. 90% of global trade by volume and 77% by value of India's trade is carried by sea. India's ambition for the Indo-Pacific is for it to be free, secure, independent, and inclusive. All nations should be followed the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and international Sea lines of communications (SLOCs) should be secured. The Indo-Pacific region is particularly important for both importing and exporting countries because if one country controls this area, it influences global commerce. As a consequence, via efforts such as the Quad Alliance, the AUKUS alliance, and the ASEAN perspective for the Indo-Pacific and East Asia Summit, the big powers, with the collaboration of India and other middle-power nations, promote a free Indo-Pacific area. Under the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative, India also has a SAGAR Initiative. The recent COVID-19 pandemic outbreak devastated the world. Many challenges emerge as a result of COVID-19, including poverty, medical shortages, oxygen supply shortages, economic turmoil in many nations, and vaccination shortages. This study primarily focuses on India's strategy in COVID-19 for Indo-Pacific countries, intending to investigate the relationship between India and ASEAN countries, and how India assisted East Asian and Southeast Asian countries.

Keywords: Indo-pacific, United Nation Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), International Sea Lines of Communications (SLOCs), QUAD, SAGAR Initiative, COVID-19, India, ASEAN, AUKUS Alliance

I. INTRODUCTION

The Indo-Pacific Ocean is the result of the union of two oceans: the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. Many countries used to refer to this region as the Asia-Pacific Region. The Indo-Pacific route connects Africa to the United States. As a result, the relevance of this area is critical for both advanced economies and emerging countries. When social scientists attempted to build a modern map in the past, they attempted to integrate oceanography, ethnography, and philology. At the period, Karl Haushofer, a

German geopolitical theorist, aimed to realign the Indian and Pacific Oceans as one place (Li 1). He used this phrase in his work "Indopazifischen Raum" in the 1920s. This was the first time in contemporary history that this notion was introduced. In Indian history, Kalidas Nag performed the first complete study of the Indian and Pacific waters. He was a historian, philosopher, and legislator. Kalidas travelled around the Indian and Pacific Oceans with the assistance of Dr. Rabindranath Tagore. This experience helped him grasp the relevance of the Indian and Pacific Oceans. In 1941, he used the phrase "Indo-Pacific" for the first time in his book, *India and the Pacific World* (Raghavan). He felt that the Indo-Pacific was the route via which culture and civilization were transferred from India to its neighbours. Modern Indian intellectuals, such as Rabindranath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi, K.N. Nilakanta Sastri, and R.C. Majumdar, recognize the significance of this region. The Indian Ocean is the world's third-biggest of the five oceans. The Indian Ocean extends from north Africa to west Australia and encompasses all of Asia. It has the biggest peripheral seas, including the Bay of Bengal, the Arabian Sea, the Somali Sea, and the Andaman Sea. It has the longest border with India and covers 70,560,000 km² (27,240,000 sq mi), accounting for 19.8 percent of the water on Earth's surface (U.S. Department of Commerce). Historically, foreign invaders exploited this ocean for commerce before establishing colonies here. That is why this ocean is so vital; it accounts for roughly half of world trade. The Pacific Ocean is the world's biggest and deepest ocean ("Pacific Ocean | Depth, Temperature, Animals, Location, Map, and Facts"). The Pacific Ocean extends from the Arctic Ocean to the Antarctic Ocean. It is the largest in terms of total land area on the planet. It has a ring of fire around it. As a result, these two seas are vital to every country on earth. What are the necessities of a country to exist if it perceives an actor such as a human being? Secure the borders first, then the oil and the ability to trade with other countries. These are the fundamental requirements of every state. The Earth's land surface is quite limited, and the seas cover a substantial percentage of it. The Indo-Pacific region has 38 countries, 44 percent of the world's surface area, 65 percent of the world's population, 46 percent of global commodities traffic, 55 percent of container trade, and much more. This study focuses on the Indian approach to the Indo-Pacific before, after, and during the epidemic. The first section of the paper concentrated on the historical significance of the Indo-Pacific, the second on India's history with the Indo-Pacific, and the third on how other nations assisted India and how India assisted the Indo-Pacific countries. The paper's fourth portion concentrated on COVID-19, India's Indo-Pacific strategy, and China's assertive posture. The final section of the paper will be the conclusion, which will include the suggestion and limitations.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research technique used in this article is qualitative reading and formal analysis, which includes case studies, archival research evaluation, subjective reading, and a structural and comparative study of key subjects for the paper. The research study is primarily based on primary works of key authors and their interpretations of their ideas, as well as my understandings of the topic at hand. The use of these methodologies for the paper meets the paper's need to cover a broad ground of knowledge, which is required for such a topic of emphasis that includes situational and conditional understandings that correlate with the understanding of the many writers themselves. As a result, a qualitative reading and structural analysis are required to avoid bias in the article. The need for such strict controls is to prevent the spread of incorrect information and perspectives. As described in the limitations section, it becomes necessary for the method in use to attempt to alleviate the concerns, which is why comparative analysis applications are developed.

III. HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE INDO-PACIFIC

Sea routes have always been the most practical means to become wealthy anyplace in the world. The seaway was utilised by Alexander the Great to conquer numerous continents across the world. The maritime route transported the entirety of the world's trade. Ancient civilizations grew up around the water. The sea or oceans are always significant for both the people and the state. So maritime trade and sea route exploration to find new prospects for trade and conquer are not new phenomena because there is very limited land accessible on Earth, and when humans begin to need to expand for their day-to-day living activities. Humans were the first to establish new continents and water routes. The difference today is that the state now represents its residents since they live in that region. Historically, there were groups of early ancestors who were hunters, and later they discovered alternatives after discovering fire and the

wheel. Humans no longer hunt but instead raise milk-producing animals. This will aid in human survival. They then divide into groups. These tiny groupings grow into larger ones, which is referred to as a "community." The community then grows into a bigger group, which constitutes a state. So the key issue for groups is to trade and be sustainable since each group has diverse and unique qualities, such as some groups making very fine garments, some making very nice handcarts, others being artists, and so on. So the primary issue was how the group's leader used these particular powers, so they began engaging with other groups, but they still couldn't sustain themselves effectively, so the only choice was to trade with other distant groups, so they began to explore land and sea. They can't get very far on the land path since much of it is covered in forest and the risk is considerable. On the other side, the sea route is an excellent option with several alternatives. As a result, most people used the water route rather than the land option. The sea is always vital to everyone. Vasco da Gama was the first Portuguese navigator to discover a maritime route to India. Then, in 1492, an Italian explorer called Christopher Columbus finds a number of water routes that connect the United States with Europe. The sea is significant because many people exploit it in many ways for their own benefit. Other continents were colonised by many European nations. They started with the sea. They came for commerce and then took over the region. During the Middle Ages, several great battles were fought at sea. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj possessed the largest army in India, and he was supreme commander. As a result, each state depends on the sea. The sea connects all of the continents rather than land. So, how important was the Indo-Pacific region? So says one of the world's largest waters, the Indo-Pacific. Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei, Cambodia, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, Timor-Leste (East Timor), the United States, and Vietnam are among the countries represented. Prior to WWI and WWII, all of these nations were colonial possessions of various European powers. Some of these countries are still ruled by colonial powers. are referred to as third-world countries. Because, after considerable fight, these countries were freed from colonial rule. So, taking India as an example, several foreign countries came to India via the sea route for industry and built colonies there. Japan Russia-China War Japan and the China War Russia's conflicts are all fought by water, with relatively few fought on land. Asia is thus one of the world's biggest continents. Why is Asia the least developed? For numerous reasons. First, this continent is highly diverse. Second, different rulers only see themselves, not people. Finally, foreign powers dominate these countries and utilize them to build their own countries. As a result, there are wars throughout Asia, and these third-world nations are still growing as a result of them. The Indo-Pacific was first. Asia-Pacific remains China referred to this region as Asia-Pacific rather than Indo-Pacific. According to China, the West wishes to split Asia into two blocs. The first is who supports the west, and the second is who does not favour the west. That is why they are their chip tactics for a Western power to play. The west, on the other hand, regards China as a threat since it is communist and does not share the same philosophy as the west. The USSR was the main force in Asia until its demise when the US became the sole superpower. At the time, only China was regarded as a prominent Asian force. China is active in land occupation and fighting in the South China Sea. As a result, West Sea India is resisting China's aggressive approach. Because, in this day and time, every state desires autonomy and independence. No state wants external forces to meddle in its internal affairs. Only India and China are the two most populated countries in Asia. They make significant contributions to global GDP. As a result, every distant player requires one player in this zone. As a result, all external factors are at work. which I call the Great Indo-Pacific Game. In the two last decades, after the Indian parliamentary speech of Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, they said "Indo-pacific". All the developed countries are developing special strategies and policies for the Indo-pacific. Following Russia's invasion of Crimea, the strategic importance of the Indo-Pacific region has grown; all countries from west to east want to keep sea lines of communication safe, so they are attempting to counterbalance Russia and China in the Asia region. All of this has increased India's importance in the region, so every developed country wants to partner with India to maintain the Indo-Pacific power balance. So we'll see how India approaches the Indo-Pacific region now.

