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India and Eurasia

What is the issue?

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- The Indian political establishment is brought up on the notion that Europe and Asia are different.

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- India is hardly interested Eurasia ideology unlike Indo-Pacific.

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What is the ideology of Indo- Pacific?

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- Marine bio-geographers use the Indo-Pacific to describe the large stretch of tropical waters from the east coast of Africa to the Western Pacific that has many common features.

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- Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe who imagined the Indo-Pacific. Australia was quick to adopt it.

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- India along with Indonesia dreamt of Asian unity and founded the non-aligned movement in the middle of the last century, was enthusiastic in its embrace of the Indo-Pacific.

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- It was President Donald Trump who ended American ambivalence by consistently using the term "Indo-Pacific".

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What is Eurasia ideology?

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- For geologists, Eurasia refers to a tectonic plate that lies under much of what we know as Europe and Asia.
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- In political term Eurasia is supposed to represent a unique cultural, spiritual and geographic space that is neither East nor West.
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- For many in Russia, Eurasia invokes either the memories of the vast Russian empire or rekindles nostalgia for the Soviet Union.
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- There is a Eurasia Division in India's ministry of external affairs that deals with a significant part of the post-Soviet space.
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What instance proved India's aversion from Eurasia?

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- Recently a consequential event held in Budapest, Hungary which was went entirely unreported in India.
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- It was the annual summit of an organisation called C-CEEC that promotes cooperation between China and 16 Central and East European Countries.
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- It is more popularly known as "sixteen plus one".
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- That India is hardly interested in this new forum underlines the problem it has in dealing with a changing Eurasia.
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What are the concerns for India on Eurasia?

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- At present China is breaking down the idea that Europe and Asia are two different continents.
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- It is about the expanding Chinese economic and political influence in spaces that were once dominated by either the West or Russia.
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- China is exporting large amounts of capital for infrastructure development, drawing its economies east ward, and creating new political groupings.

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- It also widens the strategic options for Central European states. Fed up with bullying from both Germany and Russia, the Central Europeans are quite happy to join hands with China.

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- India's stand of irreconcilable tension between "Europe and Asia" is becoming unsustainable as China's massive Silk Road Initiative begins to integrate Europe with Asia.

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- If the concept of "Indo-Pacific" survives the Trump Administration, the existence of Eurasia is a little more complex.

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What measures India needs to take?

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- India has now revamped its ideology and puts itself back in play in the maritime world by accepting the Indo-Pacific idea.

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- But Delhi is yet to come to grips with continental Eurasia.

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- India needs to focus as it is on bilateral relations with France, Germany and Russia.

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- At the same time India needs to maintain a balance between the European Union and Central Europe.

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- Correcting this imbalance is the first step towards a more purposeful Indian engagement with Eurasia.

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Source: Indian Express

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