

Interactive Panel Discussion on India's Neighborhood Policy with special reference to Act East Policy

Organised by:

CHRIST (Deemed to be University) & Hanns Seidel Stiftung (HSS)

On 6th December 2021 (Monday)

As a part of the project - India's Neighborhood Policy towards
the Southeast Asian Region: A Study on Act East Policy (INPSAR)

PROJECT TEAM

Principal investigator: Dr. Sarish Sebastian, CHRIST Delhi-NCR

Co-investigators: Dr. Shalini. B, CHRIST Bangalore

&

Dr. Philip Varghese, CHRIST Delhi-NCR

Inauguration: 9:30 AM

Venue: Seminar Hall, A Block, 3rd Floor,
CHRIST (Deemed to be University) NCR



Fr. Viju, P.D, Director, CHRIST Delhi – NCR

Fr. Sunny Joseph, Administrator, CHRIST Delhi – NCR



Mr. Volker Lennart Plän, Resident Representative,
Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung, India

Dr. Sarish Sebastian, Principal investigator,
INPSAR Project, CHRIST Delhi – NCR



Schedule for Panel Discussion

Session Name

Venue

Time

India-Southeast Asia Economic
and Security Relations

A-213, 2nd Floor, A Block,
Christ NCR Campus

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Act East Policy and
Indo-Pacific Region

B-110, First Floor, B Block,
Christ NCR Campus

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Act East Policy and ASEAN

A-213, 2nd Floor, A Block,
Christ NCR Campus

02:00 PM – 04:00 PM

Act East Policy and prospects
of North-East India

B-110, First Floor, B Block,
Christ NCR Campus

02:00 PM – 04:00 PM

ABOUT THE PANEL DISCUSSION

The Southeast Asian region always occupied a prominent position in India's foreign policy. This is evident through India's external relations towards the Southeast Asian countries dating back to ancient times followed by the Cold War period. Thailand, Indonesia was relatively more prominent back then compared to India's relations with Singapore, Malaysia, and Vietnam as of today. It was the decade of 1990's that witnessed great revival and transformation of India's relations with the Southeast countries initiated through the policies by the then Prime Minister of India P.V. Narasimha Rao embarked on a series of economic and political reforms known as 'Look East Policy'. India's Look East Policy (LEP) saw the potential possibilities of connecting the North-eastern corridor of India towards Southeast Asia aiming at establishing greater political, economic, diplomatic engagement with East Asian countries. The envisioned success of the Look East Policy has transitioned further by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2014, to what is now known as 'Act East Policy'. This panel discussion will serve as a platform to discuss the transitions, development stories, advancements and challenges that the future beholds in India's engagement with the Southeast Asian region.

The Act East Policy is more focused on action-oriented policy and to ensure a multipolar Asia through deeper institutional engagement, connectivity and security partnerships with Southeast Asia and East Asia. The geo-strategic significance, ASEAN, and ever assertive presence and influence of China has convinced India of being a regional player in the region. However, on one side there have been challenges in its approach, unclear and uncertain policy as the policy is not worded in black and white in the government documents. Status-oriented power shaping the regional order to its national interest and lack of transparency in the policy process has rendered it as a hurdle to realise the full potential of the Act East Policy. On the other hand, India's engagement towards its Eastern neighbours has also strengthened its other initiatives such as the Mekong-Ganga cooperation and BIMSTEC. Thus, there is a strong economic and strategic rationale to India's Act East policy. The discussion will essentially be aimed at advancing this futuristic policy dialogue in line with the specific and thematic agenda on the same.

This event would take place as part of a fifteen months-long collaborative research project titled 'India's Neighborhood Policy towards the Southeast Asian Region: A Study on Act East Policy' by CHRIST (Deemed to be University) in collaboration with Hanns Seidel Stiftung (HSS), India. The project intends to generate a deep and sophisticated understanding of diverse aspects of India's relationship with the Southeast Asian region and examine India's policy approach towards the economically and strategically vital region.

