

INDIA-BHUTAN STRATEGIC RELATIONS- ISSUES AND CONSEQUENCES

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Introduction

Until recently Bhutan (Drukyl - Land of the Thunder Dragon) did not fit into the story of the global conquest of democracy. Not only the way it came into existence but also the mode in which it was interpreted made the process of democratization exceptional. As a landlocked country which is delimited on the north by Tibet in China and on the south by the Indian states Sikkim, West Bengal, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh, it was a right off the bat starter in the technique for state-building. Nonetheless, it seems that the last, reclusive Himalayan kingdom started a silent transition from an absolute to a constitutional monarchy by introducing parliamentary democratic elements. Initiated by the king rather than a revolutionary movement or a national catastrophe, this major step was unusual: a voluntary reallocation of power in the face of a notable indifference towards democracy by the people. A great political leap with mounting concerns and hopes not only among the ruling dynasty but surprisingly also among the common people of Bhutan¹.

Historical Perspectives

Generally Bhutan's political can be separated into three significant periods. To begin with, the religious period from 1616 to 1907; second, something like 100 years of government subject to the Wangchuk line, and third, the time starting around 2008 when Bhutan turned into the world's most youthful vote based system subsequent to passing another constitution and holding the primary Public Gathering races. The genetic government of Bhutan was laid out in 1907, rising up out of a 250-year old double arrangement of organization (Chhoesi) in light of two domains of force, a common and strict one, and headed by the Shabdrung (head of state). This framework involved the Druk Desi, responsible for the fleeting organization of the nation, and the Je Khenpo (master abbot), the main abbot answerable for strict issues, addressing the Buddhist pastorate of the nation, and heading the focal religious body (DratshangLhentshog or Board/Commission for Clerical Undertakings). The Chhoesi framework, which was laid out by ShabdrungNgawang Namgyal (a Tibetan priest and considered as pioneer behind the state) during the seventeenth 100 years, can be recognized

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as quite possibly of the most urgent milestone in the beginning of Bhutan's design of administration. Previously, without incorporated 4 rule from the mid-seventh to the nineteenth hundred years, Bhutan depended on frameworks of nearby rule focused upon tribes and strict lines². To get Bhutan's way of life as a Drukpa state (Drukpa alludes here to the decision group in Bhutanese society), five conflicts were battled with Tibet and the Mongols, the last consummation in triumph for Bhutan, permitting a Shabdrung rebirth to turn into the sovereign in 1734. Notwithstanding, the resulting arrangement of strict authority demonstrated shaky (particularly after the demise of Namgyal in 1651), described by inward struggle and power amassed in neighborhood rulers. In 1774 a ceasefire was endorsed with the English East India Organization and from the late eighteenth century onwards, Bhutan was brought under the umbrella of English India. Following a conflict in 1864 it surrendered its Duar regions, a region lining India and constrained by Bhutan since the eighteenth 100 years, to the English as a trade-off for yearly pay under the Settlement of Sinchulu (1865) which prompted the regional combination of the country. In 1910, this arrangement was overhauled in Punakha and endorsed with the English, conceding Bhutan independence in inward matters relying on the prerequisite that international strategy would heed English guidance³. This plan was certified by free India in 1947, which perceived Bhutan as a sovereign country. Towards the finish of the nineteenth century the genuine political power had become gathered in the legislative heads of Paro and Tongsa areas and territorial contention won. By the by, even until the present time, different parts of the Chhoesi actually exist and keep on assuming a critical part in the country's improvement cycle, particularly the Je Khenpo, who likewise addresses the Chamber for Religious Undertakings. Regardless of the rising control of the state over the strict circle, it keeps on assuming a significant part not just in the otherworldly and social existence of individuals yet in addition in critical government organizations. In this way, one can express that Buddhism was not just the binding together power in the first course of state assembling yet in addition in keeping up with the country's ideational establishment until now.

