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India's Act East Policy and Mizoram: Linking Borders through the Bairabi-Sairang Railway Line

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Abstract

The completion of the Bairabi-Sairang railway line marks a historic milestone in Mizoram's connectivity with the rest of India. As a landlocked and hilly state sharing 510 km of border with Myanmar and 318 km with Bangladesh, Mizoram has long faced geographical isolation and dependence on road and air transport. The new 51 kilometre broad-gauge line directly connects Aizawl, the state capital, to the national railway grid for the first time, enhancing both domestic integration and regional accessibility. Beyond its developmental significance, the project aligns with the strategic vision of India's AEP, which positions North-East India as a gateway to Southeast Asia. The railway strengthens links to Assam while also creating the potential to integrate with key cross-border initiatives such as the Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project and the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway. It will lower transport costs, stimulate trade in agricultural and forest products, expand opportunities in tourism and handicrafts, and generate employment in logistics and border trade. The project enhances India's presence in a sensitive frontier state and supports its efforts to counterbalance China's influence through the Belt and Road Initiative in neighbouring Myanmar and Bangladesh.

Keywords: Mizoram; Bairabi-Sairang Railway; Act East Policy; North-East India; Connectivity; Border Trade; Regional Integration

Introduction

Mizoram is a landlocked state located in the far North-East of India, having its hilly terrain and difficult geography. Mizoram shares an international border of about 404-510 km with Myanmar and 318 km with Bangladesh, making it a key frontier in India's foreign and security policy. Mizoram has historically remained one of the more isolated states due to its mountainous terrain, heavy monsoon rains, and lack of robust transport infrastructure. The roadways and limited air connectivity were the only means of linking Mizoram with the rest of India. The Economic Times (2025) highlights that these routes were often disrupted by landslides and floods, making transport costly and unreliable.

A major milestone in overcoming this isolation was the recent completion of the Bairabi-Sairang railway line, a 51.38 kilometre broad-gauge connection that links the state capital, Aizawl, to the national railway grid (The Week, 2025). The project, constructed under difficult terrain conditions, includes multiple tunnels and bridges and passes through stations such as Hortoki, Kawnpui, Mualkhang, and Sairang (India Today,

2025). After extensive safety inspections, the railway was officially commissioned in June 2025, marking Mizoram's full integration into India's rail network (News on Air, 2025). This new railway connectivity is more than an infrastructure project. It promises to improve economic opportunities by lowering transport costs, easing the flow of goods and people, and enhancing access to services. It has a clear strategic dimension. By integrating Mizoram more closely with the rest of India and positioning it as a gateway to Myanmar and Southeast Asia, the railway aligns directly with the objectives of the AEP. This policy framework emphasises connectivity, trade, and cultural exchange between Northeast India and ASEAN, making the Bairabi-Sairang railway a developmental achievement and a strategic tool of India's regional engagement.

1. Theoretical Understanding

This work draws on interrelated theoretical perspectives to analyse the significance of the Bairabi-Sairang Railway Line within India's AEP. The New Regionalism Theory explains

how subregions like Mizoram can be transformed from peripheral spaces into active nodes of globalisation through infrastructure and cross-border linkages. The railway line symbolises this re-positioning, making Mizoram a potential gateway between India and Southeast Asia. By linking Mizoram to national and international trade networks, the railway project contributes to the institutionalisation of economic and diplomatic ties envisioned under the AEP. The Borderland Studies provide a critical way to view Mizoram as an isolated frontier and as a dynamic corridor of interaction. The Bairabi-Sairang Railway, by linking the state to Myanmar and beyond, redefines the border from a space of marginality into a site of opportunity and exchange. These perspectives emphasise that the Bairabi-Sairang Railway Line is not merely a domestic infrastructure project but a strategic instrument for development, integration, and regional diplomacy.

2. Methodology

This work employs a qualitative and interpretive approach, integrating perspectives from political science, development studies, and borderland studies. Data has been drawn from both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include government documents such as reports from the Ministry of Railways, the Ministry of External Affairs, and parliamentary debates, alongside official development plans related to the North-East and field visit. Secondary sources comprise books, peer-reviewed journal articles, think tank publications, and media reports on connectivity and regional integration.

