



TATHASTU ICS



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ASEAN A KEY PILLAR OF ACT EAST POLICY: MODI

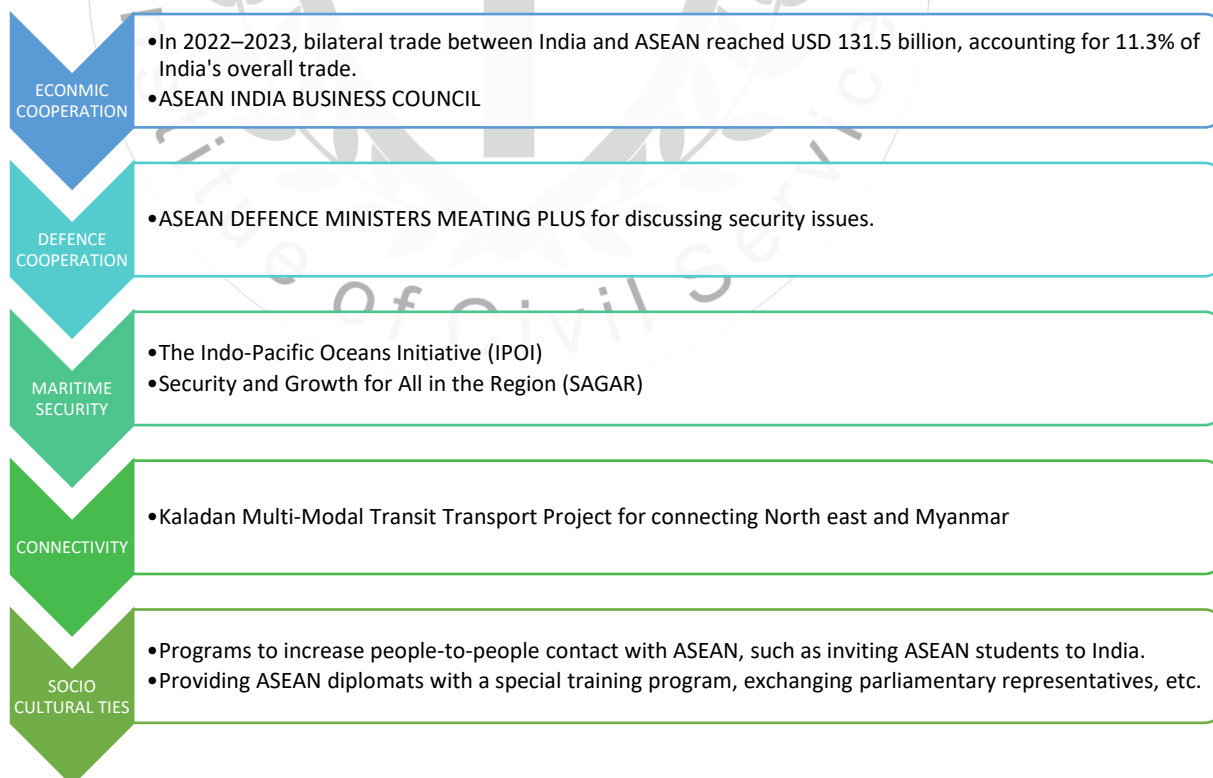
SOURCE: [THE HINDU](#)

WHY IN NEWS?

- During his visit to Indonesia for the **20th ASEAN-India Summit** and the **18th East Asia Summit (EAS)**, Prime Minister Narendra Modi highlighted the importance of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in India's Act East policy.
- The summits emphasized India's dedication to enhancing ties with ASEAN members and its position in the East Asian region.



SIGNIFICANCE OF INDIA ASEAN SUMMIT:



ACT EAST POLICY OF INDIA:

- The "**Look East Policy**" has been replaced with the "**Act East Policy**," which was unveiled in November 2014.
- It is a diplomatic initiative to advance **all levels of economic, geopolitical, and cultural ties with the large Asia-Pacific region.**

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LOOK EAST AND ACT EAST POLICY:

- **LOOK EAST POLICY (1990s-2014):** India started implementing the Look East Policy in the early 1990s in an effort to **diversify its foreign policy** beyond its established ties.
 - The main goals were to **boost trade with nations in East and Southeast Asia** and to **strengthen economic cooperation.**
 - It sought to tap into the **area's economic vitality.**
- **ACT EAST POLICY (2014-Present):** The Government of India launched the "**Act East Policy**" in 2014 as a foreign policy effort with the **goal of enhancing India's relations with nations in East and Southeast Asia.**
 - The **goal of this policy**, which developed from the former "Look East Policy," is to strengthen relations with countries in the Asia-Pacific area on a **political, diplomatic, and strategic level** along with **economic relations.**
- The Indian Prime Minister emphasized the Act East Policy's four pillars.
 - **Commerce**
 - **Culture**
 - **Connectivity**
 - **Capacity enhancement**

