India China - Doklam Plateau Standoff

What is the issue?

- Indian troops intervened to block the path of Chinese soldiers engaged in building road-works on the **Doklam plateau** of Bhutan’s territory that Beijing laid claim.
- Beijing responded by closing access to Indian pilgrims seeking to proceed through the Nathu La pass on to Kailash-Mansarovar.

What is the source of the conflict?

- Doklam plateau is a 269-sq km plateau in Bhutan, which overlooks the strategic Chumbi Valley.
- The plateau is claimed by China.
- Bhutan has a written agreement with China that pending the final resolution of the boundary issue, peace and tranquility should be maintained.
- Now the construction of road raised concerns between Bhutan and China.
Why China is interested in the region?

- The road, which passes through Bhutan’s territory, has significantly enhanced China’s military logistics in the region.
- China aims to promote the development of the Yadong region, which is connected to Lhasa with a highway.
- China is also aiming to establish formal ties with Bhutan.
- It was reported to have Pressured Bhutan by saying it would not agree to a border deal until Bhutan allowed it to open a diplomatic mission in that country.
- It would also like to adopt a military posture in the area to ensure that it can defeat India in any military contest.
- At the same time it is seeking to check India’s efforts to help Bhutan.
How India and China relation is affected by it?

- China accused Indian border guards of crossing into its territory to stop the construction of the road.
- Chinese are using it to send various political messages.
- India boycotted the Belt and Road Initiative jamboree in Shanghai in May.
- It’s unclear if its $50-billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) will be viable if India doesn’t join.
- China’s riled at India’s growing US tilt in what Beijing sees as an anti-China alliance that includes Japan and Australia.
- Chinese also want to signal that China has consolidated its position on the global stage.

What are India’s interests?

- Indian Army regards the Doklam plain as strategically crucial because it opens a path to the Siliguri Corridor which links the northeast to the rest of India.
- India also can’t afford to abandon its diplomatic ties with Bhutan

What should be done?

- India needs to make some kind of economic concessions to China.
- While we stay out of CPEC, we should offer to join BRI.
At the same time we need to ensure that we aren’t side lined to smaller stage by the global giant next door.

Source: Business Line