3. Objective

The central aim of this study is to analyse the strategic, economic, and socio-political implications of the Bairabi-Sairang Railway Line within the framework of India's AEP. The specific objectives include:

- Evaluate how the Bairabi-Sairang Railway project enhances regional connectivity between Mizoram and Southeast Asia.
- Explore the project's potential in fostering cross-border trade, cultural exchange, and people-to-people connectivity.

4. Literature Review

The discourse on India's AEP and North-East connectivity has generated a substantial body of scholarship in recent years, with academics, policymakers, and think tanks stressing the centrality of infrastructure in reorienting India's engagement with Southeast Asia. This review organises the literature into five thematic strands: (i) The AEP and North-East India, (ii) Infrastructure and Connectivity, (iii) Borderland Development and Security, (iv) Mizoram-Specific Connectivity Challenges, and (v) Policy and Institutional Perspectives.

Scholars widely agree that the Northeast is the pivot of India's AEP. Baruah (2022) emphasises that while the policy aims to link the region with Southeast Asia, persistent structural challenges of governance, security, and uneven development restrict its transformative potential. Goswami and Misra (2023) argue that the North-East is a geographic gateway and a strategic frontier where connectivity corridors intersect with security imperatives. Haokip (2015) highlights the policy's dual role: strengthening regional diplomacy and addressing the Northeast's isolation from India's economic mainstream. These works collectively highlight the ambition of the AEP but emphasise that its success depends heavily on local infrastructural capacities.

Infrastructure is consistently identified as the backbone of AEP. Das and Thomas (2021) stress that railway expansion in the Northeast enhances domestic integration and transnational linkages with ASEAN economies. Singh (2019) points out that transport corridors act as catalysts for trade, cultural exchange, and investment inflows. The Observer Research Foundation (ORF) and the Centre for Policy Research (CPR) also underline how connectivity projects like the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project and the Trilateral Highway parallel the importance of rail links in Mizoram. The Asian Development Bank (ADB, 2020) has framed infrastructure as a prerequisite for regional economic corridors, where Mizoram could emerge as a critical node.

Theories of borderland studies provide a strong foundation for understanding the implications of the Bairabi-Sairang Railway. Van Schendel (2005) and Scott (2009) reconceptualise borders as dynamic zones of exchange rather than static peripheries. Misra (2020) highlights that border states in the North-East must be developed for integration and addressing insurgency, migration, and illicit trade. Baruah (2015) cautions that while connectivity can enhance opportunities, it can also create new security vulnerabilities if not supported by strong institutions. In Mizoram, with its proximity to Myanmar, enhanced rail connectivity could both stimulate cross-border trade and demand greater vigilance against trafficking and border insecurity.

Academic literature specifically focusing on Mizoram remains relatively limited compared to other northeastern states like Assam or Manipur. Existing work highlights the region's infrastructural deficit. Lalhriatpuii (2020) notes that Mizoram's rugged terrain and lack of transport networks restrict economic diversification. Government reports (Indian Railways, 2022) project that the Bairabi-Sairang Railway will connect Aizawl to the national railway grid, revolutionising trade and mobility. NITI Aayog's Vision Document (2021) also positions Mizoram's connectivity projects as part of India's strategy to leverage border states as engines of growth. Yet, as Datta (2018) observes, implementation delays, environmental concerns, and lack of community engagement have slowed down progress in several connectivity initiatives in the North-East.

Policy-oriented literature highlights the strategic rationale behind linking Mizoram to Southeast Asia. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA, 2019) frames AEP as a means of strengthening trade and people-to-people contacts through connectivity. The Ministry of Railways (2022) emphasises the developmental dividends of projects like the Bairabi-Sairang line in reducing regional imbalance. Reports from international organisations such as the World Bank (2021) and ADB (2020) advocate for 'connectivity-led growth,' noting that North-East India's integration with Southeast Asia could uplift millions by fostering cross-border supply chains. While there is abundant scholarship on the AEP and North-East connectivity at large, the specific case of the Bairabi-Sairang Railway Line has received little focused academic attention. Most references to Mizoram's connectivity remain scattered across government reports and policy papers, with limited engagement from critical academic perspectives. There is also a rareness of field-based studies that examine the social, cultural, and economic impacts of railway expansion in Mizoram. This study seeks to address these gaps by situating the Bairabi-Sairang Railway Line within the broader framework of the AEP, while also evaluating its local and regional implications.

