

**Joint USI-ASSAM RIFLES SEMINAR: 19 MARCH 2024**

**‘INDIA BECOMING A \$ 5 TRILLION ECONOMY BY 2025-26 – ROLE OF THE  
NORTH EAST AS A GROWTH ENGINE’**

<b><u>Dt &amp; Time</u></b>	<b><u>Mins</u></b>	<b><u>Events</u></b>	<b><u>Remarks</u></b>
<b><u>Arr &amp; Assy</u></b>			
0915 h	-	Time for Speakers to be ushered	
0930 h	-	Arrival of the Chief Guest	
<b><u>Inaugural Session</u></b>			
0930-0935 h	05	Welcome & Introduction of Chief Guest	<b>Col Rohit Jakhar, Comdt 45 AR</b>
0935-0940 h	05	Welcome Address and Curtain Raiser for the Inaugural Joint Seminar by USI and Assam Rifles	<b>Maj Gen B K Sharma, AVSM, SM** (Retd), Director General USI</b>
0940-0945 h	05	Special Address	<b>Lt Gen PC Nair, PVSM, AVSM, YSM, PhD DG Assam Rifles</b>
0945-0955 h	10	Keynote Address by the Chief Guest	<b>Lt Gen Upendra Dwivedi, PVSM, AVSM VCOAS</b>
<b><u>Session I – NE Region: Potential Springboard and Inhibitors for India’s Economic Swoop into ASEAN</u></b>			
0955-1000 h	05	Introduction to the Panelists & Preamble to Session I	<b>Maj Gen B K Sharma, AVSM, SM** (Retd), Director General USI</b>
1000-1020 h	20	Assam Rifles: Role as ‘Preservers’ & ‘Promoters’ of Socio - Economic Development & Peace through active engagement.	<b>Lt Gen Shokin Chauhan, PVSM, AVSM, YSM, SM, VSM, PhD (Retd)</b>
1020-1040 h	20	Natural Resources, Tourism & Sports: Flagships of Regional Economy.	<b>Shri Jitesh Khosla, IAS (Retd)</b>
1040-1100 h	20	The Myanmar Factor in India’s Act- East Through Northeast	<b>Mr Subir Bhaumik</b>
1100-1120 h	20	Q & A Session (Open House) Summing up Session 1	<b>Maj Gen B K Sharma, AVSM, SM** (Retd), Director General USI</b>
1120-1145 h	25	Gp Photo & High Tea	
<b><u>Session II – NE Region’s Societal &amp; Topographical Encumbrances: Ways to Establish a Sustainable Growth Engine</u></b>			
1145-1150 h	05	Introduction to the Panelists & Preamble to Session II	<b>Maj Gen Gen RS Yadav, VSM (Retd) Director CS3, USI</b>
1150-1205 h	15	Emerging Ethnic Fault Lines: Impediment in the engine of economic growth.	<b>Lt Gen Sukhdeep Sangwan, PVSM, AVSM, SM** (Retd)</b>
1205-1220 h	15	Termination of FMR & Fencing of IMB: New emerging dynamics & implications of NE India	<b>Lt Gen AK Sahni, PVSM, UYSM, SM, VSM (Retd)</b>
1220-1235 h	15	India, Myanmar and Thailand (IMT) Trilateral Highway & Kaladan Multi Modal Project: Harbinger for boosting trade and economic development.	<b>Ambassador PMS Malik, IFS (Retd)</b>

1235-1250 h	15	Atmanirbhar Bharat: Role of NE in making India self-reliant.	<b>Mr Sabyasachi Dutta</b>
1250-1310 h	20	Q & A Session (Open House) Summing up Session II	<b>Maj Gen Gen RS Yadav, VSM (Retd) Director CS3, USI</b>
1310-1320 h	10	Presentation of Mementos & Closing Remarks	<b>Lt Gen PC Nair, PVSM, AVSM, YSM, PhD, DG Assam Rifles</b>

On 19<sup>th</sup> Mar 2024, The United Service Institution (USI) of India, Centre for Strategic Studies and Simulation (CS3) organised the Joint USI-Assam Rifles Seminar on the topic 'India Becoming a \$5 trillion Economy by 2025-26 - Role of the North-East as a Growth Engine.'



**Welcome Remarks by Maj Gen B K Sharma, AVSM, SM\*\* (Retd), Director General USI**



**Special Address by Lt Gen PC Nair, PVSM, AVSM, YSM, PhD, DG Assam Rifles**



**Keynote Address by Chief Guest Lt Gen Upendra Dwivedi, PVSM, AVSM VCOAS**

### Session I - NE Region: Potential Springboard and Inhibitors for India's Economic Swoop into ASEAN

- The Assam Rifles have been described as an active socio-economic promoter for change in the NE region. Not only has Assam Rifles managed well the conflicts in the region, they also understand the significance of the culture and need for lasting peace. They have worked on multiple initiatives such as setting up unit schools for education, turned camps into hostels for children and established medical and veterinary camps. Moreover, to promote social cohesion, they often organise sports events and cultural festivals.
- There is a critical need to leverage natural resources of the NE. Like a 3000-ton refinery was set up in Numaligarh whose capacity was later increased to 9000 tonnes. NE cannot absorb 9000 tonnes of output and the only way this refinery can be economically efficient is through the Act-East policy. Bangladesh and ASEAN countries, thus, may buy production of this refinery.
- The bamboo economy in India has untapped potential. While the bamboo economy of China is about six-fold in billions than that of India, India has much more variety and quantity. Also, the NE can provide a huge contribution in terms of tourism to India's GDP. It breaks insularity and allows the development of trade to emerge. However, there still needs to be a setting of world-class standards in terms of mode of travel, hotels and the airport.
- Finally, the subject of Myanmar was raised. Myanmar must inevitably be included while looking eastward through land. Currently, rebels control about 60–70 per cent of the country and the military junta seems powerless to stop them. China's influence is gradually growing in Myanmar and is frequently providing weapons to both the government and rebels in the area. If Myanmar

were to break apart, there would be no Look East through land.



Panel 1

### Session II – NE Region’s Societal & Topographical Encumbrances: Ways to Establish a Sustainable Growth Engine

- India’s border with Myanmar is 1,643 km long, out of which 1,472 km has been demarcated. The MHA 2022-23 report states that 6.5 kilometres of the fencing has been completed with smart fencing. There are however, 3 issues associated with the fencing: terrain, coordination with the other side, and discrepancies in the area mapped. So, while the government may be slow on the matter, there is still some progress happening.
- Talking about the Trilateral India-Myanmar-Thailand (IMT) project and the Kaladan project, India has faced several hurdles while completing these projects. The turmoil within Myanmar as well as India’s constrained relations with them have delayed the completion of these projects. Although, its completion will improve supply chain and trade links with ASEAN, however the situation is made more difficult by the military junta's loss of authority over border regions.
- The unique positioning of the NE gives the region multiple advantages namely, fresh water resources, geology, bio diversity, geography and demography. However, the lack of proper technology, market accessibility, and infrastructure prevents the region from reaching its full potential. By intelligently using these resources, the region's energy needs may be satisfied and the energy security of its surrounding nations can be enhanced.



**Panel 2**



**Group Photograph**

**Report by Riddhima Verma, research intern CS3 USI**