



Infrastructure Development in North East India

For Prelims: Hornbill Festival, Kaladan Multimodal Transit Project, NEIDS, National Bamboo Mission, North Eastern Region Vision 2020, Digital North East Vision 2022, BCIM corridor

For Mains: Government Initiatives to Promote North-East Connectivity and its Significance

Why in News?

Recently, India's Finance Minister announced the execution of **several rail, road and air connectivity projects worth Rs. 1,34,200 crore in the northeast.**

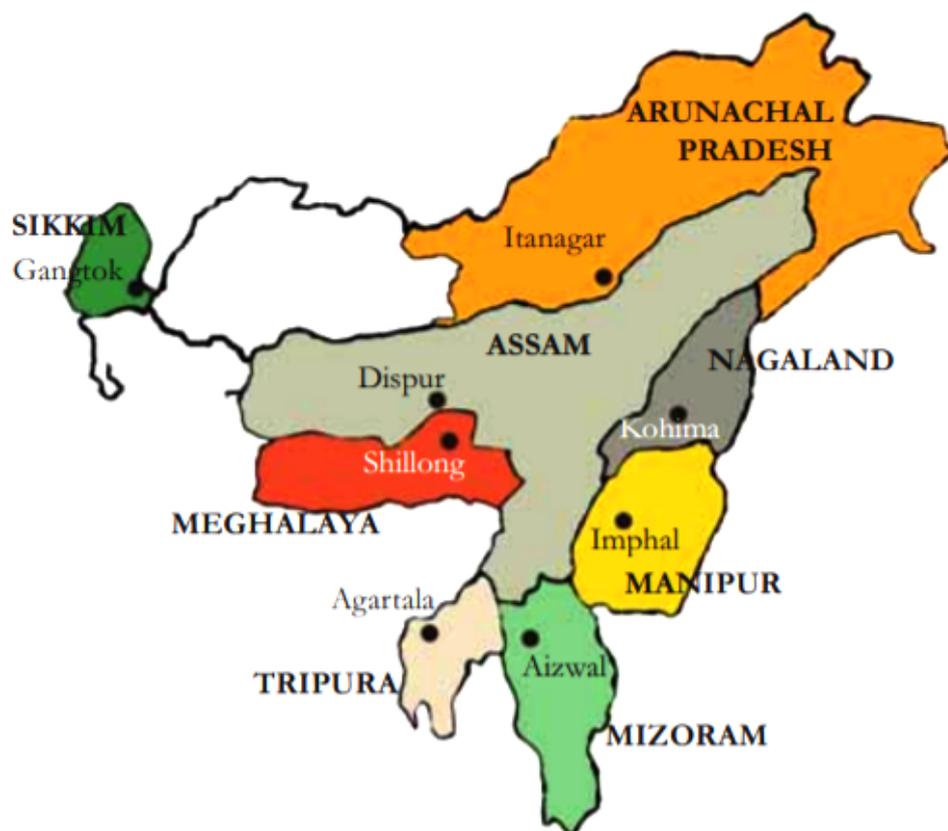
- These projects will help in **bringing the rest of India closer to the North-East** and vice-versa.
- **Connectivity with Southeast Asian countries** will also remain an area of focus.

What are the major Infrastructure Projects in the Northeast?

- **Rail, Road and Air Connectivity:**
 - **4,000 km of roads, 20 railway projects** for 2,011 km and **15 air connectivity projects** are being developed.
- **Waterways Connectivity:**
 - National waterways on the Ganges, Brahmaputra and Barak rivers (**National Waterways (NW)-1 on the Ganges, NW-2 on Brahmaputra and NW-16 on Barak**) are under development to provide better connectivity.
 - As the cost of travel through water is the least when compared to air, road and rail networks, **the riverine systems of India and Bangladesh can be leveraged for all types of transportation.**
 - The number of **'Indo-Bangladesh Protocol Routes'** was increased from **8 to 10.**
 - Along the Brahmaputra River, the **development of the entire area between Sadiya and Dhubri in Assam is ongoing** for improved connectivity.
 - **Multimodal hub that includes a ship repairing port at Pandu, four tourist jetties, and 11 floating terminals on the Brahmaputra** in Guwahati is under construction.
- **Eastern Waterways Connectivity Transport Grid:**
 - It will connect the northeast with the rest of India by providing 5,000 km of navigable waterways.
- **North Eastern Region Power System Improvement Project (NERPSIP):**
 - **(NERPSIP)** is a major step towards **economic development of the North Eastern Region** through strengthening of Intra - State Transmission and Distribution systems.
 - Government is also emphasizing on projects related to **power transmission and distribution, mobile networks, 4G, and broadband connectivity.**
- **Prime Minister's Development Initiative for North East (PM-DevINE):** It was announced in **Union Budget 2022-23.** This will fund infrastructure in the spirit of **PM Gati Shakti**, and social development projects based on felt needs of the North-East.

