



E-ISSN: 2664-603X
P-ISSN: 2664-6021
IJPSG 2024; 6(1): 37-43
www.journalofpoliticalscience.com
Received: 11-10-2023
Accepted: 16-11-2023

Snehasila Mondal
Department of Political
Science, Diamond Harbour
Women's University, Diamond
Harbour, West Bengal, India

Act east policy emphasizes foreign relations: A review

Snehasila Mondal

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33545/26646021.2024.v6.i1a.301>

Abstract

India's Act East Policy is a foreign policy initiative. Its main goal is to improve relations with other nations. Additionally, it is a diplomatic endeavor to promote cultural, geopolitical, and economic ties on a bilateral and multilateral basis with countries in the Asia-Pacific region. The goals of this policy are to promote regional integration and forge strategic relationships. Its objective is to strengthen ties with ASEAN and East Asian nations. The Act East Policy seeks to improve interpersonal relationships and cultural exchanges. It aims to increase international trust and understanding. This strategy promotes regional peace and stability as well as economic growth. Originally meant to be an economic endeavor, the approach has grown to incorporate institutional channels for cooperation and communication along with political, strategic, and cultural elements. This is how the current article illustrates how India's 'Act East' policy has led to increased involvement in the Bay of Bengal, especially in maritime affairs. As a result, India has also embraced its security responsibilities.

Keywords: Diplomacy, foreign policy, act-east policy, look east policy international relationship

Introduction

India's "Act East Policy" is a diplomatic strategy to strengthen ties at all levels with the vast Asia-Pacific region on the economic, geopolitical, and cultural fronts. At the 12th ASEAN-India Summit, which took place in Myanmar in November 2014, the Act East Policy was introduced. The Look East Policy, which was implemented in 1992, was replaced by the Act East Policy. The Act East Policy incorporates security cooperation in addition to targeting the Asia-Pacific region as an expanded neighborhood. In general, India is beginning to position itself as a provider of network security, or at least is moving in that direction, based on its recent improvements in maritime domain awareness, its interests in strengthening joint patrols and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) cooperation, and its efforts to improve the maritime security of its neighbors, including through the transfer of weapons.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries were the focus of the Look East Policy's economic cooperation initiative. These nations are: Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, Philippines, Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, and Brunei Darussalam. In 1992, India became a Sectoral Dialogue Partner before becoming a Dialogue Partner three years later. In order to strengthen its relationship with ASEAN, it officially established a Mission to ASEAN in 2015 after starting to take part in ASEAN Summits in 2002 and becoming a Strategic Partner in 2012.

Pillars of India's Act East Policy

Therefore, the three Cs commerce, culture, and connectivity; serve as the cornerstones of India's present Act East Policy. India's eastward orientation is centered on its Act East Policy, which also aligns with the country's larger Indo-Pacific strategy.

There is nothing like the warmth that currently exists between India and the USA. Despite all of the challenges and disappointments, the two main democracies are currently engaged in economic and commercial activity at their best. Concurrently, India is developing positive relationships with countries in East Asia, and the current government has shifted India's foreign policy from "Look East" to "Act East." Act East must be interpreted as a strategic alliance between the United States, India, and east Asian countries to fight China's economic and strategic advancement as the world's economic superpower. This degree of closeness is unmatched, but it shouldn't be a subject of Indian foreign policy sovereignty.

Corresponding Author:
Snehasila Mondal
Department of Political
Science, Diamond Harbour
Women's University, Diamond
Harbour, West Bengal, India

India should stay non-aligned since it has benefited greatly from maintaining its neutrality (Jain, 2021) ^[9]. The democratic socialist message is accepted in India. The task of constructing socialism peacefully has been placed on the state. Articles 36 to 51 are mentioned in Chapter IV. According to the Constitution's Article 51.

The State shall endeavor to-

- a) Promote international peace and security;
- b) Maintain just and honourable relations between nations;
- c) Foster respect for international law and treaty obligations in the dealings of organized peoples with one another; and
- d) Encourage settlement of international disputes by arbitration.