CHALLENGES IN THE RELATIONS WITH EAST ASIAN COUNTRIES:

- **Influence of China:** The Indo-Pacific area is a hotspot for **geopolitical conflict**, with difficulties posed **by China's growing power.**
- **Differing political systems:** Diplomatic relations and agreement on many topics may be hampered by the diversity of political systems within ASEAN, which range **from democratic to authoritarian countries.**
- **Security concerns:** The stability of the region may be impacted by security challenges, such as **maritime conflicts in the South China Sea.**
- **Issues in connectivity:** Enhancing economic and people-to-people links between India and ASEAN nations requires improving **physical and digital connectivity**, and there are **logistical and budgetary difficulties.**

WAY FORWARD

- **Economic cooperation:** To encourage **increased economic cooperation**, and ensure the efficient implementation and regular revision of the **ASEAN-India Free Trade Agreement.**
- **Security and defence cooperation:** To improve regional security and foster trust, hold joint military drills and security discussions.
 - **INDIA ASEAN MARITIME EXERCISE(AIME)** for security in the **Indo-Pacific.**
- **Cultural exchange:** Promote a greater **understanding of Indian culture** and values by providing **financial aid and educational opportunities** for students from ASEAN nations to study in India through various **scholarship programs.**

ASSOCIATION FOR SOUTH EASTERN NATIONS:

- ❖ **Formation:** On August 8, 1967, in Bangkok, Thailand, ASEAN was established. Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand are the five original members.
- ❖ **Membership:** Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar, and Cambodia.
- ❖ **Chairmanship:** Based on the sequence of the member states' English names in alphabetical order, the ASEAN chairmanship is rotated every year.
- ❖ **ASEAN Summit:** It is the highest-ranking ASEAN decision-making body. The ASEAN Summit decides goals and policies. According to the ASEAN Charter, the Summit convenes twice annually.
- ❖ **Demographic dividend:** Approximately 655 million people, or 8.5% of the world's population, reside in the ASEAN.
- ❖ **ASEAN FORUMS:**
 - ✓ **ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM:** Regional defence and confidence building forum.
 - ✓ **ASEAN PLUS THREE:** Consultative group of ASEAN along with China, South Korea, and Japan.
 - ✓ **EAST ASIA SUMMIT:** It is often attended by the leaders of state from ASEAN, Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, Russia, South Korea, and the United States and aims to promote security and development in the region.
 - ✓ **ADMMPLUS:** The 10 ASEAN Member States, joined by eight additional nations, namely Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, and the United States.



NCERT GETS DEEMED UNIVERSITY STATUS

SOURCE: [THE HINDU](#)

WHY IN NEWS?

- Union Minister of Education Dharmendra Pradhan announced on the 63rd Foundation Day of the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), that it has been accorded the deemed-to-be-university status by the Ministry of Higher Education.



WHAT IS A DEEMED UNIVERSITY?

- **Deemed Universities** are a certain category of a **higher education institutions** that have been granted the designation of "deemed to be university" under **Section 3 of the University Grants Commission (UGC) Act, 1956.**
- In general words, it indicates that the organization has been given the **authority to provide degree programs** that are comparable to those offered by traditional universities.

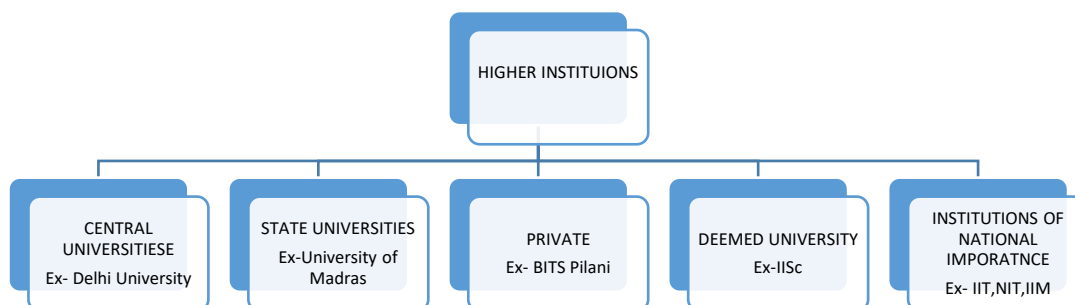
BENEFITS OF OBTAINING THE STATUS OF DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY:

- **OFFER NEW COURSES:** Without requiring clearance from any other body, they can introduce **new programs and courses** that are pertinent to the **shifting demands and needs** of the education industry.
- **FUNDING:** They have the ability to draw in **more academic members** and students from other locations and backgrounds, as well as **additional funding.**
- **ACADEMIC RESEARCH:** They can work together on **research projects, faculty development initiatives,** and student mobility programs with local, national, and worldwide universities.
- They can take a more active part in putting the **NEP 2020** into action, which calls for changing the Indian educational system.