IV. INDIA'S HISTORY WITH THE INDO-PACIFIC

When India was under colonial authority, it had no rights, but following the 1957 rebellion, the British began to liberalise everything. So they began to provide internal administration authority, but foreign policy remained under British control. As a result, upon independence, India gained complete powers and government in their own way. Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first prime minister and foreign minister, was the first achiever and visionary in foreign policy. Nehru is an idealist. As a result, he has always admired multinational organisations. He consistently emphasises non-alignment and is not a fan of outside intervention. India claimed to be a big brother to all the states surrounding it, but they didn't enjoy India's meddling. India does not want any foreign intervention in the area since it has seen how colonialism has wrecked the states. That is why India claimed to be all of its neighbours' older brother. But India was having internal problems, such as deciding on an economic strategy, dealing with a food security crisis, and so on. After independence, India was unable to assist any other states. There were two blocs in place when the cold war began: one communist and one liberal. India refuses to be a part of any of this. That is why India chose a middle path, non-alignment. Then, gradually, India began to exert influence and attempt to intervene in the internal affairs of neighbouring nations, but India cannot assist the states economically since India is still not stable enough to do so. As a result, the states are upset. The genesis of the Bangladesh and Sri Lankan Tamil crises are famous instances. As a result, India eventually gained independence and began to safeguard its borders and aid its neighbours. Following the 1990s economic crisis, India's foreign policy shifted to one of globalisation. Now that India understands the significance of its neighbours, it has enacted measures in their self-interest, such as Look East, the Neighbourhood First Policy, and so on. As a result, India began to give assistance, and Indian nationals travelled there and created a base. Following globalisation, India began to focus increasing importance on the Indo-Pacific Ocean as a result of its difficult experience with China. Look East was introduced by India. Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India has just recently begun to implement the Act East plan. India undertook several measures, but the relevance of the ocean was recognised following the 1993 Mumbai bombing, and the value of maritime security was recognised following the 9/11/2008 terrorism assault on Mumbai. These two incidents are significant blows to India's ocean security and demonstrate how susceptible India is to the ocean. After globalisation, every state seeking hegemony over another must be powerful in economic, military, and soft power. As a result, the sea is strategically important for every state. India is the same way. Following independence, India pursued a non-aligned strategy. Then India rebounded in its economic sector since it selected agriculture to develop freedom first. So, by that time, India was doing extremely well, but India had forgotten that it had a 7500-kilometer-long coastline to guard following the 9/11 assault. India stressed coastal security and the necessity of free commerce in an open economy that relies on communication sea lanes. After 2008, India's strategy on coastal security and coastal ports underwent a dramatic transformation. India is focusing on maritime security in order to protect its national interests by discouraging other governments from coercing India and conducting maritime military operations in such a way that India can end any war to its advantage. India seeks a friendly and positive marine environment in order to improve the security of its coastal states. India established marine troops such as the Indian coast guard. From Iran to Bangladesh, India has a large presence in the Indian Ocean. Iran, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Seychelles, Mauritius, Madagascar, Reunion Island, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Australia, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Myanmar, and Bangladesh all enjoy strong connections with India. India also maintained close ties with Japan, the Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. In 2014, India also established the Forum for India-Pacific Island Cooperation. One belt, one road, China's new silk road concept, is the greatest danger to India's maritime security. India also backed unrestricted trade and freedom of navigation and overflight based on international law principles, most notably the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea ("India To Host 14 Pacific Leaders"). However, China refused to back it. That is why Western countries are concerned, and they do not want any country to have control over the seas. As a result, India is a trustworthy partner in the Indian Ocean and a gateway to the Pacific. As a result, they staged several joint exercises in the Indian and Pacific Oceans in order to counter-hegemony or influence China in the Indo-Pacific. India has nine coastlines, including Kutch, Kathiawar, Konkan, Malabar, Cape Comorin, Coromandel, Andhra Pradesh, Northern Circles, Utkal pain, and others, hence India must safeguard all of these states as well as four union territories. As a result, India is the most dependable alternative for all Western nations because Afghanistan was first invaded by the Russian army, then by an American army in the guise of the war on terror, resulting in a lack of a stable