India has always been a non-aligned nation since it played a significant role in the formation of the Non-Alignment Movement, a bloc of neutral nations founded during the Cold War. India is a non-aligned country, although it has closer strategic ties to Russia in terms of defense and trade. However, following the huge rift in economic ties that was created in 1991 and the consequently terrible status of India's foreign reserve, India opened its economy and started constructing economic confidence measures with the United States of America with the fall of the Soviet Union. The "Act East Policy," which was introduced in November 2014, has taken the place of the previous "Look East Policy". The goal of diplomacy is to strengthen cultural, strategic, and commercial ties with the vast Asia-Pacific region (Bajpae, 2022) ^[2]. It means deep and continuous engagement in the fields of connectivity, trade, culture, defense, and interpersonal connections with countries in Southeast Asia on a bilateral, regional, and global scale.

The 'Act East Policy' seeks to enhance the economic development of the North Eastern Region (NER), which acts as a gateway to the South East Asia Region, by promoting economic cooperation, cultural ties, and the development of a strategic relationship with countries in the Indo-Pacific region through a proactive and pragmatic approach (PIB, 2021) ^[14].

India sought to overcome the loss of its strategic partner, the USSR, after the Cold War ended in 1991 by establishing relationships with the USA and its allies in Southeast Asia. The Look East policy was introduced in 1992 by former Indian Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao with the objectives of bolstering India's regional power status, promoting its engagement with South-East Asia, and counterbalancing the strategic influence of the People's Republic of China. According to Bhattacharya (2019) ^[5], it is imperative that the Indian government attend to the 'Act East' Policy in order for it to continue standing as it enters a new phase. Even though the strategy has shown to be durable as a crucial component of India's foreign policy agenda, it now confronts three significant challenges: In terms of foreign policy, India's reform agenda is falling short of what the country wants out of it; in the region, the idea of "ASEAN centrality" is being questioned more and more; and globally, the international order is changing as the US and China's rivalry intensifies (exacerbated by Russia's invasion of Ukraine). China and India are viewed as the two Asian superpowers who, if they cooperate, have the capacity to completely change the global economic structure to Asia's advantage. Still, the relationship between China and India is pointing in a different path.

Comparing India's Look East and Act East Policies

Look East Policy: Under the "Look East Policy" initiative, P.V. Narasimha Rao and Dr. Manmohan Singh, the ninth prime minister of India, discussed business and diplomatic proposals. Narasimha Rao realized early on in his presidency in 1991 how important it was for his nation to maintain strategic relationships with its neighbors in order to establish a position for itself on the global economic and commercial landscape. To this end, he tried to build constructive relationships with growing South-east Asian states. India's strategic position in the grand scheme of things has been made clear by the connection that has been attempted to be established with the inclusive nations in a commercial, economic, and strategic manner. Additionally, he arrived in an effort to undermine diplomatic efforts or decrease the strategic influence of the People's Republic of China.

Act East Policy

The success of the Look East policy prompted officials in the Indian foreign ministry to restructure it into a more project- and outcome-based, tactical approach. The Modi government declared that it would step up efforts to fortify relations with the ASEAN and other East Asian countries. A few decades later, the Look East plan was superseded in India by the Act East initiative, which Prime Minister Narendra Modi's administration introduced in 2014. Since the early 1990s, when new global realities first appeared, the relationship has grown into a solid and strategic partnership. Act East's foreign policy was centered on East Asian countries, ASEAN countries, economic integration, and security cooperation. The Indian Prime Minister stressed the importance of the Act East Policy's four pillars: culture, commerce, connectivity, and capacity building. Security is a crucial element in India's Act East Policy (Chaudhury, 2022) ^[7]. Given China's growing assertiveness in the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean, protecting freedom of passage and India's own standing in the region are top priorities. As per the Indo-Pacific and informal Quad grouping, India has been involved in this (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue). This group was briefly formed in 2007 and was relaunched in 2017. Its members include Australia, India, Japan, and the United States. These programmes are usually problem-specific and functional in nature. For example, India, Japan, and Australia launched the "Supply-Chain Resilience Initiative" in 2020 with the aim of "diversifying supply-chains in the Indo-Pacific region to ensure resiliency," a reference to steps taken to reduce reliance on China in strategically important industries (Tan, 2020) ^[21].