5. Railway Connectivity in Mizoram

The completion of the Bairabi-Sairang railway line marks one of the most significant transport milestones in Mizoram's history. The state capital Aizawl, perched on steep hills and valleys, remained without a direct railway connection. All rail-based travel and freight movement had to terminate at Bairabi, located on the Mizoram-Assam border, and then continue by road. Given Mizoram's hilly terrain, heavy monsoons, and frequent landslides, these road connections were often unreliable, costly, and time-consuming (Economic Times Infra, 2025). The new broad-gauge line changes this reality and directly connects Aizawl to the national railway grid. The Bairabi-Sairang project is a remarkable engineering achievement in one of India's most difficult terrains. According to official reports, the line includes 48 tunnels, adding up to nearly 13 kilometres in length, and more than 140 bridges—55 classified as major and 89 as minor (Economic Times Infra, 2025). These were necessary to navigate Mizoram's deep gorges, river valleys, and high ridges. Among them, Bridge No. 196 is notable as one of the tallest in Northeast India, with a pier height of 104 metres (Times of India, 2025). The line also passes through four key stations within Mizoram: Hortoki, Kawnpui, Mualkhang, and Sairang, which lies only about 20 kilometres from Aizawl (India Today, 2025). The project's cost was ₹7,714 crore, reflecting both the engineering challenges and its strategic importance.

The project faced multiple delays due to difficult weather conditions, landslides, and the COVID-19 pandemic. In June 2025, the Commission of Railway Safety (CRS) completed its inspection of the final stretch between Hortoki and Sairang, paving the way for full commissioning (The Week, 2025). Hence, Aizawl has direct railway access, reducing its dependence on road transport and making travel to Assam and other states more efficient.

The importance of this line is not limited to passengers. Freight and logistics are expected to benefit even more significantly. Goods that previously had to be trucked in through Assam can now be transported more cheaply and efficiently by train. Agricultural commodities such as ginger, turmeric, fruits, and bamboo, which form the backbone of Mizoram's rural economy, will have better access to larger markets. Industries such as cement, bamboo-based manufacturing, and handicrafts are likely to experience growth due to reduced transport costs and improved logistics (Economic Times Infra, 2025).

The railway also strengthens domestic integration. By directly linking Aizawl to the national network, Mizoram is more closely tied to the Indian economy, helping overcome its historical isolation. Roy (2023) notes that for decades, the state's development was slowed by geographical challenges and infrastructural deficits. The new connectivity improves efficiency, enhances competitiveness, and opens opportunities for both trade and tourism.

The line has a strategic dimension within India's Act East Policy. By improving infrastructure in Mizoram, India ensures that domestic connectivity complements international projects such as the Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project and the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway. Barua (2020) and Bajpae (2023) noted that without reliable internal transport networks, India cannot fully realise its vision of using the Northeast as a gateway to Southeast Asia. Thus, the Bairabi-Sairang railway is considered as both a developmental project and a strategic asset in regional integration.

Table 1: Key Features of the Bairabi-Sairang Railway Project

S. No.	Feature	Details
1	Total Length	51.38 km (Broad Gauge)
2	Major Bridges	55
3	Minor Bridges	89
4	Total Tunnels	48 (approx. 12.6 km total length)
5	Tallest Bridge Pier	104 m (Bridge No. 196)
6	Stations in Mizoram	Hortoki, Kawnpui, Mualkhang, Sairang
7	Project Cost	₹7,714 crore
8	Completion Year	2025 (CRS approval in June)

6. The Act East Policy Context

India's engagement with its eastern neighbourhood has evolved significantly over the past three decades. The Look East Policy, first announced in the early 1990s, marked India's attempt to strengthen economic and strategic ties with Southeast Asia following the end of the Cold War. This policy initially focused on trade, investment, and cultural exchanges with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Barua, 2020). By 2014, the government sought to move beyond symbolic outreach to a more action-oriented framework. As a result, the Act East Policy (AEP) was launched, emphasising concrete measures in connectivity, infrastructure, and strategic partnerships (Srichampa, 2016). This shift from 'Look' to 'Act' reflects India's recognition of Southeast Asia as a key region for its economic growth and regional influence.

Within this framework, North-East India occupies a central role. The region shares long international borders with Myanmar, Bangladesh, Bhutan, and China, but only a narrow land corridor—the Siliguri Corridor—connects it with the rest of India. Given its geographical location, the Northeast is often described as the 'gateway' to Southeast Asia (Doley, 2025). Policymakers argue that closer integration of this region with ASEAN markets is critical for India's regional ambitions (Srichampa, 2016). Statements from political leaders also highlight this gateway role. Assam's Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma emphasised that Northeast India can serve as India's main link for trade with ASEAN, provided infrastructure and logistics are developed (Business Standard, 2022).