government. As a result, Pakistan sponsors terrorism and lacks a stable government. Australia is the only country left with Japan, yet both rely on the United States. As a result, India is the only country in the area with so much potential, self-reliance, and variety. As a result, India maintains its strategic alignment position with all around the nations.

V. HOW OTHER NATIONS ASSISTED INDIA AND HOW INDIA ASSISTED THE INDO-PACIFIC COUNTRIES

India's Indo-Pacific policy is built on two pillars: increased national participation in the area and deeper ties with like-minded states. The former enhances India's profile in the Indo-Pacific and increases Delhi's worth to its allies. In turn, coalitions and partnerships improve India's national capabilities, as well as its reach and effect. This approach differs significantly from previous metaphysics, which centred on the perceived necessity to uphold a certain ideology rather than a hard-headed pursuit of national interests. India's unique approach complements the US plan. Contrary to popular belief in Delhi, the US is not making new security obligations to India in order to "entrap" it into an alliance. Alliances include significant legal, political, and military responsibilities, and they are not treated lightly in Washington. In the Indo-Pacific, the US is not gaining more "camp followers." It seeks allies and like-minded countries with the strategic interest, political clout, and material capabilities to contribute to regional security. The United States wishes to maintain its hegemony, but its greatest challenge in Asia is China. That is why the United States wants India to be on the same page. That is why the United States, India, Japan, and Australia founded the Quad. On the other hand, Russia, which has been a strategic partner of India for a long time and an old friend of India, wants India to maintain a balance of power that is not overly aligned with the West, which is why Russia formed the BRICS organisation with the world's emerging economies such as Brazil, China, Russia, India, and South Africa. As we all know, India and China have boundary disputes and ideological disagreements, which is why Russia is attempting to strike a balance since Russia recognises the importance of India in the Asia area. That is why Russia has always remained neutral in India-China ties. As a result, India must strike a balance between the United States and Russia. Over the last two decades, US administrations have gambled on the premise that a strong India that can stabilise Asia and the Indo-Pacific supports American regional interests. The US plan wants to partner with India "via regional groupings to support South Asian stability; collaborate in new sectors such as health, space, and cyberspace; strengthen our economic and technological collaboration; and contribute to a free and open Indo-Pacific" (Mohan). The United States recognises that "India is a like-minded partner and leader in South Asia and the Indian Ocean, engaged in and connected to Southeast Asia, a driving force in the Quad and other regional fora, and a driving force in the Quad and other regional fora" (Mohan). The emphasis on India is distinct but not exclusive. The US goal of encouraging "allies and partners to develop their connections with one another" is more important. Previously, US security strategy was linked to a variety of bilateral partnerships. It is now ready to transition to a more networked regional architecture. An India that aspires to be a regional power will be a better partner for the US than a weak and defensive India. India's ability to lead the region, in turn, is dependent on its national capacities and addressing fundamental domestic shortcomings, particularly in commerce and security. Delhi's intention to exit the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), an Asia-wide free trade deal, at the end of 2019, as well as its new emphasis on Atmanirbhar Bharat, or "self-reliance India." In contrast, Delhi claims that this is not a return to the past, but rather a renewed drive to develop indigenous industrial competence that has been hollowed out by an irresponsible embrace of globalisation. Despite withdrawing from the China-led RCEP, New Delhi is now seeking to liberalise economic relations with critical countries such as Australia. India has also increased trade negotiations with the UAE, Israel, and the United Kingdom. India and the EU have also made a political decision to restart negotiations on a long-stalled FTA. Trade economists say that bilateral agreements cannot replace bigger regional accords, of which India is currently not a member. On developing digital trade challenges, Delhi is also not on the same page as its allies such as the United States, the European Union, Japan, and Australia. Nonetheless, the strategic trade treaties currently being negotiated are a significant step in the right direction. Although India has recently engaged in aggressive military diplomacy, it has been hampered by its inability to transfer weapons to friendly states in the area. Delhi has abandoned its lengthy political hesitancy in supplying Brahmos missiles to China's neighbours. Last month, India struck a \$375 million agreement to equip the Philippines with three shore-based anti-ship Brahmos missile batteries. While these batteries will not change the military balance between Manila and Beijing, they do pave the way for a more active Indian participation in Asia's major security concerns. India's new military export push aligns with the US Indo-Pacific strategy's emphasis on "identifying new possibilities to integrate our defence industrial bases,

