Post Doklam Scenario

What is the issue?

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Now that the Doklam stand-off and the BRICS summit are over, it's time that India pay attention to some developing bilateral scenarios.

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What all should India focus on?

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- **Bhutan** - Though not being as strategic as for India, the unrest in Doklam was of a concern for Bhutan.
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- Also, views within Bhutan are strongly demanding a “balanced foreign policy” i.e. opening of ties with China as well.
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- China could exploit the situation, to influence Bhutan and gain it support.
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- Thus, India should consider working on the hydropower potential of Bhutan, assisting it in its economic development, etc more firmly than before to retain the Bhutanese trust.
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- **China** - Beijing has maintained that Doklam had been part of China since ancient times, and continues to claim its sovereignty.
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- Notably, the intention for a smooth BRICS summit is also behind China's stance on ending the Dokalm stand-off.
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- Also, China will not let down Pakistan while the CPEC is gaining momentum as one of the major components of the Belt and Road Initiative.
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- India should beware and focus on its military preparedness to encounter a possible two-front collusive threat from China and Pakistan.
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- **US, Russia** - India is, in recent years, getting closer to the US.
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- Though being strategic, this has its own problems as this is likely to distance India from China and even Russia.
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- Even groupings like the BRICS are getting to be 'limited purpose partnership' to achieve specific sets of outcomes rather than a common ideological convergence.
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- India should take note of this, given Russia's intention to use BRICS as an organisation against the West, particularly the US and encourage the Chinese leadership.
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- **Japan** - In the present scenario, partnership with Japan, besides the US, could be the cornerstone of a coalition to take on China's economic and military might.
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- As this could help in other larger coalitions that may include countries willing to resist Chinese dominance in the Asia-Pacific region.
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What is the way forward?

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- Bilateral relations are taking shape beyond bilateral relevance and starting to be determinants of international relations and internal security.
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- India should pay heed to these developments and strategise on its foreign diplomacy.
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Source: Indian Express

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