

India - China Ties: Two plus One Formula

What is the issue?

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- India-China ties have been on the upswing in recent times.
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- In this context, the proposed “2 plus 1” formula (“China & India” plus “another”) could further enhance the overall regional prosperity.
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How has Nepal been influencing Indo-China ties?

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- Nepal’s ties with India had come under severe strain in 2015 due to the border blockade that choked off critical supplies.
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- At that time, Nepal and its political leadership started enhancing ties with China to counterbalance India and overcome the strain.
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- In fact, Nepal was proving to be a new additional thorn in the Indo-China ties, which reached its nadir during the 2017 Doklam standoff.
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- Nonetheless, Indo-China ties have been improving drastically after the Wuhan summit between PM Modi and Chinese President Xi in April 2018.
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- In this backdrop, the ruling Marxist leadership in Nepal quickly grasped that playing the India versus China card wasn’t feasible any further.
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- On that note, they are currently displaying diplomatic prudence by maintaining cordial relations with both India and China.
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- Also, a Chinese delegation that visited Nepal is said to have proposed the “2 plus 1 formula” for Indo-China-Nepal talks ahead.
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What are the other outcomes of Wuhan?

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- The Wuhan summit opened up lines of “strategic communications” between Indian and Chinese establishments.

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- The arterial flow of information exchange has meant that India and China can be joint custodians rather than rivals in managing their neighbourhood.

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- “2 plus 1” which has been currently proposed by China to deal with Nepal, can possibly be extend to other international engagements too.

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- This would enable Beijing and New Delhi to engage with any third country jointly and thereby eliminate any likely abrasive competition between them.

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How does the future look?

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- The aggressive approach of Trump against Chinese trade and geopolitical practices is likely to have forced China to reach a compromise with India.

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- Nonetheless, China’s new approach is likely to benefit India if leveraged properly through consistent diplomatic engagements.

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- The ball is now in India’s court to respond to China’s two-plus one formulation and Nepal offers a perfect opening to test the same.

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- The initiative would be a good indicator on whether India and China can dock their collective rise cordially, through coordinated action internationally.

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Source: The Hindu

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