To realise this vision, the AEP has placed strong emphasis on multi-modal infrastructure. This includes roads, railways, waterways, and air networks designed to connect the Northeast with Southeast Asia. Projects such as the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway, the Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project, and expanded air connectivity are examples of this multi-modal approach (Ziipao, 2018). Ziipao (2018) notes that roads and market infrastructure are essential for regional trade and local development in the border states. Bajpae (2023) points out that infrastructure development under the AEP is about economics; it is also a strategic response to rising competition with China in the Indo-Pacific. In this way, the Act East Policy combines development goals with larger geopolitical interests, with the Northeast positioned at the intersection of both.

7. Strategic Role of Mizoram

The state Mizoram inhabits a strategic position in India's North-East, connecting borders with Myanmar to the east and south, and Bangladesh to the west. This uniqueness makes it a crucial gateway for India to connect with Southeast Asia, for

both trade opportunities and regional development (Pudaite, 2008). It has been further strengthened through major infrastructure initiatives such as the India-Myanmar-Thailand (IMT) Trilateral Highway and the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project. The IMT Highway, a 1,360 km corridor connecting Moreh in Manipur to Mae Sot in Thailand via Myanmar, is intended to facilitate regional economic integration and strengthen India's influence in Southeast Asia, although progress has been affected by security and political challenges in Myanmar (Pudaite, 2008). The Kaladan project aims to link the Sittwe port in Myanmar with Mizoram through river and road transport, reducing logistics costs and enhancing cross-border trade prospects (Bhutia, 2024). The Bairabi-Sairang railway line has connected Aizawl, the state capital facilitates the movement of goods and people within the state and has the potential to act as a feeder route for cross-border trade through Zokhawthar in India and Sittwe in Myanmar (Times of India, 2025). These developments highlight Mizoram's importance as a critical hub linking India's northeastern states with Southeast Asia and promoting both economic growth and geopolitical engagement.

8. Economic and Social Impacts

The completion of the Bairabi-Sairang railway line has brought significant economic and social opportunities for Mizoram. The state depended almost entirely on road transport through Assam, which made the movement of goods costly and time-consuming. With the arrival of rail connectivity, transport costs are expected to decrease by as much as 30 to 40 per cent, which will directly benefit farmers and local producers (Mishra, 2025). Agriculture is one of the key sectors likely to gain from this change. Mizoram produces fruits such as oranges, pineapples, and guavas, as well as spices like ginger and turmeric, but much of this produce suffered from post-harvest losses due to delays in road transport. Faster and more reliable railway access will help reduce wastage, allow farmers to access distant markets, and increase their incomes (New Indian Express, 2025). Alongside agriculture, bamboo and cane-based handicrafts, which form the backbone of Mizoram's cottage industries, are also expected to benefit. Easier transport of raw materials and finished goods will strengthen the state's craft traditions and improve artisans' access to larger markets (Outlook Traveller, 2025). Tourism is another sector that stands to gain significantly. Mizoram has already seen a 139 per cent increase in tourist arrivals in 2024-2025, and rail connectivity is expected to sustain this upward trend (Times of India, 2025). This author's physical verification (field visit) in April 2025 reveals the state's natural attractions, such as Reiek and Dampa Tiger Reserve, as well as its unique cultural festivals, will be accessible to visitors from across India. In anticipation of growing tourist inflows, the Mizoram Tourism Department has signed an agreement with IRCTC to develop travel packages and expand infrastructure, which indicates the state's intent to position itself as a key eco-tourism and cultural-tourism destination (Economic Times, 2025). By making Mizoram easier to reach, the railway line can transform the state from a relatively isolated region into a more attractive destination for both domestic and international visitors.

Employment creation is another major outcome of the railway project. While thousands of jobs were created during the construction phase, even more opportunities are expected in logistics, warehousing, freight handling, and hospitality as the railway becomes operational. Analysts estimate that indirect

employment could rise by several thousand annually, particularly as new depots for food grains and petroleum products are developed near Aizawl (Varghese, 2025). The lowering of transport costs will also attract small entrepreneurs and encourage greater participation in regional trade networks, thereby linking Mizoram more closely to India's wider economy (Mishra, 2025).

