



317en28

**28**

## **INDIA AND ITS NEIGHBOURS : CHINA, PAKISTAN AND SRILANKA**

---

In the previous chapter you have learnt that the major objective of India's policy has been the promotion of international peace and cooperation and developing friendly relations with all countries, especially the neighbouring countries. Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Burma and China are India's immediate neighbours with whom it has friendly relations based on bonds of common culture and heritage.

In this lesson we will study about India's relations with Pakistan, China and Sri Lanka.



### **Objectives**

After studying this lesson, you would be able to

- identify the major sources of friction in Sino-Indian bilateral relations;
- identify the various initiatives for resolving the border dispute with China;
- analyse Indo-Pak bilateral relations in the historical perspective of Kashmir problem;
- identify the nuclear rivalry between India and Pakistan;
- trace historical, cultural and ethnic ties between India and Sri Lanka; and
- explain the growth of Tamil Separatist Movement and its impact on Indo-Sri Lankan relations.

### **28.1 India and China**

India and China are the two great giants of Asia. Besides being the most populous countries, they are also two of the most ancient civilisations of the world. Historically, several historians have successfully traced the cultural linkages dating back to 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC.

As a result of the communist revolution in 1949, China became the People's Republic of China (PRC), under the leadership of Mao Tse Tung. Nehru regarded India as China's



rival for the leadership of the non-white people of the world. India, on the other hand, tried its best to come close to China. It was the first non-communist country to recognise communist China in 1949. India fully supported China's claim for membership in the United Nations. It also acknowledged China's claim over Formosa (Taiwan). It refused to be a party to peace treaty with Japan without China. In the Korean crisis too, India refused to brand China as aggressor when China intervened on behalf of North Korea. In fact, India supported China even though the Western bloc especially USA was displeased with it.

Nehru's China policy received the first jolt in 1950, when China occupied Tibet in 1950. It is important to remember in this context that India had long term interests in Tibet because it was a buffer lying between India and China. India even enjoyed certain special privileges in Tibet. Therefore direct Chinese control over Tibet was likely to endanger these, and India's security.

India's suggestions for a peaceful settlement of the Tibet problem were treated as interference by the communist regime. Gradually the Tibetans grew restless under China's yoke and rose in revolt in 1959. China ruthlessly suppressed the movement and declared Tibet as an integral part of China. The head of Tibet, Dalai Lama took shelter in India while Tibet lost whatever autonomy it still enjoyed. The granting of political shelter to Dalai Lama by India added to China's distrust.

China appreciated India's neutral and mediatory role in easing the Korean problem (1950-53). Thus, began a period of friendship between the two countries, with the signing of the Sino-Indian Treaty of friendship in 1954. This treaty put a seal of approval upon Chinese suzerainty over Tibet. The Preamble of the treaty embodies the famous 'Panchsheel Principles' about which you have studied (lesson number 26). This agreement initiated a period of relaxed relationship, marked by the slogan of *Hindi Chini Bhai Bhai*. It is interesting to note that at the Bandung Conference (1955), Nehru actively brought China into the hold of the Afro-Asian solidarity.

### 28.1.1 Boundary Dispute between India and China

The 1950s were marked by the boundary dispute between India and China, the flash point of which unfortunately caused a war between the two countries in 1962. China first started to claim large parts of Indian territory in North East Frontier Agency (NEFA, now Arunachal Pradesh) and Ladakh by publishing maps in which these were shown as included in China. China continued extending its borders and also constructed a 110 mile long road across Aksai China area (Ladakh) of India in 1956-57. In 1959, China put claim to some 50,000 sq. miles of Indian territory and also denied the validity of McMahon Line.

**McMahon Line** This is the boundary line between India and China, east of Bhutan. It was determined in 1914 at a Conference of representatives of British India, Tibet and China. The Secretary of State for India (in British Cabinet) Arthur Henry McMahon represented British India in the Conference.

