



President's Secretariat

# President of India in Assam; Graces the closing ceremony of Namami Barak Festival

Posted On: 20 NOV 2017 7:12PM by PIB Delhi

The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, graced and addressed the closing ceremony of the Namami Barak festival in Silchar, Assam, today (November 20, 2017).

Speaking on the occasion, the President said that the geographical location of the Barak valley gives it the potential to become a hub for inter-state and international trade. Several connectivity-related initiatives have been taken to achieve this potential. The Northeastern part of the "East West Corridor" – which runs from Cachar in Assam to Kutch in Gujarat – starts from Silchar. A broad-gauge railway line, connecting Agartala to Delhi, passes through the Barak valley. All this will benefit business and tourism.

Speaking on cross-border initiatives, the President said trade with Bangladesh is being promoted through the Border Trade Centre located in Karimganj district. India is being connected to Southeast Asia under the Act East Policy, taking advantage of the geographical location of the Northeast, including Assam. He emphasised that there is tremendous potential for growth of business and trade links between Southeast Asia and the Northeast region of India. He expressed confidence that with the development of infrastructure by Union and state Governments, this region would become a driver of international trade and commerce.

Later in the day, the President attended a civic reception hosted at Guwahati University in Guwahati. Addressing the gathering, the President said Assam is the gateway to the Northeast region of India. He commended the state's rich geographical, social and cultural diversity. Assam has developed industries such as oil and natural gas, tea, and silk. By building modern infrastructure, the prospects for Assam and the entire Northeast will be even greater.

The President said that the tourism industry has immense scope in Assam. This state is already an important part of the tourist map due to the Kaziranga and Manas National Parks. He was confident that by facilitating the right ecosystem for tourism, the Government of Assam could multiply the economic and social benefits of the tourism industry.

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(Release ID: 1510271) Visitor Counter : 170

