

CHAPTER 4

Alternative Centres of Power

CBSE Class 12 · Political Science ·
Contemporary World Politics · Chapter 4

CBSE · Political Science · Class 12

WHAT THIS CHAPTER DOES

A Trace the European Union from the Marshall Plan to Maastricht.

B Explain ASEAN's founding, the ASEAN Way, and the three pillars.

Boards prep that builds confidence, not anxiety.

TODAY'S MISSION

Today's mission

1

Trace the European Union from the Marshall Plan to Maastricht.

2

Explain ASEAN's founding, the ASEAN Way, and the three pillars.

3

Account for China's economic rise after 1978 + India-China ties.

4

Score 6/7 marks on this chapter's slice.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Why this chapter matters

1

5-7 marks every CBSE board paper — EU/ASEAN/China appear annually.

2

Explains today's multipolar world — the Quad, BRICS, India's Act East policy.

3

Builds on Ch 3 (US hegemony) — these are the alternatives to a single dominant power.

TOPIC

A

The European Union

THEOREM · LOAD-BEARING RESULT

From war-shattered Europe to the EU

“ After 1945, Western Europe — economically devastated and politically fragmented — chose deep economic and political INTEGRATION as its path back to peace and prosperity. Step by step, this produced the EUROPEAN UNION.

STATEMENT

The MARSHALL PLAN (1948) provided massive US aid and was administered through the OEEC, training Europeans in joint economic management. The EUROPEAN COAL AND STEEL COMMUNITY (ECSC,

WHY THIS MATTERS

- Two devastating world wars convinced Europeans that integration — not balance-of-power rivalry — was the only escape from cycles of conflict.

WATCH OUT FOR

NOTE Do not confuse the dates: 1951 = ECSC, 1957 = Treaty of Rome (EEC), 1992 = Maastricht (EU).

TOPIC

B

Why the EU counts as an alternative centre

TOPIC

Three dimensions of EU power

ECONOMIC INFLUENCE

The EU is the world's largest INTEGRATED MARKET — twenty-seven member states, free movement of goods, services, capital and labour, common external tariffs, a customs union and a SINGLE CURRENCY, the EURO, used by most members. At the time NCERT was written, the EU was the

POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC INFLUENCE

POLITICALLY, two EU members — BRITAIN and FRANCE — hold PERMANENT seats on the UN SECURITY COUNCIL with veto power, and other members rotate as non-permanent seats. The EU maintains the world's largest combined diplomatic corps and aid

MILITARY INFLUENCE

MILITARILY, the EU's combined defence budget is the SECOND-LARGEST AFTER THE UNITED STATES. France and Britain are NUCLEAR-WEAPON states; together with NATO they anchor European security. The EU also has a growing space, satellite, intelligence and cyber

BUT — LIMITS TO A SINGLE EUROPEAN VOICE

The EU is also DIVIDED on foreign policy: members disagreed on the 2003 Iraq war, on relations with Russia and on enlargement. There is no single European head of state or single foreign minister with binding authority. This is why NCERT says the EU has REAL INFLUENCE but

TOPIC

C

ASEAN — South East Asia organises itself

WORKED EXAMPLE

The Bangkok Declaration and the birth of ASEAN

- 1** **CONTEXT:** South East Asia in the 1960s was scarred by the Vietnam War, decolonisation and Cold-War rivalry; small states feared being dominated by greater powers.
- 2** **FOUNDING:** On 8 August 1967, INDONESIA, MALAYSIA, the PHILIPPINES, SINGAPORE and THAILAND signed the BANGKOK DECLARATION, creating the ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH EAST ASIAN NATIONS (ASEAN).
- 3** **GOALS:** To accelerate ECONOMIC GROWTH, SOCIAL progress and CULTURAL development of the region, and to promote PEACE and STABILITY through respect for the rule of law.
- 4** **GROWTH:** BRUNEI joined in 1984, VIETNAM in 1995, LAOS and MYANMAR in 1997, and CAMBODIA in 1999 — taking the membership to TEN.
- 5** **ASEAN WAY:** ASEAN evolved a distinctive style of cooperation — INFORMAL, NON-CONFRONTATIONAL, CONSENSUS-BASED, with strong respect for SOVEREIGNTY and NON-INTERFERENCE in members' internal affairs.