ABOUT NCERT:

- ❖ **The Societies Registration Act** allowed for the establishment of the **National Council of Educational Research and Training in 1961.**
- ❖ It serves as the **principal advisory body** for the central and state governments on issues pertaining to education.
- ❖ **MAJOR OBJECTIVES:**
 - ✓ Conducting, fostering, and coordinating **research in fields** connected to **school education.**
 - ✓ Creating and disseminating **model textbooks, supplemental materials,** newsletters, journals, and educational kits.
 - ✓ Organise **teacher pre-service and in-service training.**
 - ✓ Create and share cutting-edge instructional strategies and practices.
 - ✓ **Collaborate and connect with state education agencies,** colleges, non-profit organizations, and other educational institutions.

CLASSIFICATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN INDIA:



CHALLENGES FACED BY HIGHER UNIVERSITIES IN INDIA:

- **Outdated curriculum:** Some institutions' curricula might not be in line with the demands of the labour market or the most recent developments in the sector.
- **Regulatory framework:** Regulations that are overly complicated and bureaucratic can inhibit innovation and impede the expansion of institutions.
- **Qualified faculty:** Particularly in specialized subjects, there is a dearth of experienced and trained professors.
- **Funding strains:** The inability of many institutions to provide high-quality education and infrastructure is hampered by their low financial resources.

STATUS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA:

- ❖ There are 11,779 stand-alone institutions, 42,343 colleges, and 1,043 universities, according to the **All-India Survey of Higher Education (AISHE) 2019–20**.
- ❖ **Private management** accounts for 78.6% of colleges, of which 65.2% are private-unaided and 13.4% are private-aided.
- ❖ **3.85 crore students** are enrolled in higher education overall, and the **Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)**, which measures the proportion of students who fall within the eligible age range who are enrolled in higher education, is **27.1%**.
- ❖ In universities and colleges, the **Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR) is 28**.
- ❖ **Only three Indian universities** made it into the top 200 according to the QS World University Rankings 2023: **IISc Bengaluru (Rank 155), IIT Bombay (Rank 172), and IIT Delhi (Rank 174)**.

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA:

INITIATIVE	OBJECTIVE
1. Rastriya Uchcharat Siksha Abhiyan	Improve the quality of higher education.
2. National Institutional Ranking framework	Ranking higher education institutions based on the quality of education.
3. UGC/NET JRF	Support scholars and aspiring teachers.
4. PM Research Fellows	For supporting research in IIT, IISER, NIT, IISc

WAY FORWARD:

- **Autonomy and academic freedom:** Give universities and colleges more freedom to decide on academic issues, faculty hiring, and curriculum development.
 - To promote critical thinking and open inquiry, and safeguard academic freedom.
- **Continuous evaluation and feedback:** Make changes based on student, faculty, and employer input when evaluating the efficacy of educational programs on a regular basis.
- **Employability skills:** Develop programs in partnership with businesses that emphasize soft skills, entrepreneurship, and practical training to improve graduates' employability.



CULTURE CORRIDOR AT G20

SOURCE: [THE HINDU](#)

WHY IN NEWS?

- The Culture Corridor - G20 Digital Museum was conceptualized by the Ministry of Culture to represent and honour the common heritage of G20 members and invited nations. This project is based on the Culture Working Group's (CWG) and India's G20 theme, "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam."

CULTURE CORRIDOR:

- An international initiative called the **Culture Corridor - G20 Digital Museum** was planned for the G20 Leaders' Summit in India.
- On September 9, 2023, this exhibition will be presented at Bharatmandapam, the location of the G20 Leaders' Summit, and it will then be made available to the general public.
- This Culture Corridor - G20 Digital Museum, which is intended to be a G20 legacy project, is a first-of-its-kind collaborative project that has invited involvement from G20 countries to establish a "museum in the making."
- The Culture Corridor will provide an effective forum for advancing information exchange, inclusion, and equality, as well as for building a feeling of shared identity. It will also serve to promote understanding and appreciation of various cultural manifestations.

