

Rising North East

Mains Syllabus: GS III - Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

Why in the News?

Rising North East summit 2025 is held recently.

What is the geographical significance of North East India?

- **North Eastern Region (NER)** - It encompasses a group of eight states, namely Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, and Tripura.



- **Geographical Coverage** - NER covers 7.98% of India's total geographical the region and accounts for 3.78% of the total population.
- **Hills of NER** - The region is characterized by several mountain ranges and hills such as Patkai Bum, Naga Hills, and Mizo Hills, as well as the Garo, Khasi, and Jaintia Hills.



- **Strategic Significance** - This region serves as a gateway to Southeast Asia, with each state sharing a border with at least one Southeast Asian nation.

Key Demographic Indicators

Indicators	Northeast India	India
Population (millions), 2011 Census	45.7	1210.9
Population density (per sq. km.)	175	368
Literacy Rate (Census 2011) (% age)	78.5	74.0
Life Expectancy (in Years)	71.8	68.3

What are the environmental and biological significance of NER?

- **Biodiversity Hotspot** - It is part of the Indo-Burma Biodiversity Hotspot, one of the world's richest in species diversity and endemism.
- **Rich Forest Cover** - One of India's most heavily forested regions — about 65-70% of the area is under forest cover, with tropical rainforests, alpine meadows, and bamboo forests.
- **Ecological Buffer Zone** - It acts as a climate regulator and ecological buffer between the Eastern Himalayas and South-East Asia.
- **Floral Diversity** - Northeast India is often referred to as the "cradle of flowering plants" as it home to a vast array of plant species, including orchids, ferns, bamboos, and medicinal plants.
- **Wildlife Richness** - It is home to protected areas like Kaziranga National Park, Namdapha, and Manas.
- Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim are particularly renowned for their high orchid species richness, with Arunachal Pradesh even dubbed the "Orchid Paradise" of India.
- It is home to numerous rare and endangered mammals, including the one-horned rhinoceros, Asian elephant, tiger, hoolock gibbon (India's only ape), clouded leopard, red panda.






What are the cultural significances of NER?

- North East India is a region of immense cultural significance, characterized by a vibrant tapestry of distinct ethnic groups, traditions, and languages.
- **Tribal Region** - Over 54% of the region's population, particularly in hilly areas, belong to tribal communities and is home to approximately 135 Scheduled Tribe groups out of a total of around 705 in India.

State	Major Tribes
Arunachal Pradesh	Nyishi, Adi, Apatani, Monpa, Mishmi, Galo, Tagin
Assam	Bodo, Mishing, Karbi, Rabha, Dimasa, Deori, Tiwa
Manipur	Tangkhul, Thadou, Paite, Hmar, Mao, Zeliangrong, Maram
Meghalaya	Khasi, Garo, Jaintia
Mizoram	Mizo (Lushai), Hmar, Lai, Mara, Chakma
Nagaland	Ao, Angami, Sumi, Lotha, Konyak, Phom, Chang, Yimchunger, Zeliang, Sangtam

Tripura	Tripuri (Debbarma, Jamatia, Reang/Bru), Chakma, Halam, Mog, Uchoi
Sikkim	Lepcha, Bhutia, Limbu

- **Religions** - The region is a mosaic of religious beliefs with the co-existence of Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, and indigenous belief systems.
- Christianity has a significant presence in states like Nagaland and Mizoram, where it has played a transformative role in the culture and way of life.
- **Rich Folklore and Mythology** - North East India is rich in oral traditions, folk stories, and mythical narratives that reflect the unique worldview of its people.
- **North East Festivals** - Hornbill Festival (Nagaland), Bihu (Assam), Ziro Festival (Arunachal Pradesh), Chapchar Kut (Mizoram), and the Cherry Blossom Festival (Meghalaya) are celebrated in the region.
- **Art and Crafts** - North East has a vigorous craft tradition and every tribe excels in craftsmanship.

	ARTS & CRAFTS	FORMS	MUSIC
Arunachal Pradesh	 Weaving, bamboo & cane crafts, wood carving, mask making, monpa		Tribal folk songs with bamboo flutes and drums 
Assam	 Muga & Eri silk weaving, Gamusa, bell-metal work, Mask making (Majuli)		Borgeet hymns, Ojapali, Zikir, Bihu songs 
Manipur	 Ras Leela (classical), Thang Ta (martial), Lal Haraoba		Pena instrument music, devotional and folk songs 
Meghalaya	 Bamboo weaving, wood carving, weaving of Jainsam & Dakmananda		Drums, bamboo flutes, Oral folk traditions 
Mizoram	 Puan weaving, bamboo & cane craft, basketry		Traditional songs (Zai), gospel, folk fusion 
Tripura	 Garia dance, Hojagiri (Reang), Lebang Boomani		Buddhist chants, Lepcha & Bhutia folk songs
Sikkim	 Thangka painting, wood carving, woolen weaving	 Singhi Chham (snow lion)	Buddhist chants, Lepcha & Bhutia folk songs

What are the economic significances of NER?