Furthermore, Prime Minister Modi has taken considerable efforts to outfox President Xi Jinping of China. In an attempt to persuade Southeast Asian (SEA) countries that India is committed to supporting the upkeep of peace and security along the Indian Ocean rim (IOR), he has undertaken a flurry of foreign visits. Without a question, he was able to establish a strategic presence outside of the neighboring South Asian countries. The achievements listed below demonstrate how the Modi government supported India's maritime Act East Policy by opposing China's geopolitical influence in the region (Augustine, 2021) ^[1]:

- In 2015, India and Vietnam signed a bilateral defense and coast guard cooperation agreement.
- India and Vietnam signed various bilateral documents

in 2016, with Vietnam reaffirming support for India's AEP.

- Two Indian warships visited Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam in 2016.
- Indian Naval Ship (INS) Sahyadri and Shakti visited Subic Bay, Philippines in 2016.
- In 2018, India held joint naval exercises with ASEAN member Indonesia, called 'Samudra Shakti.'
- The 25th Singapore-India Maritime Bilateral Exercise (SIMBEX) was a joint naval exercise between India and Singapore, another ASEAN member, which saw the signing of a renewed defense cooperation agreement intended to boost intelligence-sharing efforts.
- The Indian Navy recently conducted a maritime bilateral exercise with Singapore in the South China Sea as part of the 28th SIMBEX, which took place from August 2-4, 2021.
- From September 20-22, 2021, the 3rd edition of bilateral exercise 'Samudra Shakti' with the Indonesian Navy was held in the Sunda Strait.

Objective of Act East Policy

Through ongoing engagement at the bilateral, regional, and multilateral levels, the Act East Policy seeks to foster economic cooperation, cultural ties, and the development of strategic relationships with nations in the Indo-Pacific region. This will improve connectivity in the broadest sense, encompassing political, economic, cultural, and people-to-people relations.

Impacts of India's Act East Policy on the Trade

The goal of the policy is to strengthen the North Eastern Region's capacities while promoting border trade, connectivity, interpersonal interactions, and cultural exchanges. As stated by General V.K. Singh (2015) ^[20], "Our Act East Policy has made the North East of India a priority." The state's fast industrialization and investment climate will be aided by the Act East Policy Department. The North Eastern Region (NER) presents itself as the best place to concentrate on putting India's Look East Policy—which is supposed to be the country's vision—into practice. India is now able to benefit from new trade and investment opportunities because to the Look East Policy. India's increasing commercial ties with the area are a clear indicator of the success of her "Look East" policy. From US \$2.4 billion in 1990 to US \$23 billion in 2005, India's commerce with ASEAN has increased.

Initiatives to Enhance Connectivity: India's Agartala-Akhaura Rail Link with Bangladesh. Bangladesh is traversed by multimodal transportation networks and inland waterways. Thailand, Myanmar, and the Northeast are connected via the Trilateral Highway Project and the

Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project.

Under the India-Japan Act East Forum, projects for building roads and bridges as well as updating hydroelectric power projects have been completed.

The India-Japan Act East Forum was established in 2017 to provide a platform for cooperation between Japan and India under the frameworks of Japan's "Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy" and India's "Act East Policy".

The Forum will delve into specific economic efforts for the Northeast region of India, including those related to industrial linkages, infrastructure development, connectivity, and travel, culture, and sports as means of fostering human interaction.

Under the Policy, connectivity constructions, the development of transport routes, and related industrial and trade infrastructures were sought to free the Indian North Eastern Region from the grip of a security paradox that was purported to have restricted the availability of developmental opportunities in Northeast India (AEP) (Barua, 2020) ^[3].