TOPIC

D

The ASEAN Community — three pillars

TOPIC

The ASEAN Community rests on three pillars

ASEAN SECURITY COMMUNITY

The SECURITY pillar commits members to settle disputes peacefully and to build mutual trust. Its main instrument is the ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM (ARF), set up in 1994, which brings together ASEAN with major powers — INDIA, CHINA, the UNITED STATES, RUSSIA, JAPAN,

ASEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY

The ECONOMIC pillar aims to make ASEAN a SINGLE MARKET and PRODUCTION BASE with free flow of goods, services, investment and skilled labour. ASEAN has built FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS with India, China, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand, and was central

ASEAN SOCIO-CULTURAL COMMUNITY

The SOCIO-CULTURAL pillar fosters PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE ties, common identity, cooperation in education, health, environment and disaster management. It seeks to build a sense of 'ASEAN-ness' beyond inter-governmental cooperation, through student exchange,

ASEAN WAY AND SIGNIFICANCE

All three pillars work through the ASEAN WAY of informal consultation and consensus, in contrast to the EU's legalistic supranational structure. The result is a Southeast Asia that has avoided major inter-state war for over half a century, hosts the principal Asian security

TOPIC

E

The rise of China

WORKED EXAMPLE

Deng Xiaoping's reforms and China's economic ascent

- 1** **BACKGROUND:** The 1949 communist revolution under MAO ZEDONG built a Soviet-style state-planned economy, with land collectivised and industry state-owned. Growth was slow and Chinese living standards were low.
- 2** **1973 — FOUR MODERNISATIONS:** Premier Zhou Enlai (with Deng Xiaoping's support) announced 'Four Modernisations' — of AGRICULTURE, INDUSTRY, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY, and DEFENCE — flagging that reform was coming.
- 3** **1978 — OPEN DOOR + SOCIALIST MARKET ECONOMY:** Deng Xiaoping launched sweeping reforms — opening China to foreign trade and investment ('OPEN DOOR') while retaining Communist Party political control. The model was named the 'SOCIALIST MARKET ECONOMY'.
- 4** **1982 — AGRICULTURE:** Collective farms were dismantled and the HOUSEHOLD RESPONSIBILITY SYSTEM gave farming families autonomy and incentives, dramatically lifting agricultural output and rural incomes.

TOPIC

F

India and China

THEOREM · LOAD-BEARING RESULT

India-China relations — from 1962 to today

“ Relations between Asia's two largest civilisations have moved from **CONFLICT** (1962) to cautious **COOPERATION** (1990s onwards), with friction remaining over the boundary, Tibet and Pakistan.

STATEMENT

Key dates: (a) 1962 SINO-INDIAN WAR over the Himalayan boundary, ending in Chinese military advantage and a long freeze in ties; (b) 1976 — full DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS restored; (c) 1988

WHY THIS MATTERS

- Both countries gained from de-escalation: stability allowed each to focus on economic growth and to influence the wider Asian order through groupings like BRICS and the SCO.

WATCH OUT FOR

NOTE Quote the FOUR signposts — 1962, 1976, 1988, 1993 — for full marks. Avoid the cliché that relations are 'still frozen' — they are competitive but engaged.

TOPIC

G

Japan + South Korea

TOPIC

Japan and South Korea

JAPAN

Japan rebuilt from the destruction of the Second World War into a globally important industrial economy. By the late twentieth century it was the world's **THIRD-LARGEST ECONOMY**, leading in automobiles, electronics, robotics and precision engineering. Its constitutional pacifism and US security alliance limit its military profile, but its diplomatic, economic and developmental footprint — through aid, infrastructure financing (JICA).

SOUTH KOREA

South Korea transformed from a war-ravaged country in 1953 into one of Asia's manufacturing and technology powers — home to Samsung, LG, Hyundai and a leading shipbuilding and steel industry. Its 'developmental state' model of state-guided industrialisation became a template studied across Asia. South Korea is now an OECD member, a major exporter and a soft-power producer (the global rise of K-pop and Korean

TOPIC

When the EU was formed

TRAP → TRUTH

× **MISTAKE** The European Union was created right after World War II in 1945.