The Bairabi-Sairang railway line is considered as an infrastructure project and a symbol of transformation, serving as both an economic lifeline and a cultural bridge for Mizoram. Beyond economics, the railway line carries important social and cultural implications. Improved connectivity will expose Mizoram's traditions, crafts, and festivals to a wider audience and also encourage greater interaction between local communities and visitors from other parts of India. This is expected to enhance cultural exchanges, increase the visibility of Mizoram's heritage, and integrate the state more closely into the national mainstream (The Sentinel Assam, 2025).

9. Geopolitical Significance

One of the most important aspects is how the project helps India counter China's BR Initiative in neighbouring countries such as Myanmar and Bangladesh. China has been investing heavily in ports, highways, and railways in these regions, giving it influences over critical connectivity routes. By completing large-scale infrastructure projects like the Bairabi-Sairang railway, India shows that it too can deliver meaningful connectivity in the North-East. This reduces the perception that China is the only actor capable of transforming regional infrastructure and provides India with stronger leverage in its immediate Neighbourhood (Bharti, 2023). Roy and Mitra (2023) note that projects like railway links and border trade facilities in Mizoram reinforce India's strategic outreach under the AEP, which seeks to balance Chinese influence by integrating the North-East with Southeast Asia.

The railway also enhances India's credibility in infrastructure delivery, an area where delays and incomplete projects have often weakened its image. The North-East has long struggled with bottlenecks in road, rail, and border trade projects. While the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project has been criticised for slow progress, the successful implementation of Mizoram's railway demonstrates that India can complete complex projects in difficult terrain (Mantraya, 2023). This matters because credibility in delivering infrastructure is about building physical assets and about shaping diplomatic trust with neighbours. By showing consistency in its connectivity agenda, India positions itself as a reliable development partner in contrast to China's often debt-heavy infrastructure model.

The North-East has always been sensitive due to its geography, ethnic diversity, and proximity to international borders. Railway connectivity allows faster movement of people, goods, and even security forces, thereby reducing vulnerabilities linked to isolation. Patgiri and Hazarika (2023) have noted that railway connectivity integrates frontier societies more closely into the Indian state by creating economic opportunities and connecting them to national markets. Dounel (2023) argues that Mizoram's position on the border with Myanmar and Bangladesh makes it strategically significant, and greater connectivity reinforces both economic inclusion and political stability. In this way, infrastructure becomes a tool of development and an instrument of governance and national security.

Hence, this railway link to Mizoram is a strategic asset with multiple layers of significance. It supports India's efforts to counter China's regional influence, enhances its reputation as a credible infrastructure provider, and consolidates security in a critical frontier. These dimensions highlight how infrastructure can serve as both a domestic integrator and a geopolitical instrument, advancing India's national interests in a competitive regional environment.

10. Issues and Challenges

The Bairabi-Sairang railway project, a crucial part of India's AEP, faces multiple challenges that are both natural and man-made. These challenges are technical in nature and social, ecological, and strategic, which makes the project complex and demanding. These are:

First, the most visible challenge is the natural terrain of Mizoram, which is part of the Eastern Himalayas and known for its fragile slopes. According to the *Landslide Atlas of India* published by the Indian Space Research Organisation, Mizoram recorded more than 12,000 landslide events between 1998 and 2022, which is the highest among all Indian states (Indian Space Research Organisation, 2023). This figure highlights the severity of slope instability in the region. The heavy rainfall during monsoons, combined with loose soil and hilly terrain, increases the risk of landslides and floods, making railway construction extremely difficult. This means that tunnels, bridges, and protective structures have to be built with advanced engineering techniques, which increases both costs and timelines. Even after completion, the railway line is remained vulnerable to landslides and flash floods, creating recurring maintenance challenges. Therefore, the natural terrain remains one of the most serious obstacles to railway expansion in Mizoram.

Second, the ecological and social impact of railway development is major concern. Railways in hilly, forested areas inevitably require clearing of forest land, blasting of hills, and changes to natural water flows. This can fragment wildlife habitats and disturb fragile ecosystems. Studies on infrastructure expansion in North-East India have consistently shown that development often comes at the cost of displacement of tribal communities who depend on forests and agriculture for their livelihoods. Gogoi and Shyam (2023) argue that development-induced displacement is a recurring reality in the region, where local communities often lose access to land, resources, and cultural spaces. Scholarship on the socio-cultural transitions among tribes of Northeast India points out that forced displacement uproots people physically and affects their identity, traditions, and long-term survival strategies (Discover Global Society, 2025). Earlier reviews of displacement in India have also highlighted how large-scale projects disrupt rural life and lead to economic and social insecurity (Siddiqui, 2018). For Mizoram, this means that while the railway can create opportunities for trade and mobility, it must also address the risks of ecological degradation and displacement through careful planning, environmental safeguards, and fair rehabilitation measures.