By this time Tibet had been fully integrated into China; it was in a strong position at the India-China border with Chinese troops posted all along. While the two countries were in dispute over the McMahon line issue, China launched a massive attack on India in October 1962, in the NEFA as well as the Ladakh sector. After overrunning large areas of Indian territory, China announced a unilateral ceasefire after occupying huge territory of India 200 sq. miles in the North Eastern sector and 15,000 sq. miles in Ladakh.



A futile attempt to work out a peaceful settlement between the two countries was made by Sri Lanka. The Colombo Proposals failed because China refused to agree on conditions contained in them. For long in the years following the war, China–India relations did not show any improvement. In fact, China went out of the way to make friends with Pakistan, just to isolate and contain India.

### 28.1.2 Normalisation of Relations

Although the two countries resumed diplomatic relations in 1976 by exchanging ambassadors. The efforts of normalisation of Sino-Indian relations received a boost when the then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi paid a successful five day visit to China in 1988. The two countries pledged to settle the border dispute through dialogue. Several high level visits followed including visit by Ex-Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in 2003. The two countries agreed to keep the border dispute apart, and develop friendly relations in other fields. Until the border dispute is resolved, both countries agreed to maintain peace and tranquility on the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

One could see a clear shift in the Chinese attitude towards India. The fact that erstwhile USSR had mended fences with China, there were no more apprehensions from the South. Moreover, China's post-1979 economic transformation demanded big markets for its massive production under economic liberalisation. President Jiang Zemin's visit to India in 1996 witnessed a major consolidation of this progress. This was first ever visit of China's head of State to India. China's withdrawal of support to Naga and Mizo rebels; meaningful silence on the status of Sikkim (China considered Sikkim's status as that of an independent state) and a neutral stand on Kashmir issue could be seen as positive shift in Chinese attitude towards India.

Nevertheless, there was suddenly a brief setback in the mutual ties of the two after the nuclear explosions by India during 1998. These were followed by sharp Chinese reaction and its leading role in getting the resolutions condemning the tests in UN and similar fora, passed. These tests by India were seen as neutralising Chinese prominence in the region. But the Chinese posture of neutrality during the Indo-Pak military showdown in Kashmir, Kargil sector in 1999 exhibited China's inclination to toe a softer and friendly line with India. In fact, Chinese refusal to interfere in the conflict forced Pakistan for cessation of hostilities with India.

However, Ex-Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's 2003 visit to China is a renewed effort in the promotion of close and cordial ties between the two neighbours. The border agreement has recognised the Nathula Pass in Sikkim as a border pass, implying that China no more considers Sikkim as an independent state. Another positive breakthrough was the Joint Declaration that underlined the need to explore a framework of a boundary settlement at political level of bilateral relations. This is an acknowledgement that the key issue in resolving the dispute is political. This is seen as Beijing's readiness to give up its policy of delaying dialogue. India's National Security Advisor and Chinese Vice Minister have been appointed for holding the tasks. The developments at the diplomatic and political levels have been supplemented by fresh initiatives at the economic level to strengthen bilateral relations. The border trade between India and China has crossed \$ 10 billion quickly.



**Intext Questions 28.1**

1. China became a communist country in the year ..... (1947, 1949, 1962).
2. Bandung Conference of Afro-Asian countries was held in the year ..... (1945, 1949, 1955).
3. .... serves as the boundary line between India and China in the eastern sector (Huang Hua border, McMahon Line, Indo-China border).
4. China liberalised its economy in ..... (early 1970s, late 1970s, early 1990s)
5. \_\_\_\_\_, the President of China visited India in the year 1996 (Chou-Enlai, Mao Tse Tung, Jiang Zemin).

