

Why Bhutan is special to India

The present [standoff between Indian and Chinese troops in Doka La \(Doklam\)](#) is a rare insight into New Delhi's very special relationship with Bhutan, which includes military responsibilities towards it.

In India's only official statement on the standoff, the Ministry of External Affairs on Friday said that on June 16, a "PLA (People's Liberation Army) construction party entered the Doklam area and attempted to construct a road. It is our understanding that a Royal Bhutan Army patrol attempted to dissuade them from this unilateral activity."

The lowdown on the border standoff with China

The MEA statement went on to say that the Foreign Ministry of Bhutan "has also issued a statement underlining that the construction of the road inside Bhutanese territory is a direct violation of the 1988 and 1998 agreements between Bhutan and China and affects the process of demarcating the boundary between these two countries."

Giving a view of India's role in Bhutan's security, the MEA statement said, "In keeping with their tradition of maintaining close consultation on matters of mutual interest, RGOB (Royal Government of Bhutan) and the Government of India have been in continuous contact through the unfolding of these developments."

It further said that "in coordination" with the Bhutanese government, "Indian personnel, who were present at general area Doka La, approached the Chinese construction party and urged them to desist from changing the status quo. These efforts continue."

In a rebuff, Bhutan refutes China's claims on Doko La road construction

Under the 2007 India-Bhutan Friendship Treaty, the two sides have agreed to "cooperate closely with each other on issues relating to their national interests. Neither Government shall allow the use of its territory for activities harmful to the national security and interest of the other."

Under the previous treaty, India was to "guide" Bhutan on foreign and defence policies. The language of the 2007 treaty, is meant to respect the sensitivities of Bhutan regarding its sovereignty. But the reality is that the Indian military is virtually responsible for protecting Bhutan from the kind of external threat that the Chinese military poses.

The Eastern Army Command and the Eastern Air Command both have integrated protection of Bhutan into their role. The Indian Military Training Team (IMTRAT), headed by a Major General, plays a critical role in training Bhutanese security personnel.

Says BJP will campaign against corruption, law and order problems and lack of development work in Himachal Pradesh

The process of holding the requisite Board Meetings and Shareholder Meetings has been completed in phases in September 2017.

Ruben George is staying at Ram Nath Kovind's house at Kalyanpur, near Kanpur

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