- **Productivity of the Region** - The Region's GSDP at current prices is INR 5.75 lakh crore in FY 2021-22.
- **Growth Rate** - Compounded Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of GSDP of North-eastern States grew at 08.17% from FY2015 to FY2022.
- **Abundant Natural Resources** - An abundance of oil, gas, coal, minerals, timber, medicinal plants, bamboo, forest products, and an abundance of water for industries to exploit.

- **Gateway to Southeast Asia** - As a strategic location, it offers easy access to ASEAN markets.
- **Low-cost Manufacturing Hub** - Low labor costs compared to other parts of India and the world.
- **Skilled Workforce** - A young, educated, and skilled workforce that is proficient in English.
- **Emerging Consumer Market** - A growing consumer market with rising incomes and increased urbanization that offers immense potential for business.
- **Thriving Bio-economy** - Northeast is the thriving region of bamboo industry, tea production and organic products.

What are the challenges in NER development?

- **Remoteness** - Its geographical location, connected to the rest of India by the narrow Siliguri Corridor (Chicken's Neck), creates a sense of remoteness and logistical challenges.
- **Limited Flat Land** - The mountainous nature of the region limits the availability of suitable land for urban expansion and industrial development.
- **Infrastructural challenges** - The region's mountainous terrain makes it difficult to build infrastructure and connect various parts of the region, hindering transportation and trade.
- **Natural Disasters** - The North East is prone to earthquakes and floods, landslide and other natural hazards further complicating development efforts.
- **Political Instability** - Insurgency and ethnic conflicts have disrupted social and economic development in some parts of the region.
- The recent Kuki and Meitei conflict in Manipur has severely hampered the development process in Northeast India.
- **Inter-State and Intra-State Conflicts** - Occasional border disputes between states and ethnic tensions within states can also impede cooperative development efforts.
- **Migration & Infiltration** - Large-scale migration from neighboring countries, particularly Bangladesh, has created social and political tensions, and also poses challenges to resource allocation.
- **Limited Private Investment** - The challenging environment and perceived risks have deterred significant private sector investment, hindering job creation and economic diversification.

What are the government initiatives for the development of NER?

- **Bio- Transformation** - Since 2011, a network of 126 Biotech Hubs were established across NER to support and promote biological sciences / biotechnology education and research.
- **Funding Support** - Since 2010, Department of Bio-Technology DBT has consistently allocated 10% of its annual budget to specialized programmes in the NER, aiming to bridge the gap between potential and prosperity.
- **Infrastructure Development** - Government has taken the specific initiative for improvement of connectivity within the region by programs such as SARDP-NE, Bharatmala-I, etc. and with rest of India through East-West Corridor program.

- The famous Sela Tunnel and mega projects like the Bhupen Hazarika Bridge have been completed recently.
- **Building Connectivity** - The India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway will establish direct connectivity to Thailand through Myanmar.
- Kaladan Multimodal Transit Project will connect the Kolkata Port to Sittwe Port in Myanmar, and further link the rest of the Northeast via Mizoram.
- **Sports Development** - Under the Khelo India program, projects worth hundreds of crores of rupees are underway in the Northeast.
- There are 8 Khelo India Centres of Excellence and over 250 Khelo India Centres in the region alone.
- **Rising Northeast Summit** - The Ministry of DoNER, Government of India, is organizing the summit to showcase the investment and trade potential of the Northeast Region of India.
- **Peace Efforts** - Several peace treaties are being made to address the conflicts in the region.
- Long-standing dispute for Karbianglong was solved having signed Karbianglong agreement/accord in 2021.

What lies ahead?

- The Northeast Region of India needs better infrastructure, including roads, railways, and digital access, to enhance connectivity and economic growth.
- Strengthening education, healthcare, and tourism will empower communities and create sustainable opportunities.
- Governance improvements and targeted social welfare programs will ensure stability and long-term development.

References

[The Hindu | North East Rising Summit](#)