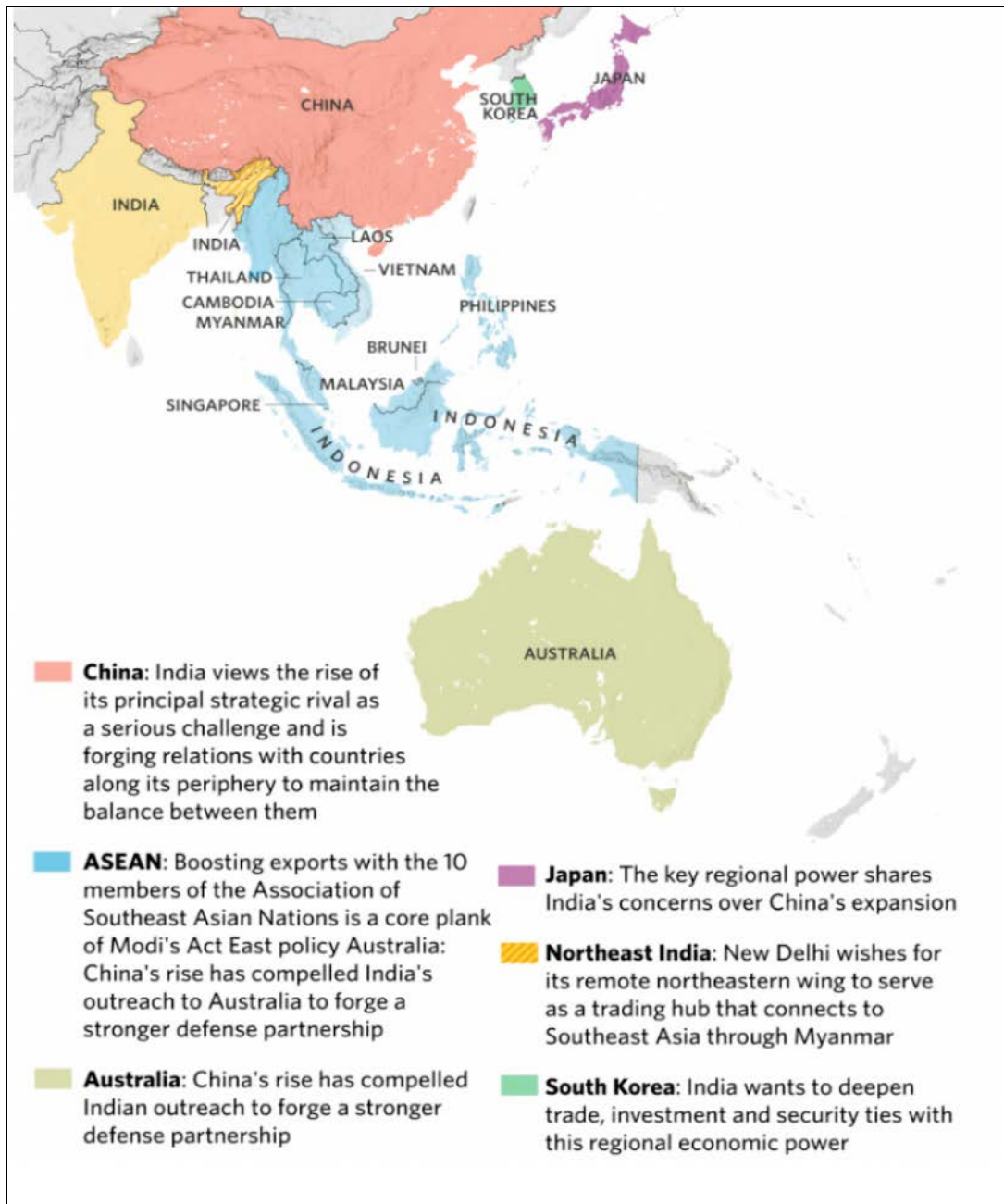
Other Initiatives

The supply of medical supplies and pharmaceuticals to ASEAN countries during the pandemic. Scholarships at IITs with offers of 1000 PhD fellowships have been given to participants from ASEAN countries. In order to assist local populations in the fields of health, education, and water resources, India is also implementing Quick Impact Projects in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam.

The issue has drawn more attention since the Obama administration made several remarks in 2011 indicating that the US will be strengthening and expanding its already significant presence in the Asia Pacific, especially in the southern half of the area. By putting in a concentrated effort to influence the creation of rules and regulations in the Asia Pacific as China becomes a more significant regional power, the "pivot," or "rebalance," as the policy came to be known, sought to strengthen US credibility in the region.

On November 17, 2011, President Barack Obama said that India "looks east and plays a larger role as an Asian power," encouraging India to join the initiative. The precise expectations of the US government with regard to India have never been clearly stated (PIB, 2015b) ^[16]. That being said, it would be inaccurate to believe that US strategy has ever been much influenced by the Look East doctrine.

