

tons of bulk cargo and about 8200 containers. In the recent past, there has been a rise in transit cargo for Afghanistan through Chabahar. India's assistance of 75,000 tons of wheat to Afghanistan, of which eight consignments have already been shipped, is being supplied via Chabahar. The port has handled over 53,000 tons of India's wheat bound for Afghanistan since the beginning of the current fiscal year. Afghanistan's exports to India are also routed via Chabahar Port.

### **Odisha's role in Act East Policy**

1363. SHRI SUJEET KUMAR: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India's Act East Policy is a powerful platform to connect to its neighbours and extended neighbours;

(b) whether Eastern India and North-East India have been considered as the gateway to connect to the region, and in doing this somehow Odisha's potential has not been factored into;

(c) whether Odisha with its civilizational and maritime contacts with the region for several centuries is uniquely placed to contribute to the strengthening of the Act East Policy; and

(d) if so, whether Odisha is a part of the overall Act East framework and whether any assessment has been made on how Odisha can contribute?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI V. MURALEEDHARAN): (a) to (d) India's Act East Policy focuses on strengthening relations with India's extended neighbourhood in the Indo-Pacific Region. The Prime Minister articulated India's vision for a free, open, inclusive and rule-based Indo-Pacific in Singapore in 2018 promoting Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR).

The objective of Act East Policy is to promote economic cooperation, cultural ties and develop strategic relationships with countries in the Indo-Pacific region through continuous engagement at bilateral, regional and multilateral levels, thereby providing enhanced connectivity in its broadest sense, including political, economic, cultural and people-people relations.

Act East Policy is a major pillar of India's foreign policy with the objective of benefiting all the States of India, especially those in Eastern India and North Eastern India.