India - Nepal - China

Why in news?

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Nepal's Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal (commonly known as Prachanda) visited China after eight months in PM office.

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What did Nepal prime minister do in China?

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- Prachanda held bilateral talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping.
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- Speaking to the media after his meeting with Xi, Prachanda said that the Chinese president had stressed political stability and infrastructure development in Nepal.
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Did Nepal PM Prachanda visited India?

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- Prachanda had visited India in September 2016, one month after assuming office, in his first foreign trip.
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Why Nepal PM Prachanda visited China?

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- The chief purpose of Prachanda's visit was attending the **Boao Forum for**

Asia Annual Conference 2017, held in China's Hainan province.
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- Prachanda, meanwhile, was also in a hurry to visit China to correct his "pro-India" image.
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What is Nepal's domestic political situation?

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- In Nepal's domestic political landscape, Prachanda is facing charges of being close to India and giving less priority to China.
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- Prachanda himself has confessed that there was some level of mistrust between Nepal and China, which his visit helped to dispel.
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- Soon after becoming prime minister, Prachanda, a former rebel, tried to maintain a balanced relationship with both India and China.
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- Unfortunately, none of the prime ministers after 1990 have been successful in crafting a balanced foreign policy when it comes to dealing with neighbors, which are competing to increase their influence in Nepal.
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- In an effort to secure a balanced approach, Prachanda dispatched two of his senior ministers as special envoys to Delhi and Beijing soon after taking office.
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- The purpose of sending envoys was to give the impression that he wishes to build a balanced and cordial relationship with both countries.
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How will Nepal build its bilateral relation with China?

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- Nepal PM Prachanda tried to assure China that he will implement the agreements reached between two countries under erstwhile Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli.

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- Last year, China and Nepal signed the **Agreement on Transit Transport**- an agreement of paramount importance for making landlocked Nepal a land-linked nation.
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- Prachanda focused on **conncetvity projects** between two countries. He listed rail, road, web, and ideology connectivity with China as his main areas of focus.
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- He also highlighted the need **for cross-border electricity transmission lines** to ease the electricity trade process.
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- China's main concern is increasing **railway connectivity** with Nepal as soon as possible, and Beijing has been expressing displeasure over the slow progress on this front.
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What is China's impression on Nepal?

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- There are several indications from China that clearly shows their dissatisfaction with Prachanda.
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- Several opinions pieces published in Chinese media, give the message that China is not happy with him.
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- Local Nepali media reports say that Chinese President Xi Jinping was planning to visit Nepal in 2016 and was making preparations accordingly. But China canceled the visit, citing the lack of preparations on the Nepali side.
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- According to media reports, Xi was planning to visit Nepal around the time of the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) summit held in Goa, India last year.
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- As part of that trip to South Asia, Xi visited Bangladesh, the first visit by a Chinese head of state since 1986 — but he skipped a visit to Nepal.
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- China sent a message that Xi would meet Nepal's prime minister on the sidelines of BRICS Summit, as the leaders of the Bay of Bengal Initiative

for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) countries were also invited.
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- Xi and Prachanda did indeed hold a brief meeting in Goa, at which Prachanda extended an invitation to Xi to visit Nepal as soon as possible.
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- The Chinese side had pressed Prachanda to sign some agreements in Goa, but Nepal insisted that agreements would be signed only on official visits.
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What is China – Nepal aspiration on OBOR project?

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- China has been consistently pressing Nepal to be a part of Xi's **"One Belt, One Road" (OBOR) initiative**.
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- In principle, Nepal had expressed a commitment to joining the project during Oli's visit to China.
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- Chinese think tanks have been holding series of discussions and seminars in Nepal to highlight the benefits that the country would get after signing an OBOR agreement.
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- Nepal, however, has not signed on the document, though Prachanda and Xi discussed cooperation on OBOR during their meeting.
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- Inking an official OBOR agreement with Nepal is at the top of China's agenda during any high-level visit between two countries.
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- During his visit to China, Prachanda assured Beijing that Nepal would soon sign the document, possibly before the international conference on OBOR that China is organizing in Beijing in May.
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What is the defense relation between China and Nepal?

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- Chinese interests in Nepal are reaching out to security agencies, mainly the Nepal Army.
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- Chinese Defense Minister Chang Wanquan visited Nepal and assured that China would supply necessary military hardware to the Nepal Army.
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- Nepal and China are also planning to organize their **first-ever joint military exercise** very soon.
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- Whatever mistrust exists with the current government, China continues to expand its influence in Nepal’s internal political affairs.
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What Nepal should do to maintain bilateral relation with China and India?

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- To achieve prosperity, Nepal should maintain a balanced relationship with its two neighboring countries.
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- Aside from addressing the genuine security and other interests of both India and China, Nepal needs to develop cordial relations with India and China to gain economic progress.
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Source : The Diplomat

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