

## India pushes for direct Vietnam-NE flights

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**New Delhi: Union Minister of State for External Affairs Rajkumar Ranjan Singh urged airlines from Vietnam to explore launching direct flights to cities in north-eastern states of India to provide increased investment and tourism opportunities to both countries.**

Guwahati, considered the Gateway to Southeast Asia, has an international airport with direct flights connecting Bangkok and Singapore, Singh said while addressing a session on investment and trade at the North East India Festival here.

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“All eight North East states are well connected by air, land and rail with other parts of India. I invite airlines from Vietnam to explore possibilities of connecting NE states with cities by air,” he said.

“It has further fostered its strategic relationship promoting economic cooperation and strengthening cultural ties with ASEAN countries. Our journey from the establishment of diplomatic relations to comprehensive strategic partnership has been further enhanced since Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s historic visit to

Vietnam in 2016,” the minister said.

The bilateral trade between India and Vietnam has increased exponentially since 2000 when it was only USD 200 million but it crossed the USD 15 billion mark in 2022.

During the recent visit of External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar to Vietnam there were fruitful discussions and both sides agreed to take the bilateral trade to USD 20 billion dollars, Singh added. “Initiatives like ‘Make In India’, ‘Skill in India’, ‘Digital India’ and ‘Startup India’ have not only fostered innovations but also positioned India as the third largest startup hub in the world. India provides vast opportunities for investments in sectors like infrastructure development, renewable energy, digital technology, health care and others,” he said.

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