

India's Act East Policy

January 25, 2021

What is India's Act East policy?

- India's 'Act East' policy is a diplomatic initiative to promote economic, strategic and cultural relations with the vast Asia-Pacific region at different levels.
- **It was launched in 2014**, with this launch India's Look East policy(1991) has morphed into a proactive Act East policy, which envisages accelerated across-the-board engagement between the two growth poles of a vibrant Asia.
- It revolves around four C's- Culture, Commerce, Connectivity and Capacity building
- India's Act East Policy focuses on the extended neighbourhood in the Asia-Pacific region.
- The policy which was originally conceived as an economic initiative, has gained political, strategic and cultural dimensions including establishment of institutional mechanisms for dialogue and cooperation.
- Act East Policy has placed emphasis on India-ASEAN cooperation in our domestic agenda on infrastructure, manufacturing, trade, skills, urban renewal, smart cities, Make in India and other initiatives.

Principles and Objectives

The key principles and objectives of "Act East Policy" is to promote economic cooperation, cultural ties and develop strategic relationship with countries in the Asia-Pacific region through continuous engagement at bilateral, regional and multilateral levels thereby providing enhanced connectivity to the States of North Eastern Region with other countries in our neighbourhood

About Look East Policy

- This policy has emerged as an important foreign policy initiative of India in the post-Cold War period.
- It was launched in 1991 by the Narasimha Rao government with the aim of developing political contacts, increasing economic integration and forging security cooperation with countries of Southeast Asia.
- India's "Look East" policy was developed and enacted during the governments of Prime Ministers P.V. Narasimha Rao (1991–1996) and Atal Bihari Vajpayee (1998–2004)
- Along with economic liberalisation and moving away from Cold War-era policies and activities, India's strategy has focused on forging close economic and commercial ties, increasing strategic and security cooperation and the emphasis of historic cultural and ideological links
- The policy marked a shift in India's perspective of the world, with the strategic and economic importance of Southeast Asia to India's national interests being recognised.
- The second phase of the policy which began in 2003 extends the coverage of the Look East policy from Australia to East Asia, with Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as its core
- It also began strategic and military cooperation with nations concerned by the expansion of China's economic and strategic influence
- The success of Look East policy enthused the Mandarins of South-Block to develop the policy into more action oriented, project and outcome based policy