Third, challenge comes from the security environment across the Indo-Myanmar border. The Bairabi-Sairang line is expected to play a role in connecting Mizoram with Myanmar under the broader AEP vision. The political crisis in Myanmar since the military coup of 2021 has made the border region unstable. Armed clashes between the military and resistance groups have created a fragile situation, which affects both trade and cross-border projects. The Takshashila Institution (2023) notes that India faces a 'fragile political environment'

along the Myanmar frontier, where instability, refugee flows, and insurgent activity complicate any effort to build sustainable connectivity. For railway projects, this means that cross-border extensions and usage remain vulnerable to disruptions caused by armed conflict. Lack of safety and security in the border increases the financial and political cost of building and operating infrastructure. So, additional security measures and diplomatic engagement are essential. This makes it difficult for India to rely on the Bairabi-Sairang line alone to achieve its connectivity goals with Southeast Asia.

Finally, even if the railway is completed, it will not be effective without addressing the problem of last-mile connectivity. At present, the Bairabi-Sairang line ends near Aizawl but does not extend all the way to the Myanmar border. For the AEP to succeed, rail lines need to connect directly to international border points such as Zokhawthar in Mizoram or Moreh in Manipur, where trade with Myanmar is concentrated. Without these extensions, goods will have to be transferred from trains to trucks, which increases costs and reduces efficiency. Experiences from the other connectivity projects, such as the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project, shows that the absence of reliable last-mile links is one of the biggest bottlenecks to realising the full benefits of infrastructure investments in the North-East. Unless policymakers prioritise extending the railway up to border trade points and integrating it with road corridors, the Bairabi-Sairang line risks falling short of its intended purpose.

The story of the Bairabi-Sairang railway line is one of resilience, vision, and connection. Its journey through Mizoram's fragile hills and unpredictable monsoon landslides shows why development here must be as sensitive as it is ambitious. Engineers have had to listen to the land, adapting to its contours, while planners have worked to protect the environment and safeguard communities from displacement. The instability across the Myanmar border adds another layer of complexity, reminding India to plan with foresight and flexibility. Yet, without the final stretch of connectivity to the international border, this ambitious railway could fall short of its true promise.

Conclusion

The Bairabi-Sairang railway is not just about steel tracks and tunnels, it is a story of hope, belonging, and transformation. It brings diplomacy, development, and integration onto the same track, symbolising India's broader aspiration to connect its North-East not only with the rest of the country but also with Southeast Asia. Within Mizoram, the railway lowers costs, creates livelihoods, and opens up opportunities for local communities that were once isolated by geography. At the national level, it strengthens India's vision under the AEP, positioning Mizoram as a bridge between India and its eastern neighbours.

For decades, Mizoram's rugged terrain and dependence on narrow roadways limited access to markets and deepened its sense of distance from the mainland. Rail connectivity changes that story, it doesn't just move goods and people; it moves aspirations. It weaves Mizoram into India's economic and emotional map, connecting hearts as much as borders.

The new railway also aligns perfectly with India's wider connectivity efforts. As internal infrastructure grows stronger, it naturally extends outward, linking India's borderlands with regional corridors. Mizoram's unique location, touching both Bangladesh and Myanmar makes it a future hub for trade, culture, and collaboration. When complemented by the

Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project and the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway, the railway could transform Mizoram from a distant frontier into a vibrant corridor connecting India to Southeast Asia.

But the significance of this railway goes beyond economy and strategy, it speaks to inclusion and trust. It reflects the government's genuine commitment to addressing the hopes of the North-East, ensuring that its people are not left behind but are central to the national story. With better connectivity come new possibilities: thriving bamboo industries, renewed agriculture, eco-tourism, and youthful entrepreneurship. In a region where geography meets geopolitics, the Bairabi-Sairang line stands as a lifeline of both unity and progress, turning Mizoram's once-isolated hills into pathways of promise and peace.

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