



## 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.**

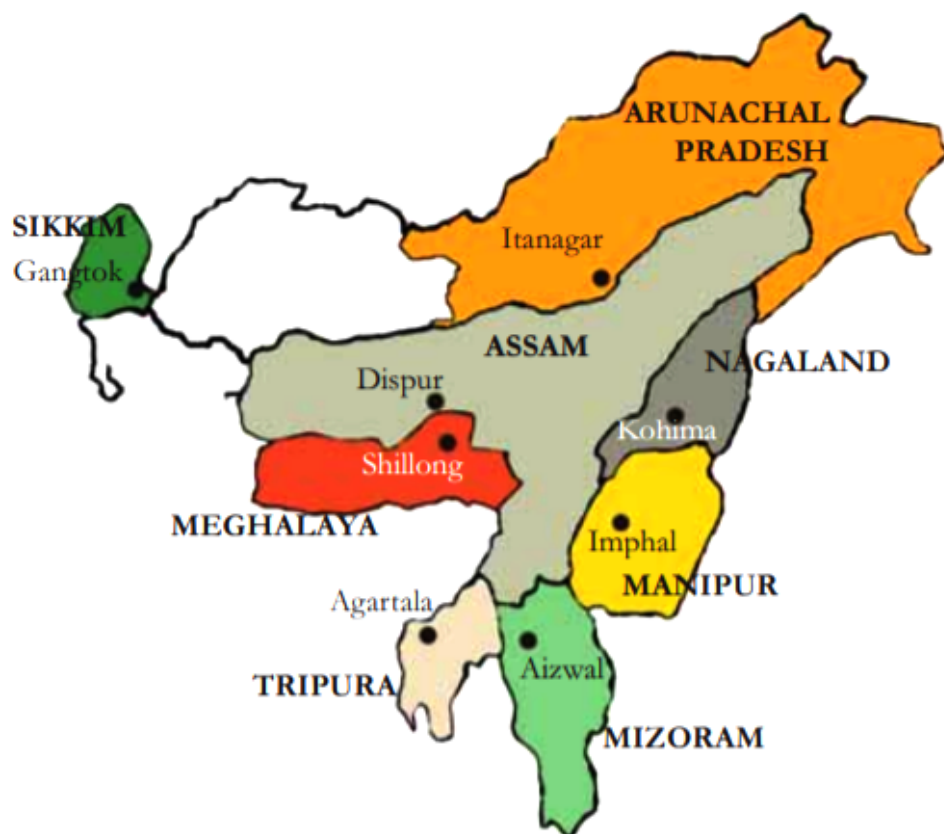
- These projects will help in **bringing the rest of India closer to the North-East** and vice-versa.
- **Connectivity with Southeast Asian countries** will also remain an area of focus.

### 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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