

ASEAN key to economic prosperity: Patowary



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The Centre for South East Asian Studies (CSEAS) of the Gauhati University organised the 25th Anniversary of the [ASEAN-India](#) Dialogue Partnership at BKB Auditorium on Friday. The conference was attended by State Industries and Commerce Minister Chandra Mohan Patowary, Vice Minister of Information, Culture and Tourism, Laos, Savankhone Razmouny, Ambassador of Laos to [India](#), Southam Sakonhninhom and members of [ASEAN India](#) Business Council (AIBC).

Patowary said that Assam is not the periphery, but at the centre of South East Asia and is the expressway of the Act East Policy. 'If not today, but tomorrow, the Western market will be bound to look at the big consumer market of 630 million population of South East Asia, waiting to be explored.'

Patowary further stated that responding to the recently held road shows at Toronto, New York and London, foreign investors have expressed their willingness to invest in the [state](#). The Minister also took the opportunity to formally invite the dignitaries at the upcoming Global Investors' Summit to be held at Guwahati in February, 2018 and requested them to bring along a strong delegation to pitch in investment opportunities in Assam.

Vice Chancellor of Gauhati University, Dr Mridul [Hazarika](#) stated that the people of Assam and Laos are linked historically and culturally. The VC said that the true sense of education exchanges is through such dialogue among the South East Asian nations and hoped that the Centre of South East Asian Studies would thrive for more people-to-people contact with the neighbouring countries.

In his welcome address, [Prof](#) Nani Gopal Mahanta said that based on the MoU between the CSEAS and Laos [National](#) University, five students from Laos will undergo a three-month course in [Computer](#) Science and Information [Technology](#) at GU.

Vice-Minister, Laos, Savankhone Razmouny said that [ASEAN](#) and [India](#) has commonality in terms of its diversity. [ASEAN](#) is a strong community and it needs a good friend like [India](#) to resolve all issues so that all its member nations benefit for peaceful coexistence.

Ambassador Southam Sakonhninhom said, '[ASEAN](#) is celebrating its 50th anniversary of glorious existence and today is the 25th anniversary of the [ASEAN-India](#) Dialogue Partnership. Food-processing, bamboo, handicrafts are some of the potential sectors for mutual [trade](#) and commerce activities.'

Delivering the Special Lecture, Chairman of AIBC, Dato' Ramesh Kodammal said, '[ASEAN](#) is the 6th world's largest economy after the [US](#), China, Japan, Germany and the [UK](#), and it aims to become the 4th largest economy by 2035. [India](#) and [ASEAN](#) have set a target of 100 billion dollar [trade](#) by 2020. There is a huge potential for investments in service sector, textiles, tourism, energy and Information and Communication [Technology](#).'

Entrepreneur Habib Choudhury from Hojai, Assam who built an agarwood empire at Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR) also dealt on furthering Indo-[ASEAN](#) economic ties.

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