What is the Importance of the North-East Region?

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- **Strategic Location:** The [North-East region](#) is strategically located with access to the traditional domestic market of eastern India, along with proximity to the major states in the east and adjacent countries such as Bangladesh and Myanmar.
- **Links with Southeast Asia:** With [Association of Southeast Asian Nations \(ASEAN\)](#) engagement becoming a central pillar of India's foreign policy direction, North-East states play an important role as the physical bridge between India and Southeast Asia.
 - The India's [Act East Policy](#) places the northeastern states on the territorial frontier of India's eastward engagement.
- **Economic Significance:** North-East has immense natural resources, accounting for around 34% of the country's water resources and almost 40% of India's hydropower potential.
 - Sikkim is India's first [organic state](#).
- **Tourism Potential:** Northeast of India is home to many wildlife sanctuaries like **Kaziranga National Park** famous for the [one horned rhinoceros](#), Manas National Park, Nameri, Orang, Dibru Saikhowa in Assam, Namdapha in Arunachal Pradesh, Balpakram in Meghalaya, Keibul Lamjao in Manipur, Intanki in Nagaland, Khangchendzonga in Sikkim.
- **Cultural Significance:** Tribes in North-East have their own culture. Popular festivals include [Hornbill Festival](#) of Nagaland, Pang Lhabsol of Sikkim, etc.

What are the Different Government Schemes and Initiatives for North-East Region?

- **Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER):** A Department of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) was established in 2001. It was elevated to a full ministry in 2004.
- **Infrastructure Related Initiatives:**
 - [Bharatmala Pariyojana \(BMP\)](#), for road infrastructure.
 - [Regional Connectivity Scheme \(RCS\)-UDAN](#) to make flying more affordable.
- **Connectivity Projects:**
 - [Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Project](#) (Myanmar) to develop water connectivity.

- **Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar (BCIM) Corridor.**
- **India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway.**
- **Tourism Promotion:**
 - [Swadesh Darshan Scheme](#) of the Ministry of Tourism.
- **North-East Industrial Development Scheme (NEIDS):** In order to promote employment in the North East States, the Government is incentivizing primarily the MSME Sector through this scheme.
- **The National Bamboo Mission** has a special significance for the Northeast.
- **North Eastern Region Vision 2020:** The document provides an overarching framework for the development of the North-East region to bring it at par with other developed regions under which different Ministries, including the Ministry of DoNER have undertaken various initiatives.
- **Digital North East Vision 2022:** It emphasises leveraging digital technologies to transform lives of people of the north east and enhance the ease of living.

Way Forward

- Investing in infrastructure would generate employment and would **play a major role in thwarting [secessionist movements](#) in the North-East region.**
- India's North East is surrounded by national and international borders, so, national and international infrastructure development will be the best choice for inclusive development in India's Northeast.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question

Q. If you travel by road from Kohima to Kottayam, what is the minimum number of States within India through which you can travel, including the origin and the destination? (2017)

- (a) 6
- (b) 7
- (c) 8
- (d) 9

Ans: (b)

Exp:

- If a person travels through road from Kohima (Nagaland) to Kottayam (Kerala), he shall pass through minimum 7 states and could choose between two alternate routes:
 - Route 1: Nagaland, Assam, West Bengal, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Kerala.
 - Route 2: Nagaland, Assam, West Bengal, Odisha, Telangana, Karnataka and Kerala.
- Therefore, option (b) is the correct answer.

Q. Consider the following pairs: (2014)

1. Dampa Tiger Reserve : Mizoram
2. Gumti Wildlife Sanctuary : Sikkim
3. Saramati Peak : Nagaland

Which of the above pairs is/are correctly matched?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (c)

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