

## Use schemes, says Mukhi

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Jagdish Mukhi being felicitated during the inauguration of the seminar in Guwahati on Monday. Picture by Manash Das

**Guwahati:** Assam governor Jagdish Mukhi has stressed the Centre's development agenda for the state which is the "hub" of Act East policy and urged utilisation of various central government schemes.

The governor said this while inaugurating a two-day conference on Physical and Social Infrastructure for Regional Development here on Monday.

The conference is being organised by the Union finance ministry in collaboration with the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) along with Research and Information System for Developing Countries, an autonomous research organisation under the ministry of external affairs besides the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (Ficci).

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The inaugural session was addressed by Ficci's deputy secretary-general Manab Mazumdar, RIS fellow Amitabh Kundu, AIIB head of communications Laurel Ostfield, additional chief secretary of industries and commerce Ravi Capoor, RIS governing council member Seshadri Chari and parliamentary secretary of Arunachal Pradesh Tourism P.D. Sona.

Mukhi said: "The government is laying lot of emphasis on infrastructure development for all-round development of the region. The theme of the seminar provides an in-depth analysis of the core issues of the northeastern states."

He added that Assam is at the "heart of the Centre's Act East policy" and Prime Minister Narendra Modi has put Assam on the development track.

"The Northeast also has the best reputation for being the hub of communication because of its proximity to South Asian countries. Various initiatives such as UDAN, single-window clearance for trade besides inland waterways must be utilised for maximum development of the region," Mukhi said.

Capoor said: "From a historical perspective, the Northeast was a very prosperous region before Independence because of excellent trade routes during that time. Assam exported tea, oil, timber and coal to the world through various rail and water routes such as the Brahmaputra. In more than 50 years after Independence, the river routes have completely stopped. In recent years, efforts have been made to make these operational again."

Capoor stressed connectivity, including rejuvenation of rail lines, with nearby Asian countries.