**28.2 India and Pakistan**

No two countries in the world have so much in common as India and Pakistan. Yet they have perpetually been in a state of undeclared war with varying degree of intensity. Pakistan's aggression in Kargil (1999) brought the two countries even on the verge of a nuclear confrontation. The legacy of suspicion and mistrust predates the partition of India in 1947. During the freedom struggle the Muslim League, under the leadership of Mohammad Ali Jinnah propounded the two-nation theory, in support of a separate Muslim state. Jinnah insisted that since Hindus and Muslims were two communities, two separate states must be constituted for the two communities. The Indian National Congress (INC)'s long rejection of and reluctant acceptance of partition gave room for suspicion in Pakistan that India would try to undo the partition and divide Pakistan. Moreover, Pakistan was concerned at the possibility of India's domination in the region and its inability to match India's power all by itself. Pakistan developed a perception that it is an incomplete state without Kashmir being incorporated into it. On the other hand, India perceives Kashmir's accession and integration into India as an essential element of its secular and federal democratic structure.

**28.2.1 The Kashmir Issue**

At the time of partition Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) was one of those several princely states, the fate of which was left uncertain in 1947. Pakistan desired that Kashmir with Muslim majority population should join Muslim country, Pakistan. But the popular leader of National Congress opposed Pakistan's ideology. Maharaja Hari Singh did not take a decision until Pakistan sent armed intruders into the Kashmir valley in October 1947. Seeking Indian help to repulse the Pakistani intruders Maharaja signed the 'Instrument of Accession' making Jammu and Kashmir a part of Indian Union. On this occasion, as true democrat, Prime Minister Nehru assured that after Pakistani aggression was cleared, the future status of the state would be decided on the basis of wishes of the people of Kashmir.

Since India did not want an open clash with Pakistan, it referred the matter to the United Nations. Indian forces saved Srinagar from the invaders, pushed back the Pakistanis from the Kashmir Valley. But the whole of Kashmir could not be recaptured, at it would have meant direct and difficult war between the two new nations. India sought United Nations help in 1948. A ceasefire came to be implemented on January 1, 1949. It left a large part

## India and the World



## Notes

of Jammu and Kashmir (nearly 2/5 of the State) under Pakistan's possession, which we call Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK). In 1950s the UN mediators put forward several plans to resolve the dispute, but they failed to bridge the differences between the two countries.

The problem of Kashmir is still pending. Plebiscite was to be conducted only after Pakistan withdrew its forces from the occupied territory, as per the UN resolution of 1948, which Pakistan refused to comply. Hence India pleaded that the wishes of the people were ascertained in 1954 in the form of the direct election to the Constituent Assembly which satisfied the accession of Jammu and Kashmir to India. The mediation came to an end. Pakistan was desperate to capture Kashmir. Thinking that India's army was weak after defeat in the war with China in 1962, Pakistan tried through a war to take Kashmir in 1965. But Indian forces defeated the Pakistani designs.

**LoC** The Ceasefire line determined in 1949 was called the LoC after 1972. Some people believe that the possible solution to Indo-Pak problem on Kashmir is the conversion of LoC into international boundary.

Moreover, Pakistan suffered another humiliation, when its eastern wing, 1000 miles away from West Pakistan successfully waged independence struggle in 1971. India played a key role in the war to liberate Bangladesh. The birth of Bangladesh proved to be the final burial of two-nation theory on the basis of which Pakistan put a claim to Kashmir. Pakistan was reduced to one-fourth of the size of India. This altered the power equation in South Asia in India's favour.

In order to normalise relations India invited Pakistan for an agreement, the result of which was the Shimla Pact of 1972. This Shimla agreement however bears important significance as the two countries agreed to seek the settlement of all bilateral problems, including Kashmir, mutually without the intervention of any third party. Thus under the Shimla Pact, the Kashmir issue cannot be raised in international or any other forum, although Pakistan has not hesitated to ignore the spirit of the agreement. The agreement also talked about the return of Prisoners of War (POW). Though Pakistan's territory in India's possession was returned, a new cease-fire line (in place of the old cease-fire line of 1948–49) was drawn, which is known as the LoC, Pakistan found ways other than open war to destabilise India by encouraging and assisting terrorism in Punjab, and the State-sponsored militancy in Jammu and Kashmir since the mid 1980s. Pakistan still continues to encourage terrorist and separatist tendencies in Kashmir, operating mainly from terrorist training camps situated in POK.