The Wangchuk Dynasty

After the diarchy of lay and clerical administration in Bhutan consented to lay out a genetic government and a crowning ceremony concurrence with the English was marked, Sir Ugyen Wangchuk, the child of the 51st Druk Desi and powerful supportive of English legislative leader of Tongsa, turned into Bhutan's most memorable lord. This undeniable the establishing of the Bhutanese state as well as the finish of nationwide conflict and the contention with the English Raj in South Asia. Ugyen was prevailed by his child Jigme Wangchuk (1926-52). Under the last option's rule, the standard of the Wangchuk tradition

turned out to be additionally dug in, with the nation becoming solidified and brought under the immediate control of the outright government. Having this as a main priority, one could express that the significant accomplishments of the initial two lords were a smooth and effective opening towards 'the external world' as well as guaranteeing of force and authenticity of the dynastic rule of the Wangchuks⁴. The third lord, Jigme Dorji Wangchuk (1952-72), can be really viewed as the 'father of current Bhutan'. His choices to create and modernize the nation incorporated a functioning advancement of instruction, innovative turn of events, and political change. He nullified serfdom and subjection and did significant land changes. The fourth ruler, Jigme Singye Wangchuk (1972-2006), proceeded with his dad's modernization strategies, yet remained similarly dedicated to maintaining a unified and uniform culture, joining more worth to Net Public Satisfaction (GNH) than basically quick financial turn of events. Besides, he zeroed in much on the development of an aggregate personality to create a base for public belief system. This should be visible as a continuation of "philosophical designing" what began currently in 1963, as the Lord modified his title to Druk Gyalpo (Mythical serpent Ruler), fully intent on declaring a particular Bhutanese personality. Starting around 2006, the fifth and current lord Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuk has attempted proceed with the strategies of mindful financial and political modernization and advancement.

Pursuing the Path to Democracy

By and large the cycles of popularity based change from tyrant monarchical rule towards parliamentary majority rule government was started by the third Druk Gyalpo (lord), Jigme Dorji Wangchuk. In 1953 he directed Bhutan towards a sacred government by laying out a Public Gathering (TshogduChenmo) over which he at first held blackball power. To reinforce the council, his 1968 pronouncement outfitted the Public Gathering with institutional sway and the ability to eliminate the Ruler through a statement of general disapproval (in view of a 66%'s greater part), came into force from 1969. As per a few political onlookers, this last one was laid out against the desire of individuals' delegates which is a seriously strange peculiarity in a global correlation. Be that as it may, it is hard to envision this arrangement really being applied in Bhutan. In any case, Jigme Dorji Wangchuk was, mindful so as to get the Wangchuk tradition, by specifying that an effective statement of disapproval would result in the following Wangchuk relative in the line of progression consequently consenting to the privileged position. Nonetheless, his political change estimates included likewise the presentation of an Illustrious Warning Board (Lodoi Tshogde) in 6 1965 and a Committee of Pastors (Lhengye Zhungtshog) in 1968 "as an expansive based regal consultative body" to separate and regulate the presidential part of government.

To lay out a ruler of check-and-equilibrium framework in the political framework he embraced significant changes with respect to the association of the legal executive. To isolate the legal executive from the chief and official a High Court (ThrimkhangGongma) was laid out.

