

Act East Policy centric conference in Shillong



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The increasingly bigger role of the “Third Space” in every economic sphere will be richly explored in a [2](#)-day conference titled “India’s North Eastern States and Eastern Neighbors: Engaging for Connectivity Culture and Prosperity by an Intelligent Third Space” at Shillong starting this December 5. Divya Jeevan Foundation – Asian Confluence, which is a civil society institution at Shillong trying to contribute towards implementation of a forward looking Look East Policy which have aptly upgraded as Act East Policy in tune with the present NDA government vision of India’s emerging position in Asian and the World, in collaboration with Indian Council for World Affairs, a unit of Union Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India will organize the conference. The event will be unveiled at Hotel Polo Towers and is expected to be inaugurated by Meghalaya Governor, Dr KK Paul.

The Conference will address the complex and sensitive issues relating to the tremendous role that the Civil Society can must play in development of the land-locked and relatively underdeveloped North Eastern part of India, both as a homeland goal, and also as India's land-connectivity corridor to the greater economy of the larger South East and East Asia. Governments can put in political structures. Big Businesses together with Governments can take a step forward by putting in economic structures. There is however a Third Space that exists beyond such efforts, that functions at the grass-root level of people-to-people contact, which is far more effective and has to be nurtured. This Third Space has remained unutilized so far but has tremendous potential of functioning as an arena for intelligent, proactive Civil Society initiatives in connecting daring stakeholders, people across disciplines, who think creatively for out of the box solutions.

The [2](#)-day event will seek to outline practical plans for bringing together organizations and individuals representing Government, Medium & Small Enterprises, Civil Society and the Academia, to have a brainstorming on the topics of how this Third Space can be best utilized to create win-win synergies to link this larger region, which has a long history of thinking alike leading to synergy of Culture. The focus is to create concrete measurable time line and action based agendas that stakeholders from all sides can act upon to complement the Government of India's renewed focus on India's connectivity with the rest of South East and East Asia.

The conference has been designed in view of transforming the Look East Policy to Acting East will hinge on Civil Society initiatives that create bridges of mutual confidence and friendship to nurture human capital, which can operate the physical, economic and political infrastructures that Governments put in place. In addition to economic initiatives, organizations and individuals can (and should) play a more proactive role in the region through bottoms-up approach of socio-cultural exchanges of local knowledge & skills through fairs & festivals; [trade](#) & commerce; games & sports, debates & competitions; inter-communication over internet, and such like. Developing sectors like education, tourism and health services with injection of ground-level science & technology innovations, can give the large service sector a major boost to sharing of much needed skilled human capital among the neighbors. This holds the key to breaking the psychological barriers, promoting goodwill and prosperity within this larger region and also creating confidence in the political and economic structure that governments are trying to put in place.

However considerable trust deficit in the region inhibits development and win-win synergies from taking place. India's links with South East Asian neighbors span centuries of spiritual, cultural, economic and strategic ties. The hiatus created by colonization, cold war and other developments are finally a thing of the past. India and its South East Asian neighbors must leverage their common history and aspirations to build a better, peaceful and more prosperous future by reviving and redeveloping physical, psychological, economic and organic linkages among the Civil Societies of the region before its too late.

The event will see high dignitaries from Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Bangladesh and India. The Governor of Orissa, Chief Minister of Meghalaya, Chief Minister of Mizoram, Chief Justice of Meghalaya High Court is expected to participate.

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Shillong

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