The sanctity of the LoC that came to be agreed upon between India and Pakistan under the Shimla Agreement of 1972, was violated by Pakistan in May 1999 as a part of a big plan. This was done when the Pakistani forces infiltrated into India, after crossing the line of control in Kargil, Drass and Batelik sectors of J & K. Indian army once again gave a befitting defeat in a war that continued for about 60 days. The purpose of Pakistani operation in Kargil was to create a crisis with a threat of nuclear war, which would in turn ensure intervention by the United States in its favour on Kashmir dispute. Neither United States nor China came to Pakistan's help. In fact, Pakistan had a diplomatic and military defeat.

### 28.2.2 Nuclear Tests and Efforts Towards Improvement of Relations

Indo-Pakistan relations acquired an entirely new dimension in the context of nuclear tests

by both India and Pakistan in May 1998. The relations between the two neighbours hit a new low. India has been facing a nuclear threat arising out of China's clandestine support to build up of the nuclear weapon capability of Pakistan since the mid-seventies. No doubt, Pakistan's nuclear policy is targeted against India

The extreme bitterness and tension between India and Pakistan in the aftermath of the nuclear tests of May 1998 did bring with it an increasing realisation on both sides that things could not continue in the same manner indefinitely. That, some meeting ground between the two neighbours has to be found. Thus, foreign secretary level talks started, and a direct bus service between Delhi and Lahore was proposed. Prime Minister Vajpayee's Bus Diplomacy in 1999 marked a tremendous goodwill between the two countries. The Lahore Declaration signed at the time underlined the need for resolving all outstanding issues, including that of Kashmir, through peaceful means. While India agreed to bring Kashmir onto the agreed agenda along with other areas of mutual benefits, Pakistan conceded to bilateralism. The reference to the 'composite and integrated' dialogue process implied that the two would not be a hostage to any single issue. Despite the rupture caused by the Kargil war and the terrorist attack against our Parliament (December 2001) the unconditional dialogue has been resumed. The emphasis in these talks is to promote people to people contacts across LoC, and also improve economic ties between India and Pakistan. Change of government in India has not meant any deviation from our commitment to peaceful and prosperous co-existence with Pakistan.

**Notes****Intext Questions 28.2**

**State whether the following statements are True or False:**

1. The two-nations theory was accepted by Indian National Congress. (True/False)
2. Maharaja Hari Singh of Jammu and Kashmir demanded assistance from both India and Pakistan but only India responded. (True/False)
3. Pakistan occupied Kashmir is known as Azad Kashmir in Pakistan. (True/False)
4. The people of East Pakistan declared themselves independent in April 1971. (True/False)
5. The Shimla Agreement was signed between India and Bangladesh in 1972. (True/False)
6. Kargil war happened immediately after the nuclear test by India in May 1972. (True/False)

**28.3 India and Sri Lanka**

Sri Lanka, earlier known as Ceylon (until 1972), is a small island country situated in the Indian Ocean to the south of India. Its total area is 25,332 sq. miles. Of all countries, it has geographical proximity to India. Only 18 miles wide shallow water in the Palk Straits separates Jaffna in northern Sri Lanka from the Southernmost tip of the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. Its geostrategic location in the Indian Ocean (at the centre of commercial



and strategic sea and air routes) and its closeness to US naval base in Deigo Garcia indicates its importance far beyond its size, population and resources. The history of cultural relations between India and Sri Lanka dates back to the ancient times. Out of the total population of Sri Lanka, about 64 percent believe in Buddhism and about 15 percent believe in Hinduism. Sri Lanka became a British colony in early 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was granted independence on February 4, 1948.