✓ **CORRECT** Post-war European cooperation began with the Marshall Plan (1948) and the OEEC; the ECSC was created in 1951 and the EEC by the Treaty of Rome in 1957. The EUROPEAN UNION itself was established only by the MAASTRICHT TREATY of 1992. Do not collapse forty years of step-by-step integration into a single 1945 date.

TOPIC

EU is only an economic bloc

TRAP → TRUTH

- × **MISTAKE** The EU matters only economically — it has no political or military weight.
- ✓ **CORRECT** NCERT stresses that the EU has ECONOMIC influence (second-largest economy in the early 2000s, single market, euro as a major reserve currency), POLITICAL + DIPLOMATIC influence (two permanent UNSC seats — Britain and France — and a large diplomatic corps), and MILITARY influence (the world's second-largest combined defence budget after the US, with the nuclear arsenals of Britain and France). Treating it as 'just economic' loses two-thirds of the answer.

TOPIC

Bangkok Declaration members

TRAP → TRUTH

× **MISTAKE** ASEAN was founded by ten countries in 1967.

✓ **CORRECT** ASEAN was founded by the BANGKOK DECLARATION of 1967 with only FIVE founding members — INDONESIA, MALAYSIA, the PHILIPPINES, SINGAPORE and THAILAND. Brunei, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar and Cambodia joined later, taking the membership to ten. Get the founding five right.

TOPIC

ASEAN Way

TRAP → TRUTH

× **MISTAKE** The 'ASEAN Way' means strict majority-voting like the EU.

✓ **CORRECT** The ASEAN WAY is a style of cooperation that is INFORMAL, NON-CONFRONTATIONAL and COOPERATIVE. It rests on respect for national SOVEREIGNTY, non-interference in members' internal affairs, and CONSENSUS-BASED decisions rather than majority votes or binding supranational rules. It is the opposite of the EU's legalistic, supranational style.

TOPIC

Three pillars of the ASEAN Community

TRAP → TRUTH

× **MISTAKE** The ASEAN Community has only one pillar — economic cooperation.

✓ **CORRECT** The ASEAN COMMUNITY (envisaged in Vision 2020, formally launched in 2015) rests on THREE PILLARS: (1) the ASEAN SECURITY COMMUNITY (peace, conflict resolution, the ARF since 1994); (2) the ASEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY (a single market and production base, FTAs); (3) the ASEAN SOCIO-CULTURAL COMMUNITY (people-to-people ties, education, culture). All three are required for full marks.

TOPIC

When China's economic rise began

TRAP → TRUTH

× **MISTAKE** China's economic rise began with the 1949 Revolution under Mao.

✓ **CORRECT** Mao's 1949 revolution built state socialism but kept China relatively poor and isolated. The DRAMATIC ECONOMIC RISE began only with DENG XIAOPING'S REFORMS launched in 1978 — the 'open door' policy, the SOCIALIST MARKET ECONOMY, agricultural decollectivisation (1982), SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONES (SEZs) to attract foreign investment, and WTO membership in 2001. Mark the date as 1978, not 1949.

TOPIC

India-China since 1962

TRAP → TRUTH

× **MISTAKE** India-China relations have been frozen since the 1962 war.

✓ **CORRECT** After the 1962 border war, relations were frozen for over a decade; but **NORMALISATION** began in 1976 with the restoration of full diplomatic ties, accelerated with **RAJIV GANDHI'S 1988 VISIT**, and was institutionalised by the 1993 and 1996 agreements on **PEACE AND TRANQUILLITY** along the Line of Actual Control. Trade has grown rapidly. There remains friction (boundary, Tibet, Pakistan) but the relationship is no longer 'frozen'.

TOPIC

Japan + South Korea

TRAP → TRUTH

× **MISTAKE** Japan and South Korea count as Western powers, not Asian centres.

✓ **CORRECT** NCERT lists JAPAN (third-largest economy at the time of writing) and SOUTH KOREA (a major manufacturing and technology power) as IMPORTANT ASIAN ECONOMIC CENTRES. They are alternative centres in economic terms even if both are close US security allies. Do not omit them when listing Asian centres of power.

TOPPER TEMPLATE · MARK-BY-MARK

5-mark: 'Examine the European Union as an alternative centre of power.'