integrating our defence supply chains, and co-producing important technology that will shore up our collective military advantages." The US goal to "empower friends and partners as they take on regional leadership responsibilities themselves" and India's desire to play a greater role in the Indo-Pacific have a lot in common. Concurrent pursuit of enhanced national capabilities and more active engagement in coalitions are interrelated components of realising that Indian objective (Mohan). The announcement in September 2021 of AUKUS, the new trilateral defence collaboration between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, confirmed the Indo-Pacific region's centrality in modern great-power relations. Global interest in the region has increased in recent years, both geoeconomically and strategically. China's belligerence has been increasing throughout the area. India, which is located in the heart of the Indian Ocean region and shares a 3,488-kilometer land border with China, faces both opportunities and challenges that could be pivotal to the region's geopolitical affairs, as well as difficult relationships with its two largest neighbours, China and Pakistan (Kamal and Sahni). In his address at the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore on June 1, 2018, Prime Minister Narendra Modi highlighted India's vision for the Indo-Pacific region. India advocates for an Indo-Pacific order that is free, open, and inclusive, based on respect for all states' sovereignty and territorial integrity, peaceful settlement of conflicts through discussion, and adherence to international rules and laws. India's Indo-Pacific concept is inclusive in character, and it supports an approach that respects everyone's right to free navigation and overflight in international waters. The notion of 'ASEAN-Centrality' underpins India's Indo Pacific strategy. Given the necessity for common answers to shared difficulties in the area, India's strategy is built on cooperation and collaboration. At the East Asia Summit in Bangkok, Thailand, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) on November 4, 2019. The IPOI, as an open global initiative, draws on existing regional cooperation architecture and mechanisms to focus on seven central pillars centred on Maritime Security, Maritime Ecology, Maritime Resources, Capacity Building and Resource Sharing, Disaster Risk Reduction and Management, Science, Technology, and Academic Cooperation, Trade Connectivity, and Maritime Transport. India hosted the sixth Indian Ocean Dialogue with IORA Member States on the theme "Indo-Pacific: Re-imagining the Indian Ocean through an Expanded Geography" on December 13 and 14, 2019 in addition to the eleventh Delhi Dialogue with ASEAN Member States on the theme "Advancing Partnership in the Indo-Pacific". At both events, maritime connectivity and emerging architecture in the Indo-Pacific construct were major conversation topics. The 4th East Asia Summit (EAS) Conference on Maritime Security Cooperation was held in Chennai from February 6–7, 2020, and was hosted by India in collaboration with Australia and Indonesia. The conference, which included attendees from EAS Participating Countries, covered a variety of subjects, including the blue economy and marine security. The Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Collaboration Strategy (ACMECS) is a framework for cooperation among the five Mekong subregional nations of Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam. It aims to create an integrated and linked Mekong community by implementing seamless ACMECS (increased physical and digital connection), synchronised ACMECS (improved trade, investment, and financial cooperation), and smart and sustainable ACMECS (enhanced human resource and environmental cooperation). India joined ACMECS as a Development Partner in July 2019, with Australia, China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, and the United States. India is collaborating with group partners to identify suitable projects from the ACMECS Priority Projects, drawing on the USD 1 billion Line of Credit announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the India-ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur in November 2015 for connectivity and digital infrastructure in the ASEAN region (Center). Mekong-Ganga Collaboration (MGC) is a South-East Asian sub-regional forum that was founded in 2000 in Vientiane, Lao PDR. Six nations collaborated in the project: India, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam. MGC Ministerial Meetings have taken place ten times since its beginning in 2000. In 2020, MGC will celebrate its 20th anniversary. The successful India-MGC Quick Impact Scheme, which India introduced in September 2012, focuses on initiatives with a short gestation time that may have a good impact on the community level. So far, 24 projects have been completed, including 15 in Cambodia and 9 in Vietnam. Furthermore, 11 projects are now being implemented in Cambodia, 4 in Vietnam, and 3 in Lao PDR. Scholarship programmes granted by India to MGC member nations have found extensive use. Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM) is the largest inter-governmental mechanism between Asia and Europe, accounting for 60% of the global population, 65% of global GDP, and 55% of worldwide commerce. It was founded in 1996 as a venue for "informal communication" between governments from both continents. It presently has 53 partners, consisting of 51 nations and two regional organisations (ASEAN and the European Union). India joined ASEM as part of its second expansion process in 2008. The Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) is a regional organisation representing 22 nations in the Indian Ocean area. India is a founder member of IORA, which