The fourth ruler Jigme Singye Wangchuk, other than briefly debilitating of the parliament, founded momentary withdrawals of the demonstration of approval as well as the representation of the lord's denial power, proceeded with the popularity based change process. In 1998 the ruler broke up the Gathering of Pastors, declaring that priests previously designated by him would rather be supported by the Public Get together. This was a broad step in light of the fact that the lord broke down his own administration as well as moved his powers to this new chosen chief. The resultant Gathering of Priests was given more command over state undertakings, with the head of government pivoted yearly among the bureau individuals and the ruler staying the head of state. The principal draft of another constitution was introduced in December 2002, conceiving a parliamentary vote based system with a protected government. An updated rendition proposed by the lord has been being talked about since Walk 2005 and predicts key changes to the political methodology and establishments. Moving towards a vote based protected government, on 18 July 2008, the fifth lord, Jigme Khesar Namgyal Wangchuck, marked the constitution which stamped officially the finish of 100 years of outright illustrious rule. Close to the foundation of a multiparty a majority rule government, the ideas of partition of force and check-and-balances got additionally organized into the political arrangement of Bhutan with this most recent political change. The leader is currently vested in the LhengyeZhungtshog(Gathering of Priests) what capabilities as a bureau and is going by the Head of the state, a post which was canceled after the death of the primary Head of the state of Bhutan PaldenDorji of on April 5, 1964. The LhengyeZhungtshog needs to help and help the Druk Gyalpo (the mythical beast ruler) who is the top of the state. The regulative power lies with the bicameral parliament which comprises of the Druk Gyalpo and the two houses: the Public Gathering (lower house) and the Public Committee (upper house) and the. It is critical to take note of, that the demonstration of positive support against the public authority got once again introduced and revered into the foundation. With respect to legal branch, the authority is vested in the Imperial Courtrooms, containing the High Court, the High Court, the Dzongkhag Court, and the Dungkhag Court. Curiously, the Druk Gyalpo actually represents the option to laid out occasionally on the suggestion of the Public Legal Commission further Courts and Councils. Moreover, to fortify the democratization cycle and to upgrade public support, Bhutan change endeavors are pointing somewhat recently on the advancement of neighborhood government bodies (for example Block and Region Advancement Councils) and to outfit them with the

position to execute financial projects. The pinnacle of the vote based change was set apart by the primary parliamentary decisions in 2008. This occasion led the foundation of the ongoing institutional settings and was achieved in an extremely peculiar Bhutanese style. To accomplish some fair activity and familiarize individuals with the act of casting a ballot, the public authority completed a false political decision one year sooner in April and May 2007. The citizens needed to pick among four fanciful ideological groups. Each of these was distinguished by a variety addressing a specific belief system: yellow for legacy and custom, red was for quick industrialization and improvement, blue for urban sense, and green for environmentalism. The discretionary cycle occurred in two stages. In the primary round, every one of the four gatherings went up against one another. Be that as it may, hands down the two most grounded (biggest portions of votes) had the option to enter the subsequent round, which was the spillover contest in this counterfeit political race. For eyewitnesses it was not shocking that the yellow party, which is really the variety related with the ruler, at last bet on the red party and won serenely. It is additionally not surprising, that the result of this made up political race was pretty much affirmed in the genuine decisions in Walk 2008. This was the main political decision highlighting general grown-up testimonial and which included ideological groups (previously, the option to take part in races for ideological groups in a few neighborhood decisions was not conceded). However the enrollment of one party was dismissed by the Political race Commission, just two recently established ideological groups, the Druk PhuensumTshogpa (DPT, Bhutan Congruity Party), drove by previous civil servant Jigmi Y Thinley, and Individuals' Leftist faction (PDP), drove by SangayNgedup, a direct relation of the current ruler, had the option to partake in this political decision. In any case, other than the way that the two players had fundamentally the same as pronouncements and philosophical contrasts, which were difficult to separate, it appears to be that the DPT became distinguished by the electorate as nearer to the ruler and won an avalanche triumph catching 45 out of 47 seats in the Public Gathering in which the PDT obviously shaped the smallest resistance on the planet. To summarize, there is no question that this political race was a huge step towards the foundation of a popularity based request in Bhutan. Not just elector turnout was effectively accomplished with around 80 %, yet additionally the checking of the races by the worldwide local area was positive as to the lead of the decisions⁷.

India Bhutan Relations

India has been keeping up with welcoming relations with adjoining nations since the asking from autonomy. Conciliatory relations among India and Bhutan were laid out in 1968 with the foundation of an exceptional office of India in Thimphu. The fundamental structure

of IndiaBhutan respective relations is the Truce and Participation endorsed in 1949 between the two nations and changed in February 2007. The Brilliant Celebration of the foundation of formal political relations among India and Bhutan was praised in the year 2018.

The respective ties among Bhutan and India have forever been close and the two countries share a 'unique kinship' and have had to deal with the trial of times. India, until this point in time, stays powerful over Bhutan's international strategy, protection, and Business. Nonetheless, India should not take advantage of this situation for its self centered interests and should guarantee that there are shared advantages for the two sides.