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1</p> <p>ORIGIN + EVOLUTION</p> <p>1 m</p> | <p>After the Second World War, US aid through the MARSHALL PLAN (1948) and the OEEC began European economic reconstruction. Step-by-step integration followed: the EUROPEAN COAL AND STEEL COMMUNITY (ECSC, 1951), the EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY (EEC) created by the TREATY OF ROME (1957), and finally the EUROPEAN UNION established by the MAASTRICHT TREATY of 1992, with a common currency, the EURO, introduced soon after.</p> |
| <p>2</p> <p>ECONOMIC INFLUENCE</p> <p>1 m</p> | <p>ECONOMICALLY, the EU became the world's SECOND-LARGEST ECONOMY in the early 2000s with a single market, free movement of goods, services, capital and people, and the euro as a major international reserve currency — a serious challenger to the US dollar.</p> |
| <p>3</p> <p>POLITICAL + DIPLOMATIC INFLUENCE</p> <p>1 m</p> | <p>POLITICALLY AND DIPLOMATICALLY, the EU has two permanent UNSC seats (BRITAIN and FRANCE) plus several non-permanent seats over time, a large global diplomatic corps and aid budget, and a collective voice in the WTO and climate negotiations.</p> |
| <p>4</p> <p>MILITARY INFLUENCE</p> <p>1 m</p> | <p>MILITARILY, the EU's combined defence budget is the SECOND-LARGEST after the United States; Britain and France possess nuclear weapons, and the EU has a growing space and intelligence capacity.</p> |
| <p>5</p> <p>CONCLUSION + LIMITS</p> <p>1 m</p> | <p>Thus the EU is an 'alternative centre' along ECONOMIC, POLITICAL and MILITARY dimensions, though its members differ on foreign policy, which limits a single 'European' voice. It illustrates how regional integration can create real countervailing weight to US hegemony.</p> |

TOPPER TEMPLATE · MARK-BY-MARK

5-mark: 'Discuss the objectives and the three pillars of the ASEAN Community.'

1 FOUNDING
1 m

The ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH EAST ASIAN NATIONS (ASEAN) was founded by the BANGKOK DECLARATION of 1967 by five members — INDONESIA, MALAYSIA, the PHILIPPINES, SINGAPORE and THAILAND — to accelerate economic growth, social progress and cultural development, and to promote peace and stability in the region. Membership later grew to TEN.

2 ASEAN WAY
1 m

ASEAN works through the distinctive 'ASEAN WAY' — INFORMAL, NON-CONFRONTATIONAL and CONSENSUS-BASED cooperation that respects national sovereignty and non-interference. This style is in contrast to the legalistic supranational model of the EU.

3 THREE PILLARS
2 m

Under Vision 2020, ASEAN built the ASEAN COMMUNITY on THREE PILLARS: (1) the ASEAN SECURITY COMMUNITY — peaceful settlement of disputes, supported by the ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM (ARF, 1994) which brings together ASEAN with major powers including India, China, the US, Russia and Japan for security dialogue; (2) the ASEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY — a single market and production base, free trade agreements with India and others; (3) the ASEAN SOCIO-CULTURAL COMMUNITY — people-to-people ties, education, culture and identity-building.

4 SIGNIFICANCE + CONCLUSION
1 m

ASEAN has become a significant alternative centre in Asia, mediating disputes in a strategically tense region and engaging India through the LOOK EAST / ACT EAST policy. Its consensus-based, economically-driven model offers a contrast to both US hegemony and Chinese assertion.

TOPPER TEMPLATE · MARK-BY-MARK

5-mark: 'Account for the rise of the Chinese economy after 1978.'