India-Sri Lanka relations have generally been cordial, though there have been occasions of tense relations due to the ethnic conflict between Tamils and the Sinhalese. Despite ethnic problems, India has never sought to impose its will on Sri Lanka and has always based its foreign policy towards this southern neighbour on mutual understanding and friendship. An important area of common interest between the two neighbours is the foreign policy of non-alignment. Sri Lanka has generally stood neutral in Sino-Indian disputes. In fact, it made efforts to mediate between India and China after the war of 1962. Sri Lanka also showed understanding when India become nuclear. Recently in 2005, India extended valuable help to Sri Lanka after Tsunami devastated the coastal areas of that country.

### 28.3.1 Problem of Indian Tamils

Jaffna province of Sri Lanka has large concentration of Tamil population. The problem became serious when Tamilians began demanding a national homeland or “Eelam” in northern Sri Lanka. It is important to understand that there are essentially two categories of Tamilians in Sri Lanka: The *Ceylon Tamils* whose forefathers had migrated to Sri Lanka centuries ago. They are estimated to be one million. The second category is of *Indian Tamils* whose forefathers were taken by the Britishers as plantation workers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They are another one million, many of them without citizenship. The problem of their status dominated early India-Sri Lanka relations. The conflict with Ceylon Tamils came later.

The Sinhalese fear Tamil domination, which is the principal reason behind the ethnic conflict. The difference between the two communities was exploited by British rulers in order to check the growing Sinhalese nationalism. The Tamils were allowed to enter the administration structure and thus gradually took control of the trade and profession. Scarce economic resources and opportunities plus the majority pressure from its own people forced the Government of Sri Lanka to pass series of steps to reducing the importance of Tamils- Indian and the Ceylonese. The representation of Tamilians in public service in 1948 was 30 percent, but by 1975 it had fallen to mere 5 percent. The Sinhalese were encouraged to settle down in Tamil dominated areas in large numbers. The citizenship law of 1948 and 1949 had deprived about 10 lakh Indian Tamils of political rights. The Tamil youth who had lost faith in non-violence organised themselves into Liberation Tigers. The aim of these ‘Tigers’ is a sovereign Tamil State of Eelam.

The issue of Tamilians, and the policy pursued by government cast a dark shadow on Indo-Sri Lanka relations. India from time to time complained against the discriminatory policy of the Ceylon government. The agreement of 1964 sought to solve the problem of stateless persons (Indian Tamils) in Sri Lanka. About 3 lakhs of these people were to be granted Sri Lankan citizenship and about 5 lakh 25 thousand persons were to be given citizenship of India. These people were given 15 years time to shift to India in instalments. Later in 1974, the fate of the rest 1 lakh 50 thousand stateless persons was decided. It was agreed between the two countries that half of them were to be given citizenship of Sri Lanka and rest would become Indian nationals. Thus, the issue of stateless persons was sorted out peacefully between the two countries.

A territorial dispute arose between India and Sri Lanka over the ownership of one mile long and only 300 yard wide small island known as Kacchativu, in 1968. In 1974 under the agreement signed between the two countries, India accepted Sri Lankan ownership of the island.

### 28.3.2 Tamil Separatism

The ethnic problem between Tamils and Sinhalese had a long history. It assumed serious proportions in 1983. As the gulf between the communities developed, militancy, separatist organisations became active. Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) demanded separate homeland for Tamils in 1988 – Tamil Eelam. A reign of terror was unleashed against the agitating Tamils in 1983. During 1983 – 86, about 2 lakh Tamils were rendered homeless. The worst racial riots in the history of the country made thousands of Tamils refugees in India.

India offered to help resolve the crisis but it was interpreted as “Indian intervention in Sri Lanka” on behalf of the Tamils. When the situation became grim, India and Sri Lanka signed an agreement in 1987. India offered military assistance under the Accord. Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) was sent to Sri Lanka to help restore normalcy in the country. The deployment of IPKF was also an extension of India’s policy of reminding Sri Lanka and outside powers that if their involvement inside the region were to have an anti-Indian orientation, New Delhi would not remain a mute spectator.