was founded in 1997. The IORA Secretariat is based in Mauritius' Port Louis. East Asia Summit (EAS) The Leaders-led EAS format, which was established in 2005, is the most important component of the ASEAN-led frameworks, owing to its contribution to the region's strategic trust. The 18 members of the EAS account for 54% of the global population and 58% of global GDP. The connection between India and ASEAN is a critical pillar of its foreign policy and the cornerstone of its Act East Policy. India became an ASEAN Strategic Partner in 2012, having previously served as a Sectoral Partner (1992), Dialogue Partner (1996), and Summit Level Partner (2002). There are now 30 discussion platforms between India and ASEAN that span many industries. The key to taking the ASEAN-India Strategic Partnership to the next level is connectivity in its broadest meaning, according to India's Act East Policy. Connectedness encompasses physical, economic, political, and interpersonal connectivity. ASEAN and India share land and marine boundaries, allowing for considerable opportunities to improve connectivity by land, air, and sea. The India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway is a long-term initiative to improve road connections between India and Southeast Asia. In order to realise the connection potential, Prime Minister Narendra Modi offered a USD 1 billion line of credit for ASEAN connectivity and infrastructure projects during the 2015 ASEAN-India Summit.

VI. COVID-19 AND INDIA'S INDO-PACIFIC STRATEGY

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is a virus-borne infection caused by the SARS-CoV-2 viral. Most patients infected with the virus will have mild to severe respiratory sickness and will recover without needing any specific therapy. Some, though, will get very ill and require medical treatment. People over the age of 65, as well as those with underlying medical disorders such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, or cancer, are at a higher risk of developing serious illness. Anyone of any age can become very ill or die as a result of COVID-19. Being thoroughly informed on the sickness and how the virus spreads is the greatest method to avoid and slow down transmission. Maintain a distance of one metre apart from people, wear a well-fitting mask, and wash your hands or use an alcohol-based rub often to protect yourself and others from infection. When it's your turn, get vaccinated and follow local recommendations. When an infected person coughs, sneezes, speaks, sings, or breathes, the virus can spread in microscopic liquid particles from their mouth or nose. These particles range in size from big respiratory droplets to tiny aerosols. If you feel ill, it is critical to adopt respiratory etiquette, such as coughing into a flexed elbow, and to stay at home and self-isolate until you fully heal ("Coronavirus"). That affected the hole globe but how India helped it's valuable neighbours will see. On the 13th and 14th of December, 2019, India hosted the Delhi Dialogue-XI with ASEAN Member States on the theme "Advancing Partnership in the Indo-Pacific," as well as the 6th Indian Ocean Dialogue with IORA Member States on the theme "Indo-Pacific: Re-imagining the Indian Ocean through an Expanded Geography." Both seminars focused on emerging architecture in the Indo-Pacific construct and marine connectivity. India, in collaboration with Australia and Indonesia, will hold the 4th East Asia Summit (EAS) Conference on Maritime Security Cooperation in Chennai on February 6-7, 2020. The Conference, which brought together delegates from EAS Participating Countries, covered a variety of issues, including maritime security, maritime safety, and the blue economy. India and ASEAN have a Free Trade Agreement covering commodities, services, and investment. India-ASEAN trade and investment ties have been progressively improving, with ASEAN