Furthermore, it would be incorrect to believe that Washington's shift in policy and the fervor of its concerns about China significantly changed its relationship with New Delhi or that the Look East policy made India an indispensable partner of the United States. The goals of Washington and New Delhi also did not suddenly coincide to the extent that the US was compelled to methodically take India's interests into account when formulating its Asian policy (The White House, 2011) ^[18].



Source: Press Information Bureau, 2021

In view of the US "pivot to Asia" in recent years, the present Indian government, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has placed a high priority on its ties with its East Asian neighbors. Act East policy was the new approach put forth by Indian Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj in response to the Look East policy, which was first introduced during the P.V. Narasimha Rao administration and then taken seriously under the Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Manmohan Singh administrations which followed.

India has been able to extend its influence beyond South Asia and avoid the tense and obstructive presence of Pakistan and China, which has stymied its efforts in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, by forging extensive cooperation on environmental, economic development, security, and strategic matters through multilateral organizations like the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation and BIMSTEC. India joined the ASEAN sectoral dialogue in 1992, was granted advisory status in 1995, became a member of the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific in 1996, joined the ASEAN

Regional Forum in 2002, and was a summit-level partner at the 2002 World Cup (equal to China, Japan, and Korea). In 2002, New Delhi hosted the inaugural India-ASEAN Business Summit. In 2003, India too became a party to ASEAN's Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia.

India's involvement in these forums has often resulted from efforts within the region to offset China's growing influence. Notably, Singapore and Indonesia played a critical role in enabling India's participation in the East Asia Summit, while Japan helped India join ASEAN+6 in an effort to challenge China's hegemony over ASEAN+3. (Bland, 2021) [6]. Furthermore, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation has benefited from the support of the United States and Japan for India's admission. East Asia and India are connected through a number of infrastructure projects. The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific has two programs in which India is involved: the Trans-Asian Railway Network and the Asian Highway Network. There are also ongoing talks on rebuilding the

Stilwell Road, which connected Yunnan province in China with Myanmar during World War II.

India's Act East Policy focuses on the larger neighborhood of the Asia-Pacific region. Originally meant to be an economic endeavor, the approach has grown to incorporate institutional channels for cooperation and communication along with political, strategic, and cultural elements. India has established robust diplomatic ties with every country in the Asia-Pacific area, elevating its ties to strategic alliances with the Republic of Korea (ROK), Australia, Singapore, Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Japan, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Furthermore, apart from ASEAN, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and the East Asia Summit (EAS), India has also taken an active part in a number of regional fora, including the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD), the Mekong Ganga Cooperation (MGC), and the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA). Act East Policy has emphasized India-ASEAN cooperation in our domestic agenda for infrastructure, manufacturing, trade, skills, urban rejuvenation, smart cities, Made in India, and other projects. Initiatives related to connectivity, space cooperation, scientific and technology cooperation, and interpersonal contacts have the potential to ignite regional integration and prosperity.

The "Act East Policy" seeks to improve connectivity by promoting cross-cultural understanding, economic cooperation, and the development of strategic partnerships with countries in the Asia-Pacific area. This includes Arunachal Pradesh and the States of the North Eastern Region. India's North East has become a primary focus of our Act East Policy (AEP). Arunachal Pradesh in particular serves as a bridge connecting North East India and the ASEAN region. The Northeast is continuously being connected to the ASEAN region through trade, culture, people-to-people interactions, and physical infrastructure (roads, airports, telecommunications, energy, etc.) through a number of bilateral and regional programs. The Kaladan Multi-modal Transit Transport Project, the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway Project, the Rhi-Tiddim Road Project, Border Haats, etc. are a few of the larger projects.

The ASEAN-India Plan of Action for the Years 2016–20, which was adopted in August 2015, outlines particular projects and fields of cooperation along the three pillars of political–security, economic, and socio–cultural cooperation (PIB, 2015a) ^[15]. India continues to step up its efforts to forge closer ties with pertinent international and regional organizations, such as ASEAN, ARF, EAS, BIMSTEC, ACD, MCG, and IORA. In order to foster new relationships and human closeness on the cultural front, linkages between Buddhists and Hindus could be strengthened. Extra efforts are being made to develop a compelling plan for connectivity, especially to connect our North East with ASEAN. Several measures are being implemented, including building transportation infrastructure, incentivizing airlines to enhance local connectivity, and fostering links between educational and cultural institutions. Our economic engagement with ASEAN has grown; project execution and regional integration are our main priorities. The ASEAN-India Agreement on Trade in Services and Investments entered into force for India and the other seven ASEAN countries on July 1, 2015.