Bhutan is little landlocked state in the Eastern Himalayas that, since days of yore, has imparted profound strict and social connect to India. Indian culture basically the same as the Bhutan they picked Buddhist way in their country Master Padmasambhava, a Buddhist holy person who went to Bhutan from India, played had a powerful impact in spreading Buddhism and fortifying customary ties in both the countries. Bhutan was a protectorate of English India and It went under the English suzerainty in 1865. It marked the 'Deal of Punakha' with the English in 1910. This established the groundwork for any future contacts between the two countries after English left India. Over the course of this time, India's relations with Bhutan were taken care of by a Political Official situated in Sikkim. This went on until 1948 when the Bhutanese assignment visited India and intended to update the settlements endorsed during the English time⁹.

The customarily special respective relations described by trust and understanding, have been supported by a practice of customary undeniable level visits between the two nations. State head Tshering Tobgay went to the swearing-in function of State head Modi in 2014. India was the main nation of visit (27-29 December 2018) by the recently chosen Top state leader Lotay Tshering (PMLT) after the Bhutanese decisions. PMLT again visited India on 30-31 May 2019 to go to the swearing-in of the recently chosen Indian government. His Highness the Lord of Bhutan keep going visited India on 17 August 2018 to go to the state memorial service of the previous Indian PM Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Around 40 significant level visits have occurred among India and Bhutan starting around 2014.

3. His Highness The Ruler of Bhutan presented the Request for the Druk Gyalpo (Ngadag Pel giKhorlo), Bhutan's most elevated non military personnel beautification, on Head of the state Narendra Modi during Bhutan's 114th Public Day festivities on 17 December 2021. The honor perceives the State head's remarkable commitment to reinforcing India-Bhutan companionship. State head Modi is the primary outside public to be given the esteemed honor by His Highness the Ruler of Bhutan¹⁰.

4. Bhutan was State head Narendra Modi's most memorable abroad visit soon after turning into the State head of India post the 2014 General Races. Not long after his re-appointment in 2019, Head of the state Shri Narendra Modi embraced a State Visit to Bhutan on 17-18 August 2019, during which he met His Highness the Lord, the Fourth Ruler and the State leader of Bhutan and extensively surveyed all parts of the two-sided relationship. PM Modi and Top state leader Lotay Tshering (PMLT) communicated fulfillment at the great condition of two-sided ties, which depend on common trust and regard, and supported by shared verifiable, social, financial, formative and individuals to-individuals linkages.

Assistance during the Covid-19 Pandemic

Bhutan was the first country to get the Made in Quite a while Covishield immunizations under Service of Outer Issues Antibody Maitri Drive. The primary transfer of 150,000 immunizations was gifted on January 20, 2021. On Walk 22, 2021, the Public authority of India gifted a second transfer of 400,000 dosages of the 'Made in India' immunizations to the Regal Legislature of Bhutan with regards to the remarkably close and well disposed relations between the two nations. The all out number of 550,000 dosages of Covishield were given to Bhutan on an award premise. Notwithstanding 02 transfers of antibodies, the Public authority of India has conveyed 11 clinical transfers to Bhutan containing fundamental medications including Paracetamol, Cetirizine, Hydroxychloroquine and clinical hardware including PPE units, N95 veils, RT-PCR test packs and 07 convenient computerized x-beam machines to Bhutan¹¹.

Developmental cooperation

Throughout the last many years, India has contributed essentially to the financial advancement of Bhutan while regarding the needs and needs of the Public authority of Bhutan and individuals of Bhutan. India's improvement help to Bhutan is generally administered by the all-encompassing instrument of Two-sided Advancement Collaboration Talks or Yearly Arrangement Talks wherein the parts of help and modalities are chosen mutually by the two sides. India has committed a help bundle of INR 4500 crores to Bhutan for the twelfth Long term Plan (FYP), containing INR 2800 crores for Undertaking Tied Help (PTA), INR 850 crores for High Effect People group Improvement Ventures (HICDPCs/past Little Advancement Tasks), and INR 850 towards Program Award/Advancement Appropriation¹². Under the twelfth Long term Plan, India is carrying out 82 PTAActivities and 524 HICDPs in Bhutan. What's more, India has additionally dedicated INR 400 crores towards Temporary Exchange Backing Office and INR 100 crores towards Duty Change of Mangdechhu Hydro Venture.

