

自由論題 3「南アジアの政治」・報告 2

報告テーマ

Why Northeast India is Important for Japan-India Relations?

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Northeast India has lagged behind other parts of the country in terms of development. However, India's "Act-East Policy" (known earlier as the "Look-East Policy") offers new hope to the Northeast, as New Delhi increases its engagement with countries in the ASEAN region and in East Asia. India is investing heavily in improving infrastructure in its Northeastern region and is constructing a road known as the India-Myanmar-Thailand (IMT) trilateral highway, which is expected to be operational by 2019. In the future, there are also plans to connect it with pre-existing highways and take it all the way to Vietnam.

Japan is reaching out to the Northeastern part of India in a big way, building on the fact that Northeast India had direct contact with Japan during the Second World War. In recent times, Japan has contributed ODA (Official Development Assistance) loans for the North East Road Network Connectivity Improvement Project (Phase 1) to the tune of 67.17 billion yen. In addition, it is also involved in schemes like the Guwahati water supply scheme and the Nagaland Forest Management Project.

This paper aims to look at Northeast India's importance in the development of Japan-India ties. At the same time, it will look at the immense challenges that confront the Northeastern states. During the visit of Japanese PM Shinzo Abe to India in September last year, the two countries "welcomed India-Japan cooperation on development of India's North Eastern Region (NER) as a concrete symbol of developing synergies between India's "Act East Policy" and Japan's "Free and Open Indo Pacific Strategy." Finally, it will suggest measures which will help Northeast India become a critical element of India's growing ties with Japan.