

China's objection to PM Modi's visit to Arunachal Pradesh

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Context

India has recently rejected **China's objection to PM Modi's visit to Arunachal Pradesh**.

Key Highlights

- China, which claims Arunachal Pradesh as South Tibet, routinely objects to Indian leaders' visits to the state to highlight its claims. Beijing has additionally named the location as Zangnan.
- Arunachal Pradesh, called the North Eastern Frontier Agency (NEFA) till 1972, is the most important state within the northeast and shares international borders to the north and northwest, Bhutan toward the west and Myanmar to the east.
 - The state is like a protective shield to the northeast.
- **China's Claims:** China claims Arunachal Pradesh as part of southern Tibet. And whilst China may additionally lay claim to the entire state, its major interest lies in the district of Tawang, which is in the north-western part of Arunachal and borders Bhutan and Tibet.
- In the 1962 war, Indian troops fought off the Chinese forces in Tawang and Anjaw district of Walong region.

Why Does China Claim Arunachal Pradesh?

- **Tawang monastery:** Tawang also hosts the Tawang Garden Namgyal Lhatse (Tawang

Monastery), that's the second biggest monastery of Tibetan Buddhism in the world.

- The monastery was founded by Merag Lodroe Gyamtso in the year 1680-81 to honour the needs of the 5th Dalai Lama.
- China claims that the monastery is proof that the district once belonged to Tibet.
- They cite historical ties between the Tawang monastery and the Lhasa monastery in Tibet to help their claim over Arunachal.
- **Cultural connections and China's anxieties:** There are a few tribes in the upper Arunachal area that have cultural connections to the people of Tibet.
 - The Monpa tribal population practices Tibetan Buddhism and are also determined in some areas of Tibet.
 - China fears that the presence of those ethnic groups in Arunachal may want to at some degree give rise to a seasoned-democracy Tibetan motion against China.
- **Political importance:** When the Dalai Lama escaped Tibet in 1959 amid China crackdown, he entered India through Tawang and stayed in the Tawang monastery for some time which has been a bone of contention between India and China.
- **The Bhutan aspect:** If China gains control of Arunachal, it might imply that the state of Bhutan would have China as its neighbour on both the western and eastern borders.
 - China has already engaged in massive construction of motorable roads to attach strategic factors on Bhutan's western side.
 - China desires to expand its roads from Doka La to Gamochin, which is under the guard of the Indian army.
 - China's efforts to transport closer to the Siliguri corridor is a security threat for both India and Bhutan.
- **Arunachal's strategic location:** Arunachal Pradesh is the nearest location for India to target China with missiles.
 - Also, Arunachal is the best location for India to install a multi-layered air defence device for possible attacks from China.
 - Thus control over Arunachal will provide China a strategic advantage.
- **Water power:** China has control over India's water supply to the northeastern region.
 - For India, the Brahmaputra accounts for nearly 30% of freshwater resources and 40% of total hydro power potential of the country. Almost 50% of the basin of the Brahmaputra is in Chinese territory
 - The Tsangpo river which originates in Tibet flows into The Tsangpo river, which originates in Tibet, flows into India and is called Siang in Arunachal Pradesh earlier than it was the Brahmaputra.
 - China has constructed several dams and might use water as a geo-strategic weapon against India by causing flooding or drought inside the place.

Way Ahead

- Fearing a Chinese chance of "water wars", India has initiated its biggest hydroelectric project of 11,000 megawatt (MW) in Upper Subansiri in Arunachal Pradesh.
- The hydro electric powered tasks overdrive within the north-east, and mainly in Arunachal Pradesh, which stocks its border with China, is seen as a strategic flow to counter the capacity impact of Chinese drift diversion by the dams it's miles building.
- India's sovereignty over Arunachal Pradesh is internationally recognized and universal.
- India has again and again rejected China's territorial claims over Arunachal Pradesh,

affirming that the state is an integral part of the country.

Source: *The Indian Express*

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Q.China is using its economic relations and positive trade surplus as tools to develop potential military power status in Asia". In the light of this statement, discuss its impact on India as her neighbour. (2017)