The critical areas of focal point of India's help keep on being those that have an immediate bearing on the existences of the everyday citizens. The extent of PTA projects range from agribusiness to water system, ICT, media, wellbeing, tertiary instruction, school training, grants, work and human asset improvement, streets, energy, metropolitan turn of events, legal executive, culture, sacred workplaces and media. The HICDPs incorporate activities with short incubation period, and cover regions like the improvement of drinking water supply organizations, water system trenches, working of homestead streets, fundamental wellbeing units and other provincial framework. The Program Award part is a direct monetary help to Bhutan and is in the idea of unfastened award collaborator to Bhutan¹³.

Hydro-power Cooperation

Hydro power cooperation is the most important symbol of the symbiotic cooperation between the two countries. Till date the Government of India has constructed four major hydro-electric projects (HEPs) in Bhutan totaling 2136 MW, including 336 MW Chukha q HEP, 60 MW Kuricchu HEP, 1020 MW Tala HEP and the recently commissioned 720 MW Mangdechhu HEP. Currently, there are two HEPs under construction: 1200 MW Punatsangchhu-I HEP and 1020 MW Punatsangchhu-II HEP. The Concession Agreement for the Joint Venture Kholongchu project in East Bhutan was signed in June 2020. The project is underway and is expected to be completed in 2026.

Cooperation in New and Emerging Areas

Space collaboration is a new and promising area of respective participation. On 17 August 2019, PM Modi and PMLT together initiated the Ground Earth Station of the South Asia Satellite in Thimphu, which was developed fully backed by ISRO. The SAS was sent off by India in 2017 as a gift to the nations in the South Asia district, including Bhutan¹⁴. Perceiving the positive effect that the South Asia Satellite would have on the financial improvement of Bhutan in regions, for example, correspondence, TV broadcasting, calamity the board, meteorological administrations as well as crisis clinical benefits, PM Modi had offered expanded data transmission on an extra transponder as a gift to individuals of Bhutan.

As per the India-Bhutan Joint Explanation of the state visit of the State leader of India to Bhutan in August 2019 where the two India and Bhutan consented to team up on the improvement of a little satellite for Bhutan and the Reminder of Understanding among India and Bhutan on participation in the serene purposes of space working closely together endorsed on November 19, 2020, ISRO and the Branch of Data and Innovation (DITT) are

as of now teaming up on the joint improvement of a little satellite for Bhutan fully intent on sharing information on building and working a little satellite. The Carrying out Game plan for the Joint Improvement of a little satellite was endorsed on September 24, 2021. A group of four Bhutanese space engineers is right now in India for Stage II of the preparation which includes testing of Bhutan's payload and its last gathering into the fundamental satellite. The actual satellite is scheduled for a send off in the main portion of 2022.

Balance tech is one more new area of coordinated effort among India and Bhutan. In November 2019, India sent off the main period of the RuPay project in Bhutan which permitted Indian vacationers to make credit only installments at ATMs and POS terminals in Bhutan. November 2020 saw the virtual send off of the Stage II of the RuPay Card which will permit Bhutanese banks to give Rupay cards that can be utilized across the length and expansiveness of India, subsequently finishing the full between operability of the lead advanced project. Expanding on the progress of the RuPay project in Bhutan, BHIM UPI was sent off in Bhutan on July 13, 2021 in this way empowering Indian nationals to make credit only installments in Bhutan and further extending the monetary and financial linkages between the two nations¹⁵.

The mix of Bhutan's DrukRen with India's Public Information Organization is a vital participation in the space of e-Learning. This reconciliation makes a data expressway between the colleges, research foundations, libraries, medical services and agrarian organizations of the two countries. The organization is by and large effectively utilized by 28 dynamic DrukREN individuals including the top colleges, schools and medical clinic in Bhutan and is helping in excess of 6000 clients.