ranking as India's fourth largest commercial partner, worth US\$96.79 billion. Both parties have established a goal of \$200 billion by 2022. Investment flows are also large in both directions. India has implemented a variety of programmes and initiatives aimed at increasing capacity and improving people-to-people connection. Ongoing projects include exchange programmes for students, journalists, and farmers. The External Affairs Minister and the Minister of Human Resource Development jointly announced 1000 integrated PhD Fellowships for ASEAN students at IITs in September 2019. Other ongoing projects include the Space Project, which envisions the establishment of a Tracking, Data Reception, and Data Processing Station in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam; the upgrade of the Telemetry Tracking and Command Station in Biak, Indonesia; the establishment of Centres of Excellence in Software Development & Training (CESDT) in CLMV countries; and the Quick Impact Projects in CLMV. ASEAN countries are quickly becoming popular tourist destinations for Indians. In 2018, India accounted for 3.45 million of the 129 million international tourist visits to ASEAN. The designation of 2019 as the ASEAN-India Year of Tourism was one of many efforts taken to improve the two-way flow of tourists. The Indian diaspora in the ASEAN area, which accounts for around 20% of India's overall diaspora, is critical to improving India-ASEAN connections. India continues to contribute constructively to the EAS aims as a nation genuinely dedicated to building the

EAS as an ASEAN-led organisation. Prime Minister Modi unveiled India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative during the 14th East Asia Summit in Bangkok (IPOI). India, in collaboration with Australia and Indonesia, will hold the 4th East Asia Summit (EAS) Conference on Maritime Security Cooperation in Chennai on February 6-7, 2020. Under the auspices of IORA, India actively participates in various IORA events and sponsors a variety of capacity-building workshops and topical seminars/conferences. In November 2019, India organised the second Somalia-Yemen Development Programme in Kochi, Kerala, to provide authorities from Somalia and Yemen with training on fisheries policy. In November 2019, India also published the first edition of the Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Guidelines for IORA. India frequently makes contributions to the IORA Special Fund, the organization's development fund. A new MGC Plan of Action (2019–2022) was adopted at the 10th MGC Foreign Ministers' Meeting on August 1, 2019, in Bangkok. It calls for project-based cooperation in the seven existing sectors of tourism and culture, education, public health and traditional medicine, agriculture and related industries, transport and communication, MSMEs, and three new sectors of water resources management, science and technology, and skill development and capacity building.

VII. CONCLUSION

This was how India supported all of its cherished neighbours during and after the COVID period. In accordance with the India-launched vaccination maitri programme, India also provided them with vaccines. India has long advocated for a free and open Indo-Pacific, and as it grows more independent, it has come to cherish its little neighbours. Global warming and climate change are two additional serious issues. Because all of these majority states are extremely sensitive to climate change, India is also providing assistance to them. India therefore embraced western ideals while modifying them in a uniquely Indian manner. India will so undoubtedly be a major force in the future in this multipolar globe. India has to grab the lead and play its own game by moving away from a defensive position and into one that is more proactive. That is the entirety of my research.

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