ITEMS AT DISPLAY:

- **RIGVEDA:** The Rigveda is one of the oldest religious scriptures in the world and is said to have been written more than 3,000 years ago in ancient India.
- **ASHTADHYAYI:** An **old Sanskrit grammar treatise called "Ashtadhyayi"** was written by the Indian grammarian Panini. It is one of the most important and influential books on grammar and linguistics in both the history of the globe and India.
- **MONA LISA:** **Leonardo da Vinci**, a well-known Italian painter, created the "**Mona Lisa**." He is regarded as one of the greatest Renaissance artists.
- **GUTENBERG BIBLE:** The **42-line Bible**, sometimes referred to as **the Gutenberg Bible**, is one of the most well-known and important books to have ever been printed. Johannes Gutenberg, a German blacksmith, goldsmith, printer, and publisher, is credited with printing the Gutenberg Bible.
- **MEXICO'S COATLICUE:** In **Aztec mythology**, Coatlicue is a significant deity whose name is frequently translated as "Serpent Skirt" or "Serpent Her Skirt."
- **MAGNA CARTA OF UK:** The Magna Carta, also known as "**Magna Carta Libertatum**" (the Great Charter of Liberties), is a historical document that was essential in the creation of British constitutional law and individual rights.
- **FAHUA LIDDED JAR FROM CHINA:** Known also as "**Fahua zhiwen**," the **Fahua lidded jar** is a kind of ceramic vase that was created in China during the **Yuan dynasty (1271–1368)** and later rose to prominence during the **Ming dynasty (1368–1644)**.

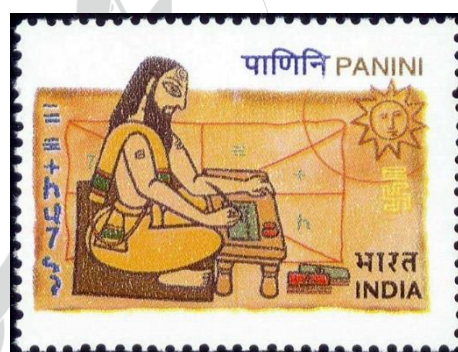


Figure 1: PANINI's ASHTADHYAYI



Figure 2: FAHUA JAR

IMPORTANC OF SOFT POWER:

- **CULTURAL DIPLOMACY:** The importance of culture in diplomatic operations is vital. Countries can improve intercultural understanding, relationships, and intergovernmental discussion through cultural exchange programs.
- **ATTRACTING TOURISTS:** Historical sites, dynamic cultural events, and a rich cultural legacy can all draw visitors. A country's economy benefits from tourism since it provides income and jobs.
- **MEDIA AND ENTERTAINMENT:** The ability to share a nation's tales and values with a large audience is made possible by the media and entertainment sectors' global reach, which includes music, cinema, and television.
 - This can sway ideas, mold perceptions, and spark interest in a nation's culture.
- **PROMOTION OF VALUES:** A nation's beliefs and tenets are frequently reflected in its culture. Sharing these principles through cultural expression can have an impact on how the world talks about crucial issues like environmental sustainability, social fairness, and human rights.
- **SCHOLARLY EXCHANGES:** The collaboration between nations in education and research is strengthened by international student, scholar, and academic exchanges.
 - This encourages a spirit of intellectual exchange and intercultural learning, adding to the soft power of academics and the educational system.



Figure 3: COATLICUE

TYPES OF SOFT POWER AND EXAMPLES:

Type of Soft Power	Description
Cultural Soft Power	India's rich cultural heritage, including music, dance, art, literature, cuisine, and festivals, has a global appeal. Bollywood films and classical dance forms like Bharatanatyam and Kathak are recognized worldwide. Yoga and Ayurveda have gained international popularity.
Education Soft Power	India is home to prestigious educational institutions like the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs). Indian students and scholars contribute significantly to global academia. Indian-origin CEOs and professionals in tech companies enhance India's education soft power.
Diaspora Soft Power	The Indian diaspora, particularly in countries like the United States and the United Kingdom, plays a vital role in promoting Indian culture and values. They are involved in various fields, including politics, business, and entertainment, fostering cross-cultural understanding.
Spiritual Soft Power	India is the birthplace of religions like Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism. Spiritual leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Swami Vivekananda have had a profound impact globally. India's spirituality and philosophy attract seekers from around the world.
Economic Soft Power	India's emerging economy and large consumer base make it an attractive market for businesses worldwide. Indian companies like Tata, Infosys, and Reliance are global players, contributing to India's economic soft power.
Democracy and Values	As the world's largest democracy, India's commitment to democratic values, secularism, and diversity serves as a model for many nations. India's pluralistic society is often cited as an example of peaceful coexistence among diverse communities.

Soft Power Through Media	Bollywood, with its global reach, is a significant component of India's soft power. Indian news outlets like NDTV and The Times of India have international readership. Social media influencers and digital content creators also contribute to India's media-driven soft power.
Sports Diplomacy	Cricket is a passion in India, and the Indian Premier League (IPL) has a massive following worldwide. Indian athletes have made their mark in sports like badminton, wrestling, and chess, enhancing India's sports diplomacy and soft power.

