Nepal & Doklam

Why in news?

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In the backdrop of the Doklam tensions, Nepal will be engaged in high-level visits with both China & India.

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What are the events in line in quick succession?

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- Chinese Vice Premier Wang Yang will be visiting Nepal.
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- India’s External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj will be in Kathmandu for the BIMSTEC meet.
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- Nepali Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba will embarks on an official visit to India.
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What is the crux of the Doklam crisis?

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- India intervened on Bhutan’s behalf to stop Chinese attempts to extend a road from Yadong further southward into the disputed Doklam plateau which is claimed by both Bhutan & China.
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- China has alleged that Indian troops had invaded Doklam in the name of helping Bhutan.
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- It claimed that Indian leaders were using the incident to “appease” domestic and international audiences.
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What are the stakes for Nepal?

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- As a country sandwiched between China & India & its proximity to Doklam has got Nepal intricately hooked.
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- Nepal has maintained a studied silence thus far & has explicitly been a neutral player.
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- Sensing the tension, Nepal has asked for reviewing the agreement reached by India & China in 2015 on the development of a proposed trading post in Lepulekh.
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- **Lipulekh** – It is located along the Kalapani tri-junction in Uttarakhand between China, Nepal & India and it is claimed by both India & Nepal.
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- Nepal sees the aggrement a 'violation of its soverignity'.
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- Addressing it is essential for all as it is a potential flaring point in future.
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How does the Nepal-China bonhomie look?

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- China knows that anti-India sentiment is unprecedentedly high in Nepal and has used every option in its kitty to score diplomatic points.
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- The Chinese have been encouraging Nepal to decide on projects and their execution under the Belt and Road initiative.
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- Opposition leaders in Nepal, who are close to China believe that China respects the soverignity of both Nepal & Bhutan and is willing to engage Bhutan in a bilateral dialogue over the border issue without India.
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- The Chinese academic circles are now seen as candid on bilateral or regional issues in Nepal, while Sino-Nepal forums are laced with sarcastic anti-Indian comments.
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- Suggestions that China and Nepal establish "connections" through railways, pipelines and highways are apleanty.

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- China, officially has been full of appreciation for what Nepal has done to discourage anti-Chinese activities on its territory & also prides itself for staying aloof of Nepal’s interal affairs.
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What are the frictional points in the Nepal-India ties?

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- India has been blatrently accused for the tensions in Terai region & for orchestrating regime changes in Nepal.
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- India’s financial aid & other areas of technical co-operation hasn’t paid off diplomatically in recent times.
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- Some groups in Nepal have been vocal in asking India to either execute the major hydro projects it undertook several years ago or give up.
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- Kathmandu knows that if the Doklam issue escalates it will affect Nepal’s life and economy adversely but that doesn’t assure India of Nepal’s support in the issue.
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Source: Indian Express

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