Though the accord of 1987 was a triumph of Indian diplomacy, it proved to be costly for India. India lost about 1200 soldiers and it costed Rs. 2 crore a day on IPKF in the height of its involvement. The worst part was that the Tamils turned against IPKF and a fighting broke out between the two. Rajiv Gandhi, the architect of India-Sri Lanka Accord of 1987 was assassinated in 1991 at the behest of LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) leader, Velupillai Prabhakaran.

### 28.3.3 Areas of Mutual Cooperation

Systematic efforts at strengthening economic ties have been taken by India and Sri Lanka since the 1990s, especially after the withdrawal of Indian troops. In 1998, the two countries set up an Indo Sri Lankan Foundation for increasing bilateral exchanges in various fields. They have agreed on a free trade area to facilitate trade, which has gone up greatly.

India encouraged Sri Lanka to invite the peace process between the Tamils and the Sinhalese. In 1998 Sri Lanka invited Norway to work out a peaceful solution to the ethnic problem. India stands for unity of Sri Lanka. The greatest milestone of this process was the cease-fire agreement of 2002 between LTTE and Sri Lanka and the revival of the dialogue between the two. From India’s long term point of view, Norway recognised India’s legitimate interests in Sri Lanka and stated that it has no desire to come in the way of any Indian initiative to end the conflict in the region.

**Notes**

### **Intext Questions 28.3**

1. When did Sri Lanka gain her independence?
2. Name the two categories of Tamil-speaking people in Sri Lanka.
3. Regarding which island did India surrender her claims to Sri Lanka in 1974?



4. In what year did India send IPKF to Sri Lanka?

**What You Have Learnt**

- Conflictual issues between India and China pertain to Tibet and the border dispute. India recognised Chinese suzerainty over Tibet which is stated in the 1954 Agreement between India and China. But the border dispute that escalated into a war in 1962 in which India lost territory to China, still remains. After years of distance, India and China are normalising relations by first improving economic ties, and now starting border talks.
- Kashmir is a bone of contention between India and Pakistan which has brought the two countries into open clash in 1947, 1965, 1971, 1999. Cross border terrorism is a major irritant. India tried to bring a positive change in the relationship of the two countries through Shimla agreement, Lahore Declaration, etc. leading to increased cultural and academic exchange. A composite dialogue is being pursued with Pakistan.
- Relations between India and Sri Lanka can generally be termed as friendly, except for the brief spell in which the Tamil ethnic problem cast its shadow on the relations of the two countries. Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) sent to Sri Lanka was a bitter experience to India. After their withdrawal in 1990, India preferred to keep its hands off the ethnic problem of Sri Lanka, letting room for other countries like Norway to initiate substantial peace process to the problem. But growing economic ties between India and Sri Lanka are a symbol of mutual trust.

**Terminal Exercises**

1. Discuss the causes of 1962 war between India and China.
2. Explain normalisation of the relations between India and China since the 1990s.
3. Kashmir is the root cause of all problems between India and Pakistan. Do you agree?
4. Trace the causes of the separatist problem in Sri Lanka. Also discuss the steps taken by India to help resolve this problem.

**Answers to Intext Questions****28.1**

1. 1949
2. 1955
3. McMahon Line
4. Late 1970s
5. Jiang Zemin

**Notes**



Notes

## 28.2

1. False
2. False
3. True
4. True
5. False
6. False

## 28.3

1. February 4, 1948
2. Indian Tamils and Ceylonese Tamils
3. Kacchativu island
4. 1987

### Hints for Terminal Exercises

1. Refer to Section 28.1.1
2. Refer to Section 28.2.2
3. Refer to Section 28.2.1
4. Refer to Section 28.3.2



### Let us ponder over adolescence issues



WHO DEFINES HEALTH AS “A STATE OF COMPLETE PHYSICAL, MENTAL AND SOCIAL WELL BEING AND NOT MERELY THE ABSENCE OR DISEASE OF INFIRMITY”.