The E-library project supplements Bhutan's endeavors at computerized change and e-learning. The venture started its work in September, 2016 and was given over to the Service of Training on June 26, 2020. The undertaking incorporates the improvement of an e-library gateway, foundation of a server farm in Thimphu Tech Park, creation and the board of e-content and the formation of e-libraries in 49 schools and 12 universities in each region of Bhutan. The e-library project is by and by helping 160,000 secondary school understudies and 9800 school going understudies.

Commerce and Trade

India has reliably been Bhutan's top exchanging accomplice. Beginning around 2014, India's exchange with Bhutan has dramatically increased from USD 484 million of every 2014-15 to USD 1083 million out of 2020-21, representing more than 85% of Bhutan's all out exchange, with the equilibrium of exchange India's approval. The exchange between

the two nations is represented by the India-Bhutan Settlement on Exchange, Business and Travel - which was first endorsed in 1972 and modified most as of late for the fifth time in 2016. This Understanding lays out a deregulation system between the two nations and furthermore accommodates obligation free travel of Bhutanese commodities to third nations. India is the main wellspring of interests in Bhutan, containing 47% of the nation's complete FDI. There are more than 40 Indian organizations in Bhutan working principally in the hydropower, monetary, assembling, IT and different administrations areas.

The last India-Bhutan Business Secretary level gathering was held in New Delhi on 03 November 2021. The Indian designation was driven by Shri B.V.R. Subrahmanyam, Business Secretary and the Bhutanese designation was driven by Dasho Karma Tshering, Monetary Undertakings Secretary. During the gathering, the different sides traded letters to formalize seven extra passage/leave focuses for exchange among India and Bhutan, viz. (i) Nagarkata Land Customs Station; (ii) Agartala Land Customs Station; (iii) Pandu port; (iv) Jogighopa port; (v) Asian Expressway 48 associating Torsha Tea Nursery in India and Ahlay in Bhutan; (vi) Kamardwisa; and (vii) Birpara.

The Priest of Monetary Undertakings of Bhutan Lyonpo Loknath Sharma visited New Delhi in January 2022 and held gatherings with Association Pastor of Trade and Industry Shri Piyush Goyal as well likewise with Association Clergyman of Force Shri R.K. Singh to talk about issues of common reciprocal interest and ways of advancing increment exchange and business ties between the two nations.

Legislature of India has teamed up on various drives for reinforcing the startup eco-framework in Bhutan, at different levels. The Indian Consulate had coordinated the very first Bhutan-India Startup Highest point from 28-29 February 2020 in Thimphu, during which Bhutanese new businesses traded thoughts and information with top Indian industry delegates. The Indian Consulate - in a joint effort with Contribute India and information accomplice TiE (The Indus Business people) Delhi-NCR - coordinated a virtual startup mentorship program named 'Light' for north of 150 Bhutanese business people from October to January 2022. Gol supported the virtual preparation of Bhutanese business people at the Business Improvement Organization of India (EDII), Gandhinagar in July-August 2021 on upskilling on influence ventures and fostering a framework of coaches/guides on business. Senior dignitaries and new companies from Bhutan partook in Gol's leader occasion - the Startup India Worldwide Culmination 'Prarambh' - held basically from 15-16 January 2021, to move forward collaboration among new businesses and business people especially from the BIMSTEC district.

Education

Many Bhutanese students benefit from scholarships provided by the GOI for study in Indian universities. In addition, many Bhutanese youth also enrol as self-financed students in Indian universities. It is estimated that approximately 4000 Bhutanese are studying in Indian Universities at any time. During the State visit of Prime Minister of India to Bhutan, 4 MOUs on cooperation in STEM Education were signed between the Royal University of Bhutan and the Indian Institutes of Technology at Delhi, Bombay, Kanpur and the National Institute of Technology, Silchar.

