

## 'NORTHEAST HELPS IN GLOBAL OUTREACH'

Relevant for: null | Topic: Important Schemes & Programmes of the Government

S. Jaishankar with Himanta Biswa Sarma and delegates from Asian countries, during NADI-3 on Saturday.PTI-

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on Saturday indicated Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar and Nepal were India's most trusted global partners along with Japan and members of the ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations).

Speaking at the inaugural session of the two-day NADI-3 Asian Confluence River Conclave in Guwahati, Mr. Jaishankar said the prioritisation of the northeast, comprising eight States, by the Narendra Modi government has made it obvious that India should work with its most trusted global partners.

"What happens when the northeast, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Myanmar get more deeply intertwined — each of them stands to benefit from more access, opportunities, resources and markets. These endeavours will literally bring ASEAN closer to us," he said.

He also lauded the catalytic role Japan has been playing as India's co-partner for global outreach.

"In 2017, we launched the India-Japan Act East Forum as a platform to bring together all the stakeholders and coordinate planning and implementation of the projects being undertaken with Japanese assistance," Mr. Jaishankar said.

"Diplomacy is not just about bridging positions through wordsmithery. It is equally about bridging societies through projects. It is about connectivity, contacts and cooperation," he said, underscoring the participation of his Bangladeshi counterpart A.K. Abdul Memon and the ASEAN ambassadors at the conference.

### **Civilisational bridge**

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said Assam acts as a cultural and civilisational bridge between India and the ASEAN region besides providing the land link. "Due to its strategic location, Assam provides a great opportunity for economic growth," he said.

Ports, Shipping and Ayush Minister Sarbananda Sonowal said the seeds of the historical and cultural relations between Assam and the ASEAN were sown by Chaolung Sukapha, the architect of the greater Assamese society who came to the region from South East Asia, in the 13th century.

### **NADI initiative**

NADI, meaning river, is an initiative to articulate and activate a collective vision of sub-regional cooperation in the Bay of Bengal region and with South East Asia. It recognises the region south of Himalayas from Ganga and Brahmaputra to Mekong as a contiguity of river basins with common challenges that require close cooperation beyond their political borders.

NADI is also aimed at building confidence in the key role of India's north-eastern region taking forward strategic initiatives for energy and water security in the neighbourhood and in the Bay of

Bengal region, leading towards a vibrant and secure Indo-Pacific.

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