

**Inputs for the Statement of the Hon’ble Education Minister, Government of
India at the 5th East Asia Summit (EAS) Education Ministers Meeting
(5th EAS EMM) on 1 October 2021 (Agenda item 5)**

Hon’ble Chairperson, distinguished delegates, excellencies.

It gives me immense pleasure to participate in this virtual meeting of the East Asia Summit Education Ministers. Today’s meeting will give us a chance to reaffirm our commitment towards the shared educational priorities articulated in the Manila Action Plan. This cooperation is especially relevant at a time when countries across the globe are trying to build back resilient education systems in face of the heavy onslaught of the Covid 19 pandemic.

Excellencies! I am very happy to share with you that India announced a new National Education Policy in July last year. The objectives of this policy are aligned to the same principles that the Manila Plan of Action upholds. NEP 2020 is built on the foundational pillars of Access, Equity, Quality, Affordability and Accountability. It lays emphasis on universalization of education, improving foundational literacy and numeracy, flexibility in choice of subjects, multiple entry- exit with credit transfer, vocational education and skilling, use of technology, setting up a National Research Foundation for strengthening the research ecosystem and enhancing international collaborations. The focus is on building global competencies to fulfill 21st century aspirations.

In tandem with Manila Action Plan’s emphasis on digital and blended learning, and realizing its importance for educational continuity, India has taken several initiatives in this direction especially during the pandemic. Under the guidance of our Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi we launched the PM eVidya programme for multi modal delivery of education through online, TV, Radio, and mobile modes. e-learning has been facilitated through digital platforms like DIKSHA, SWAYAM, Virtual labs, e-PG Pathshala and National Digital Library to name a few.

To address the issue of digital divide, we made extensive use of TV channels-SWAYAM PRABHA, a group of 34 DTH channels, and Radio including Community Radio. With the help of these we have succeeded in providing education 24x7 to students in the remotest areas. Simultaneously we are also ramping up our digital infrastructure and facilitating access to digital devices.

Friends, India greatly values educational cooperation with EAS countries. The establishment of Nalanda University and ASEAN-India University Network have been envisaged to foster overall educational cooperation between member countries of the EAS.

I am happy to share with you that Nalanda university for which 12 EAS countries have signed MoUs, is offering courses in subjects that are relevant to the core ideas of the EAS participating countries and has plans to expand to cover new subjects. The university is actively promoting academic engagements with other EAS universities and has entered into collaborations with 4 universities. So far 38 students have benefitted from the ASEAN Fellowships for studying in this university, and 20 more will avail it this year. The university is also anchoring the ASEAN-India University Network .

In order to further enhance educational collaborations with EAS partners, our Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi had announced 1000 Integrated PhD Fellowships to ASEAN students to study at our prestigious Indian Institutes of Technology. So far 65 students have been selected under the scheme.

Excellencies ! The Govt of India runs the Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration between India and other countries in which 8 EAS countries are partnering. Under another scheme called 'Global Initiative for Academic Network or GIAN, foreign faculty are invited to teach in Indian institutions. So far 990 courses have been taught by faculty from 10 EAS countries.

Dear colleagues, the ASEAN-India Hackathon organized by the Indian Ministry of Education in February this year is another example of India's commitment towards furthering student interactions with EAS countries. The hackathon brought together 330 students and 110 mentors from the 10 ASEAN countries and India.

They worked together online and competed as 55 teams to come up with innovative solutions to 11 problem statements.

Dear colleagues! I take this opportunity to reaffirm the importance that my country attaches to cooperation with EAS countries. I reiterate India's commitment to working on the partnerships that we have forged over all these years, and our resolve for further enhancing our engagement in the education and skill sectors. Acknowledging the collective efforts of the EAS participating countries for ensuring inclusive and equitable, quality education, and for enhancing research and academic collaboration including in TVET, I reaffirm India's support in this joint endeavour.

Thank you.