The current offers from India to Bhutan in terms of Scholarship Schemes such as the well-known Ambassador's Scholarship, prestigious Nehru Wangchuck Scholarship, Five-Year Plan project-tied assistance based Undergraduate Scholarship, Nalanda University Scholarship and other scholarships such as ICCR Undergraduate Engineering scholarships, AYUSH scholarships, AYUSH (BIMSTEC) scholarships and SAARC scholarships have provided a strong foundation to the bilateral engagement in education. The latest additions to the list of Scholarships for Bhutanese nationals are the India-Bhutan Friendship Scholarship, IIT Gandhinagar Global Fellowship and the Rashtriya Raksha University Scholarships. Every year, around a 1000 Bhutanese students studying in Indian colleges and institutes benefit from the award of the Ambassador's Scholarship, which was first instituted in 2001.

Cultural and Buddhist links

A number of Bhutanese pilgrims travel to Bodh Gaya, Rajgir, Nalanda, Sikkim, Udayagiri, and other Buddhist sites in India. As a part of the 50th anniversary celebration of diplomatic relations, Government of India sponsored a visit by 18 Lam Netens (Buddhist monks) and representative of the Central Monastic Body of Bhutan to India. His Holiness the Je Khenpo (the head monk of Bhutan) visited Rajgir in November 2018 to preside over the Salang or ground breaking ceremony to construct a Bhutanese Lhakhang (temple) and for World Peace Prayer in Rajgir in Bihar.

The Zhabdrung Statue, currently on display at the Simtokha Dzong in Bhutan, has been loaned by the Asiatic Society, Kolkata to the Royal Government of Bhutan. Dharma Raja or Zhabdrung, is the title of Ngawang Namgyal, a 16th century Buddhist monk - a revered figure in Bhutan, regarded as the founder of the modern nation state of Bhutan). On June 19, 2021, a subtle smiling 3.3 feet tall bronze cast statue of Lord Buddha in a lotus pose, commissioned by ICCR and weighing approximately 200 kgs, was handed over to the Royal Government of Bhutan, in the presence of Foreign Minister TandiDorji. On June

20, 2021, coinciding with the birth anniversary of Guru Padmasabhava, the statue was consecrated and enshrined at the grand Kuenray (sanctum sanctorum) of the Tashichodzong¹⁶.

Doklam Conflict

Gateway of Geopolitics for India and China and its Security implications on India Doklam in Bhutan, also known as Doka La in India and Donglang in China. It is the small area of 90 square kilometres becoming a crux point of geopolitics for India and China and a new Eurasian War theatre. Doklam plateau located in Bhutan to the North of India (Sikkim), Bhutan and China (Tibet) tri junction, juxtapose to Narrow Chumbi valley. The ongoing intense military standoff between Indian border guards (Indian Army and ITBP/Indo Tibetan Border Police) and China's PLA (People's Liberation Army) forces at Doklam was reportedly instigated by China's PLA forces attempts to construct a class 5 motorable road, which is supposed to connect Doka La (Doklam plateau) and Jampheri ridge in Bhutan, which facilitates smooth transit for China's military logistics and may overlooks India's topographic strategic advantage in Doklam (Asthana, 2017). Doklam plateau is a disputed territory between Bhutan and China, both did tried to resolve the dispute, but failed to turn out to a mutually agreeable outcome. Pertaining to disputed Doklam, China and Bhutan had two agreements in 1988 and 1998, which permits them to maintain status quo as before 1959 case. While India and Bhutan accorded a treaty, by which India may control the defence and foreign affairs of Bhutan i.e. upholding the sovereignty of Bhutan is India's concern. When china transgressed into Doklam, India stepped in on behalf of Bhutan and stopped the Chinese attempts of road construction, in retaliation china destroyed the bunkers of Indian army and prevented the Indian Kailash Mansarovar pilgrims to pass through Nathu La pass (Chansoria, 2017). We shall further look into the matter, for why India and China were studiously competing for this tiny territory. Doklam, though a tiny land mass embracing a huge geopolitical and strategic advantage for the contesting parties.

