

## India-China ties see a 'Xiamen reboot'

Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Chinese President Xi Jinping in Xiamen last year. PTI/PTI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's telephone call to Chinese President Xi Jinping after his election for a second term was part of the 'Xiamen process' — a calibrated effort to rebuild ties that had been jolted last year by the Doklam military stand-off.

"It would be correct to call the energetic efforts to re-rail ties between India and China as the 'Xiamen process'. After all it was at the sidelines of the Xiamen BRICS summit that Prime Minister Modi and President Xi decided to give a firm direction on re-building post-Doklam ties," a highly placed source told *The Hindu*.

The source said a decision had been taken to congratulate Mr. Xi after he was elected for a second presidential term.

"Ultimately, it was the Prime Minister who decided to call President Xi on the phone to congratulate him personally."

Sources said the call by Mr. Modi has set the tone for his meeting with Mr. Xi at Qingdao — the venue of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in June. No other "informal" meeting between the two leaders is planned so far ahead of the SCO conclave.

It is anticipated that the Qingdao meeting would further "change the narrative for the better", and set the stage for a bilateral summit, possibly later in the year.

### More high-level visits

The step-by-step rebuilding of the post-Doklam ties began soon after the Xiamen summit, with the back-to-back visits to India in December by the Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and of State Councillor and politburo member Yang Jiechi.

Several high-level visits are now in the pipeline. China's Commerce Minister Zhong Shan is to participate in the India-China Joint Economic Group meeting that Commerce Minister Suresh Prabhu would host on Monday. It is likely that the larger fallout of the ongoing trade tensions between China and the U.S. would be part of the conversation.

Other high-level engagements between the two governments include a visit by External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj beginning April 23. A visit by Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is also in the pipeline.

The India-China strategic economic dialogue would be held in Beijing on April 13-14, between the NITI Ayog and the China's top planning body, the National Development and Reform Commission.

END