The ASEAN-India Trade Negotiating Committee has been

tasked with revising the ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement. Furthermore, India has invited ASEAN nations to join the International Solar Alliance, which it co-launched at COP-21 on November 30, 2015, alongside France. Concerning strategic issues, we are seeing a rising convergence of security interests with significant partners on a bilateral as well as global scale (PIB, 2022a) ^[15]. Greater cooperation in promoting marine security, preventing terrorism, and promoting peace and stability in the region is being undertaken on the basis of international norms and regulations.

India's market share in East Asia is steadily growing. India was apprehensive about the US and Russia's participation at the "East Asia Summit" that was held in Indonesia in November 2011. Russia is now a country that delivers military and commercial equipment (Bajpae, 2022) ^[2]. Meanwhile, China is starting to face difficulties as Japan, South Korea, and the Philippines are taking on the roles of strategic controller and protector by establishing bilateral alliance ties in this area (Dominguez, 2022) ^[8].

Other areas of India's connection with the east, like defense cooperation, would be impacted by this as well. In early 2022, for example, an agreement was made to export the Brahmos supersonic cruise missile to the Philippines. This was seen as a sign of India's growing defense exports to Southeast Asia, particularly considering that Vietnam, Indonesia, and Thailand had also expressed interest in acquiring the Brahmos platform (Bhatt & Pandey, 2022) ^[4]. But this achievement is at jeopardy because Brahmos was established as part of a collaboration with Russia. Due to India's historical reliance on Russian military gear, countries like Vietnam, Myanmar, Indonesia, and Malaysia that also use similar Russian or Soviet-era military hardware are crucial allies for India when it comes to defense cooperation. However, future cooperation could be delayed, if not completely derailed, by Russia's growing status as a pariah (Tiwari, 2022) ^[19].

The rapidly growing markets in East Asia attract foreign investment. If India wants to achieve its economic goals, it must implement its "Act East Policy" correctly. As if this tactic would be important in Eastern and Southeast Asian countries. To assume this role, New Delhi will have to work with East Asia to impose dictatorship, discuss how to address problems, and then boldly and impartially settle the dispute.

Growing economic relations

India's trade relations with ASEAN countries have improved dramatically in the last several years. India and ASEAN have signed two trade agreements for goods and services, making them one of the largest trading blocs with a combined GDP of around US\$3 trillion and a market of 1.8 billion people. Trade between India and ASEAN now reaches US\$80 billion annually for the first time in history, but this figure is still much short of the US\$200 billion target set for 2020. A substantial amount of private investment from the ASEAN region has also flowed into India, where it has been utilized, among other things, to construct ports, highways, food processing plants, shipping routes, and auto components. India has made considerable investments in ASEAN in recent years, much like China has, with Singapore acting as a hub for both trade and investment (Kesavan, 2020) ^[10].

The Act East Policy of India has not fulfilled its potential as

it was intended because of the developing tensions between China and India, China's expanding influence in the region, and India's withdrawal from the RCEP. Since it started towards the end of 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in numerous issues such as interruptions to services, disruptions to supply chains, and economic harm. Notwithstanding these issues, the epidemic heightened the pressure to reconsider the Act East Policy's cooperation and explore alternative paths for collaboration (Roy, 2022) ^[22]. India and ASEAN can improve their telemedicine and teleeducation cooperation with the help of digital platforms like e-Vidhya Bharti and e-Arogya Bharati Network (e-VBAB). Initially, e-health care services such as e-Vidhya Bharti and e-Arogya Bharati "acted as a digital bridge between India and Africa," facilitating medical information exchange between Indian universities, institutes, and super-specialty hospitals and African educational institutions (Kundu, 2022) ^[11].

Look East Policy now turned into Act East by Narendra Modi. Although it was developed and enacted by P.V. Narasimha Rao and rigorously pursued by the successive administrations of Atal Bihari Vajpayee (1999-2004) and Manmohan Singh (2004-14).