Detailed Programme Schedule

**Panel - India-Southeast Asia Economic and Security Relations
(A-213, 2nd Floor, A Block, CHRIST NCR Campus),
10:00 AM – 12:00 PM**

**Ambassador Rajiv Bhatia,
Distinguished Fellow, Foreign Policy Studies Programme,
Gateway House, Mumbai**



Session Chair



**Ambassador Gurjit Singh,
Chair of CII Task Force on Asia Africa Growth Corridor**

**Dr. Constantino Xavier,
Fellow, Foreign Policy and Security Studies, Centre for Social
and Economic Progress (CSEP), New Delhi**



**Dr. Amitendu Palit,
Senior Research Fellow and Research Lead,
Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore**

**Dr. Rahul Mishra,
Associate, Centre for ASEAN Regionalism, University of Malaya,
Malaysia**



**Panel - Act East Policy and Indo-Pacific Region
(B-110, First Floor, B Block, CHRIST NCR Campus),
10:00 AM – 12:00 PM**

Dr. Jagannath Panda,
Research Fellow and Coordinator of the East Asia Centre,
MP-IDSA, New Delhi



Session Chair



Dr. Monish Tourangbam,
Faculty, Amity Institute of International Studies,
Amity University

Dr. Premesha Saha,
Associate Fellow, Strategic Studies Programme, ORF



Dr. Raviprasad Narayanan,
Associate Professor, Centre for East Asian Studies,
School of International Studies, JNU

Dr. Rupakjyoti Borah,
Professor, Kaziranga University, Assam



Panel - Act East Policy and ASEAN
(A-213, 2nd Floor, A Block, CHRIST NCR Campus),
02:00 PM – 04:00 PM

Prof. S. D. Muni,
Former Indian Ambassador, and Professor Emeritus, JNU



Session Chair



Captain (Dr.) Gurpreet S Khurana,
Served as missile warfare specialist, Indian Navy

Prof. Mohammed Badrul Alam,
Professor, Department of Political Science,
Jamia Millia Islamia



Dr. Pravin Jadhav,
Assistant Professor, Economics, Institute of Infrastructure,
Technology, Research And Management, Gujarat

**Panel - Act East Policy and Prospects of North-East India
(B-110, First Floor, B Block, CHRIST NCR Campus),
02:00 PM - 04:00 PM**

**Dr. Sudhir Kumar Suthar,
Assistant Professor, Centre for Political Studies, JNU**



Session Chair



**Ambassador Gautam Mukhopadhaya,
Senior Visiting Fellow,
Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi**

**Dr. Sreeradha Datta,
Centre Head, Neighborhood Studies and Senior Fellow,
Vivekananda International Foundation**



**Dr. Rakhee Bhattacharjee,
Associate Professor,
Special Centre for the Study of North East India, JNU**

CHRIST(Deemed to be University), India

CHRIST (Deemed to be University), is headquartered in Bangalore, Karnataka and has its Main Campus in three locations in Bangalore named Bangalore Central Campus, Bangalore Bannerghatta Road Campus and Bangalore Kengeri Campus. The University also has its campus in the State of Maharashtra named Pune Lavasa Campus and in National Capital Region Delhi, named Delhi NCR Campus. The University offers programmes in humanities, social sciences, science, commerce, management, law education, architecture and engineering to over 27,000 students from all the states and union territories of India and about 60 other countries.

The Hanns Seidel Stiftung (HSS)

The Hanns Seidel Foundation has been committed to international cooperation for over 40 years, with a special focus on development cooperation in 80 projects in 55 countries worldwide. The HSS Foundation seeks to promote humane living conditions and to contribute to sustainable development by strengthening peace, democracy, rule of law and social market economy. The activities of the foundation in India are an attempt to contribute towards sustainable development through capacity building aimed at supporting local governance, women empowerment, creating safety for women and children in urban and rural spaces, as well as environment protection and water conservation. In cooperation with local partners, the HSS Foundation has realised projects in the fields of policy consultancy and political education.

Leadership Team

Chief Patrons

Fr Dr Abraham V, Vice Chancellor, CHRIST Bangalore
Fr Dr Jose CC, Pro-Vice Chancellor, CHRIST Bangalore

Patrons

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