

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.344
TO BE ANSWERED ON 13.12.2018

SYNERGY BETWEEN OBOR-ACT EAST POLICY

344. SHRI JOSE K. MANI:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that Chinese diplomats in India have hinted at a synergy between One Belt One Road (OBOR)-Act East Policy;
- (b) the manner in which Government plans to go on with the idea/suggestion; and
- (c) the details of recent achievements made under the Act East Policy of Government?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
[GEN. (DR) V.K.SINGH (RETD)]

(a) & (b) Government has seen such reports. With regard to China's 'One Belt One Road' (OBOR) initiative, Government has publically articulated its firm belief that connectivity initiatives must be based on universally recognized international norms, good governance, rule of law, openness, transparency and financial responsibility, and must be pursued in a manner that respects sovereignty, equality and territorial integrity of nations. The inclusion of the so-called 'China-Pakistan Economic Corridor' (CPEC), which passes through parts of the Indian state of Jammu & Kashmir under illegal occupation of Pakistan, as a flagship project of 'OBOR' reflects lack of appreciation of India's concerns on the issue of sovereignty and territorial integrity. Government has conveyed to the Chinese side, including at the highest level, its concerns about their activities in Pakistan Occupied Jammu & Kashmir and asked them to cease these activities.

(c) India's Look East Policy, which has been a major pillar of our foreign policy since the early 1990s, was upgraded in the second half of 2014, to Act East Policy, which focuses on the extended neighbourhood in the Indo-Pacific region. The policy which was originally conceived as an economic initiative, has gained political, strategic and cultural dimensions including establishment of institutional mechanisms for dialogue and cooperation. The key principles and objectives of Act East Policy is to promote economic cooperation, cultural ties and develop strategic relationship with countries in the Indo-Pacific region through continuous engagement at bilateral, regional and multilateral levels thereby providing enhanced connectivity to India's Northeastern States with other countries in our neighbourhood.

India has strategic partnership with a number of countries in the region, including Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Australia, Singapore and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and forged close ties with all countries in the Indo-Pacific region. Apart from ASEAN, ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and East Asia Summit (EAS), India has also been actively engaged in regional fora such as Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD), Mekong Ganga Cooperation (MGC) and Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), all of which contribute to the realisation of India's Act East Policy.

In addition, various plans at bilateral and regional levels include steady efforts to develop and strengthen connectivity of India's Northeast with the ASEAN region through trade, culture, people-to-people contacts and physical infrastructure (road, airport, telecommunication, power, etc.). Some of the major ongoing projects include Kaladan Multi Modal Transit Transport Project, the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway Project, Rhi-Tiddim Road Project and Border Haats. A Line of Credit of US \$ 1 billion has also been offered by our Prime Minister at the ASEAN-India Summit for enhancing physical and digital connectivity between India and ASEAN.

Our Act-East Policy was further reinforced through the ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit, which was hosted by India on 25 January 2018 in New Delhi to mark the 25th Anniversary of ASEAN-India Dialogue Relations. During the Summit, all ten States of the ASEAN agreed with India to further strengthen and deepen the ASEAN-India Strategic Partnership for mutual benefit, across the whole spectrum of political-security, economic, socio-cultural and development cooperation, for building of a peaceful, harmonious, caring and sharing community in our region.