Latest projects for the Act East policy

Over a five-year period, from 2020–2021 to 2024–2025, the Indian government approved projects for inland water transport (IWT) infrastructure on national waterways in the North-Eastern Region (PIB, 2022b) ^[16].

The NW-2 National Waterway Development Comprehensive Project: The construction of NW-2 opens up waterway access between the North East area and the ports of Kolkata and Haldia via the Indo-Bangladesh Protocol Route. The primary interventions of the project are the building of the Jogighopa Terminal, a ship repair facility, a detour to the Pandu Port, and tourist jetties at Biswanathghat, Jogighopa, Pandu, and Neamati.

As part of the extensive plan for the development of the NW-16 & IBP route, steps have been taken to modernize the Badarpur and Karimganj terminals, including the customs and immigration facilities at the Karimganj port. The main objectives of the project are to build a terminal at Sonamura on the Gumti River, a terminal at Maia on the Ganga River, and to upgrade the terminals at Badarpur and Karimganj.

The Indian government is attempting to strengthen its position as a regional force and a counterbalance to the strategic influence of the People's Republic of China by fostering broad economic and strategic ties with the countries of Southeast Asia through the Act East policy.

Some of the key achievements of the Look East Policy

China's growing sway over Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean region supports the Act East Policy. The Indo-Pacific region's legal system and freedom of navigation may both be strengthened by the policy. India's commerce with East and Southeast Asian countries has expanded dramatically as a result of the Look East Policy, which has also deepened regional integration, formed various strategic partnerships, and promoted cultural interactions. The major goal was to increase involvement in all areas with Southeast Asian nations as well as far Eastern nations like South Korea, Japan, and Australia, as well as those in the Pacific.

India has upgraded its relations to a strategic partnership with Japan, Australia, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia,

Singapore, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Republic of Korea (ROK), and has forged close ties with all nations in the Asia-Pacific region in order to fully capitalize on the benefits of the "Act East Policy."

In addition, India has actively participated in a number of regional forums, including the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD), and the Mekong Ganga Cooperation (MGC), in addition to ASEAN, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and the East Asia Summit (EAS).

Challenges to the Act East Policy of India

The influence of China: China's growing geopolitical influence in Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean region directly affects India. China's influence in the region has been less effectively countered by the Act East Policy.

The ASEAN trade deficit: India's overall trade imbalance with ASEAN grew from approximately 7% in 2009-10 to 12% in 2018-19. With the exception of Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar, and the Philippines, India is one of the 15 RCEP members that has a trade deficit. China is responsible for 60% of the deficit overall.

Failure of RCEP: Act East Policy has not been able to secure the backing of other nations in order to resolve RCEP-related concerns that affected India. Due to the failure of extensive negotiations about the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), India was the only country to be excluded from the regional trade agreement.

Minimal involvement in the economy Significant economic agreements between India and East Asian nations are few, despite significant advancements in the fields of security and defense cooperation. India and South Korea have only signed a memorandum of cooperation (MoC) on fisheries and seas thus far.

Conclusion

This website provides information on the latest changes in Act East policy, including steps for implementation. The Act's east policy objective is to improve connectivity, relationships, and cultural and regional links with India's northeastern regions and neighboring countries. The AEsEN has made social and economic integration possible. Chinese dominance in South-east Asia is being challenged by the upcoming development project, which is constructing riverways and routes for alternate and practical access to remote locations. With the assistance of strategic planning and the Ministry of External Affairs, the most comprehensive and useful policy is being developed. Furthermore, India should continue to interact with South Asian countries, including Afghanistan, Nepal, and Sri Lanka, with particular emphasis as it forges closer connections with East Asian countries. It is not appropriate to see this region as a sacrifice for East Asian advancement.

Conflict of interest

I hereby state that there are no conflicts of interest.

