

**ASEAN role is key for peace, says Kovind**

India stands “shoulder-to- shoulder” with ASEAN in pursuit of a rules-based regional architecture that is open, inclusive and equitable, President Ram Nath Kovind said on Thursday.

Mr. Kovind received the ASEAN heads of state and government at the Rashtrapati Bhavan and hosted a lunch in their honour.

The President said that India’s ‘Act East policy’ reinforces its ancient links with Southeast Asia through enhanced political, security, economic and cultural ties.

“In this context, India greatly values ASEAN’s role as a proponent of peace, stability and prosperity in the region,” Mr. Kovind said. “We stand shoulder-to-shoulder with ASEAN in pursuit of a rules-based regional architecture that is open, inclusive, balanced and equitable.”

The President said that India and ASEAN are bound by history and geography.

“Culture, commerce and connectivity — and ideas and thought — have woven us together in one common fabric. Our partnership is based on our shared heritage and is built on the foundation of strong people-to-people contacts, nurtured through the millennia,” he said. “We have 30 dialogue mechanisms between India and ASEAN, including annual summits and seven ministerial meetings in a wide range of sectors,” Mr. Kovind said.

END

Downloaded from **crackIAS.com**

© **Zuccess App** by crackIAS.com