- 1 PRE-1978 SETTING**
1 m

After the 1949 communist revolution under MAO ZEDONG, China built a Soviet-style state-planned economy but remained relatively poor and isolated. Deng Xiaoping had already announced 'FOUR MODERNISATIONS' (agriculture, industry, science and technology, defence) in 1973.
- 2 1978 REFORMS + OPEN DOOR**
1 m

In 1978, DENG XIAOPING launched sweeping market reforms — the 'OPEN DOOR' policy and the 'SOCIALIST MARKET ECONOMY' — combining the political control of the Communist Party with market-based production and trade.
- 3 AGRICULTURE + SEZS**
1 m

Agriculture was DECOLLECTIVISED in 1982, giving farming families autonomy and dramatically raising output. SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONES (SEZs) were created along the coast to attract FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT and integrate China into world trade.
- 4 WTO + GLOBAL INTEGRATION**
1 m

China joined the WORLD TRADE ORGANISATION in 2001, accelerating exports and becoming the 'world's factory'. By the 2000s it had become the world's SECOND-LARGEST economy and a leading trade partner of most countries.
- 5 CONCLUSION**
1 m

Thus China's rise rests on DENG'S 1978 REFORMS — open door + socialist market economy + SEZs + decollectivisation + WTO accession — producing four decades of high growth and making China the principal Asian alternative centre of power.

PYQ PATTERNS

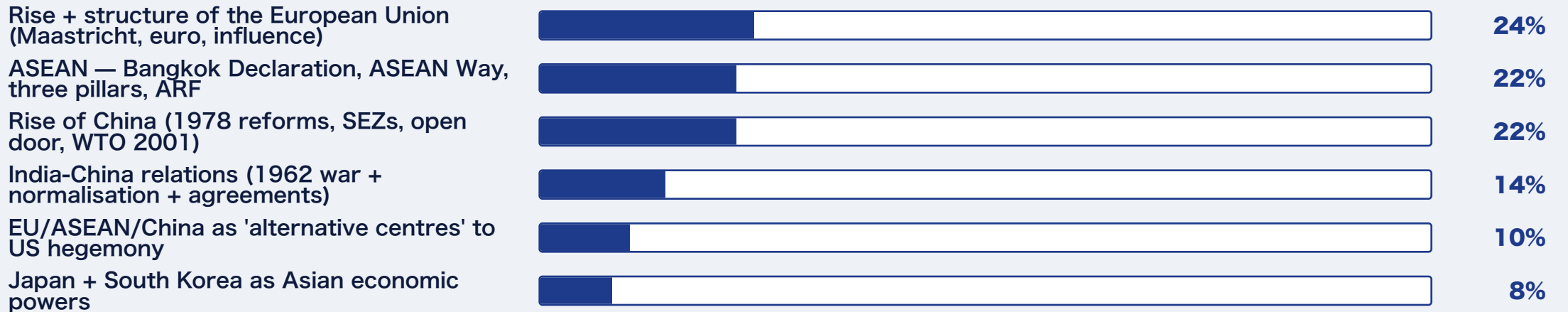
Top PYQ patterns to drill

#1	Examine the European Union as an alternative centre of power. (5 marks)	2018, 2021, 2024
#2	Discuss the objectives and the three pillars of the ASEAN Community. (5 marks)	2019, 2022, 2023
#3	Account for the rise of the Chinese economy after 1978. (5 marks)	Annual
#4	Describe India-China relations since 1962. (3 marks)	2020, 2023
#5	What is the 'ASEAN Way'? (3 marks)	2021, 2024

MARKS DISTRIBUTION

10-year marks distribution

10-YEAR PYQ MARKS DISTRIBUTION



RECAP · MEMORISE THESE

Recap

1 European Union — Staircase from Marshall Plan 1948 to MAASTRICHT 1992 + euro. Influence in three dimensions: economic, political (UK+France UNSC), military (2nd-largest defence budget).

2 ASEAN — BANGKOK 1967 by 5 founders. ASEAN WAY = informal + consensus. Three pillars: SECURITY (ARF 1994), ECONOMIC (single market), SOCIO-CULTURAL.

3 China + India-China — Deng 1978 reforms → SEZs → WTO 2001 → 2nd-largest economy. India-China: 1962 war → 1976 normalisation → 1988 Rajiv → 1993/96 LAC agreements.

WHAT'S NEXT

What's next

- Chapter 5 — Contemporary South Asia.
- Sit the 15-MCQ Quick Drill.
- Then the full Board-Pattern Paper — 25 marks.

You've mastered the alternative centres.

EU staircase, ASEAN pillars, Deng's 1978 reforms — now prove it.

readyforboards.com

Helpline: +91 70330 05444

Boards prep that builds confidence, not anxiety.