Reference

1. Augustine R. India's ACT East Policy: Warning to China or Flawed Strategy? Geopolitical Monitor; c2021. Available from:

- <https://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/indias-act-east-policy-warning-to-china-or-flawed-strategy/>.
2. Bajpae C. Reinigorating India's 'Act East' Policy in an age of renewed power politics. *The Pacific Review*; c2022. DOI: 10.1080/09512748.2022.2110609.
 3. Barua T. The Look East Policy/Act East Policy-driven Development Model in Northeast India. *Jadavpur Journal of International Relations*. 2020;24(1):101-120. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0973598420908844>.
 4. Bhatt P, Pandey A. The BrahMos sale to Philippines; Implications and prospects. *Financial Express*; c2022. Available from: <https://www.financialexpress.com/defence/the-brahmos-sale-to-philippines-implications-and-prospects/2400954/>.
 5. Bhattacharya S. India, Asean and Indo-Pacific Geopolitic. *Revista UNISC*. 2019;17(49):241-264. <http://dx.doi.org/10.31439/UNISCI-44>.
 6. Bland B. ASEAN muddle through on Myanmar. *The Interpreter*, Lowy Institute; c2021. Available from: <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/asean-muddles-through-myanmar>.
 7. Chaudhury DR. India-ASEAN: Moving towards Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. *Economic Times*; c2022. Available from: <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/india-asean-moving-towardscomprehensive-strategic-partnership/articleshow/92366280.cms?from=mdr>.
 8. Dominguez G. China and U.S. vying for influence over Pacific Island countries. *Japan Times*; c2022. Available from: <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2022/01/27/asia-pacific/us-china-pacific-islands/>.
 9. Jain M. India's Act-East Policy- A Critical Evidences. *Turkish Journal of Computer and Mathematics Education*. 2021;12(5):1846-1851.
 10. Kesavan KV. India's 'Act East' policy and regional cooperation. ORF Observer Research Foundation; c2020. Available from: <https://cutt.ly/TNv6e5f>.
 11. Kundu S, Rahman N, Pan S. Exploring India's Way Forward for E-VBAB Partnership with ASEAN. *AIC Commentary*; c2022. Available from: <https://aic.ris.org.in/sites/aic.ris.org.in/files/2022-02/AIC%20Commentary%20No%20%2026%20February%202022.pdf>.
 12. Press Information Bureau, Government of India Ministry of External Affairs. Act East Policy; c2015. Available from: <https://pib.gov.in/newsite/printrelease.aspx?relid=133837>.
 13. Press Information Bureau. India's Act East Policy; c2015. Available from: https://www.drishtiiias.com/daily-updates/daily-news-analysis/india-s-act-east-policy-1/print_manually.
 14. Press Information Bureau. India's Act East Policy; c2021. Available from: <https://www.drishtiiias.com/daily-updates/daily-news-analysis/india-s-act-east-policy-1>.
 15. Press Information Bureau. India's Act East Policy: Finding Opportunities in Post-Pandemic Adversities; c2022a. Available from: <https://www.isdp.eu/content/uploads/2022/07/Brief-July-14-2022-Torunika-Roy.pdf>.
 16. Press Information Bureau. Projects under the 'act east policy'; c2022b. Available from: <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1810971>.
 17. L. India, Japan, Australia Keen to boost supply chain security by reducing reliance on China. *South China Morning Post*; c2020.
 18. The White House. Remarks by President Obama to the Australian Parliament, Parliament House, Canberra, Australia; c2011. Available from: <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2011/11/17/remarks-president-obama-australian-parliament>.
 19. Tiwari S. Not S-400 Systems, India's BrahMos cruise missiles likely to be worst hit by Western sanctions on Russia – Experts. *The Eurasian Times*. 2022. Available from: <https://eurasianimes.com/not-s-400-systems-indias-brahmos-missiles-russia-sanctions/>.
 20. Singh VK, Kalsan M, Kumar N, Saini A, Chandra R. Induced pluripotent stem cells: applications in regenerative medicine, disease modeling, and drug discovery. *Frontiers in cell and developmental biology*. 2015 Feb 2;3:2.
 21. Tan W, Zhao X, Ma X, Wang W, Niu P, Xu W, *et al.* A novel coronavirus genome identified in a cluster of pneumonia cases—Wuhan, China 2019–2020. *China CDC weekly*. 2020 Jan 1;2(4):61-2.
 22. Roy AM. Adaptive transfer learning-based multiscale feature fused deep convolutional neural network for EEG MI multiclassification in brain-computer interface. *Engineering Applications of Artificial Intelligence*. 2022 Nov 1;116:105347.