India, China and the 2017 "Doklam 1.0" Crisis China uses its power and pursues an aggressive approach to retain a strategic advantage over its neighbours in the arena of border diplomacy. A clear guiding principle in this behaviour is China's evaluation of its national interest. In the case of the Burma border, China wished to secure its flank to focus on India in the Himalayas. In the case of Bhutan, China wished to cajole a minor power that India seemed intent on using as a buffer state. Evidently, by securing the first-mover advantage, China intends to keep India on the back foot and focused on the apparent vulnerability of its northern border, preventing India from pursuing closer ties with Japan and the USA, or, for example, exploiting the Tibet issue



Source: Defence Ministry of India

"De-escalation" since August 28th, 2017 seems only to apply to India's deployments and statements made by its officials. At Doklam, China has indeed halted further construction towards Doka La via the earlier alignment. Construction a few hundred meters to the rear and few kilometers to the east, directed towards the Torsa Nala, seems to have sped up and tended towards permanent deployments. Yet, in the testimony before the Parliamentary Standing Committee, Secretary Jaishankar explained that due to "line of sight" on "good days and bad days" he could not confirm the level of Chinese activity or the number of troops deployed but admitted that "it is possible that there are Chinese troops in northern Doklam". This is true but conceals the intelligence that would have been available through satellites, and what is already available in the public domain. Also, the Bhutanese troops would have seen some of the activities from the Jampheri Ridge and would have notified the Indian side. The Indian government, it seems, was not interested in the military buildup by a hostile power in an area often declared to be of critical strategic significance by the military establishment. Bhutan has been left to deal with Chinese aggression on its terms - China's Vice Foreign Minister Kong Xuanyou visited Thimphu on July 16

The primary reason for India's entry into the Doklam area was the issue of Chinese military aggression in a disputed territory of strategic importance. Despite major concessions having been made by the Indian side, no tangible benefits have accrued from China on other fronts as well (Parthasarathy, 2019). We find, a year on, that the center issue has not yet been settled. Consequently, the inquiry to be posed is: what are the implications of India's quiet?

How India and China relation is affected by it? China blamed Indian border guards for crossing into its domain to stop the development of the road. Chinese are utilizing it to send different political messages. India boycotted the Belt and Road Initiative in Shanghai in May. It's indistinct if its \$50-billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) will be reasonable if India doesn't join. China's provoked at India's developing US tilt in what Beijing sees as an enemy of China partnership that incorporates Japan and Australia. Chinese likewise needs to signal that China has consolidated its situation on the worldwide stage¹⁷.

National interest

Implications with China's occupation of the Doklam plateau, it has unilaterally occupied territory based on its claim that the disputed India-China-Bhutan trijunction is at Gymochen. China's military constructions and deployment (Doklam 2.0) have also enhanced its potential to utilise the Paro approach to gain access to the Siliguri Corridor. The strategic question to ask is: why has China chosen Doklam to change the status quo? The obvious answer is that the Doklam area offers China the potential to put Bhutan under pressure and test India's ability to protect Bhutan. What could be China's political objectives? It could be to weaken Indo-Bhutan political ties in order to facilitate their entry into Bhutan. The entry can be expected to follow, in due course, a pattern similar to Nepal and other countries in the neighbourhood. As explored in previous sections, India has officially refrained from acknowledging that China has militarily altered realities on the ground. However, there are severe implications to such a stance, which are best understood in the context of Sino-India, Indo-Bhutan and Sino-Bhutan relations, as well as by examining the impact on India's neighbourhood and the interplay between domestic actors in July 2017.

Conclusion

Over the last 60 years, Indian diplomacy has enabled deep political and economic ties with Bhutan. India and Bhutan share close and friendly relations underscored by mutual trust and confidence. The year (2013-14) witnessed sustained progress in bilateral cooperation in all areas of importance hydro-power, transport, communications, infrastructure, health, education and culture, IT industry, and agriculture. India-Bhutan relationship is perhaps the only bilateral engagement in South Asia which has stood the test of time. The relationship has helped Bhutan shape a unique development trajectory based on gross National Happiness (GNH). India and Bhutan bilateral relations are characterized by the regular high level political interactions which are instrumental in strengthening the bilateral ties.

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