

PREFACE

In spite of the fact that Myanmar (formerly known as Burma till 1989) and India having close geographical contiguity, historically and culturally had been sharing each other's common circumstances, still both had remained distinct from each other, till the end of 20th century. During the colonial period, both were part of the British rule in India. But after independence, both these new countries did not interact much to develop better co-ordination and co-operation for the mutual benefits of each other. Having major diplomatic relations with each other was not enough for them, which shared many common factors. It was a kind of negligence on the part of both sides. Burmese having their typical way of living and inward looking community could not impress Indian politicians to develop meaningful neighbourly relations. The globalization process in 1990's and changed geostrategic environment in the world and particularly, in South Central and South East Asian regions, had opened the eyes of both the countries. Both countries had realized the importance of their geo-strategic advantages for betterment of both the countries.

Historically, India and Myanmar had close contacts between the people of their respective countries since the pre-historic times. It was difficult to establish since when, but there was little doubt that contacts between the two countries civilization certainly pre-dated much before Christ. Sanskritised names in Myanmar bear out that by the 2nd century AD, Indians had set up settlement there.

Myanmar has its land frontiers with China on the north and northeast 1384 miles (2226.85 km), Laos on the east 146 miles (234.91 km), Thailand on the southeast 1304 miles (2098.14 km), and Bangladesh 169 miles (271.92 km) and India on the west 903 miles (1452.93 km) The total length of land boundaries is about 3906 miles (6284.75 km)

Myanmar is bordered by the Bay of Bengal on the west, Gulf of Moattama (Marta ban) and Andaman Sea on the south, the coastline from the mouth of Naaf river to Bayintnaung Point (Victoria Point) in Kawthaung is 1,385 mile (2228.47 km.). It has a coastline of Rakhine Coast 443 miles (712.79 km.), Delta Coast 272 miles (437.65 km.) and Mon Tanintharyi Coast 670 miles (1078.03 km.), thus totaling miles (2228.47 km).

Burma, which has a total area of 678,500 square kilometres (262,000 sq mi), is the largest country in mainland Southeast Asia and the 40th-largest in the world. It lies between latitudes 9" and 29⁰N and longitudes 92⁰ and 102⁰E. As on February 2011, Burma consisted of 14 states and regions, 67 districts, 330 townships, 64 sub - townships, 2914 Wards, 14220 village tracts and 68290 villages.

India and Myanmar had strong historical ties since ancient times. The spread of Buddhism from India to Myanmar and vibrant cultural interactions, had often been referred to demonstrate the strong historical ties between the two countries. However, history had also given some unwanted baggage. It was during the British colonial times that India and Myanmar (then Burma) had intense interactions.

According to statistics compiled by the European Union, India was the third largest trading partner of Myanmar. However, a closer look at the figures revealed the absence of diversity in Myanmar's international trade and also India's weak trade-links with Myanmar. China and Thailand being the first two and they accounted for 31.4 percent and 28.8 percent of Myanmar's international trade respectively. This implied that China and Thailand accounted for more than 60 percent of Myanmar's international trade, while on the other hand, India's trade with Myanmar was a mere 7.6 percent of the latter's overall trade. This was despite the fact that India shared approximately 1643 km of land border with Myanmar (four Indian States shared border with Myanmar) and for India, Myanmar was a critical land bridge to Southeast Asia.

The political situation of both India and Myanmar had many things in common. In the past history of these countries, various dynasties had ruled over the destinies of their people. In India, the Mughal dynasty was ruled before the British came and in Myanmar, it was the Toungoo and Konebaung dynasties that shaped the future developments in Myanmar. In recent history, both the countries came under one colonial rule, that was British rule. During the period of British colonial rule, both India and Myanmar faced similar kind of political experiences.

Defence cooperation between India and Myanmar was an important face of bilateral relations. A number of Indian military chiefs had visited Myanmar in the past and exchanged views on issues of mutual interest. The Indian Navy appeared to be quite proactive and several Indian naval chiefs had visited Myanmar. There had also been regular port calls by

Indian naval ships to Myanmar ports. Military training had also been an agenda of bilateral defence cooperation. In 2006, the Indian Army had offered special warfare training for Myanmar soldiers.

India and Myanmar had faced a number of maritime security challenges in the Bay of Bengal. These were essentially non-traditional security (NTS) issues that had emerged in the form of piracy, terrorism, gun running, drug smuggling, illegal fishing and human smuggling, etc. The Indian Prime Minister had also highlighted these issues during his visit to Myanmar in April 2012 and observed that both India and Myanmar needed to "expand their security cooperation that was vital, not only to maintain peace along our land borders, but also to protect maritime trade, which we hope will open up through the sea route between Kolkata and Sittwe."

It was noteworthy that the triangle between Myanmar, India and China was not static; it had been susceptible to fluctuations. Evidently, its evolution through history was remembered much more in Myanmar, than was in the other two countries. The impact of Indian and Chinese cultures on Burma, through history had been a subject of immense interest. Its faith Buddhism, came from India and China. Burma suffered many invasions from the north and its kings carried out several attacks in the West. Hence, the tendency to fear the northern neighbour and to consider friendship with the western neighbour, had always been a part of the nation's mindset.

For India, good relations with its neighbours were central to its foreign policy. Myanmar was geo-strategically important for India. The specific objective of building substantive co-operation and engagement

between Myanmar and India, was to create co-operative arrangements between the two countries to counter secessionist and terrorist activities in the border areas.

As K.M. Panikkar, a historian and a strategist, par excellence explained Myanmar's (erstwhile Burma) strategic significance to India as thus - "the defence of India's primary concern no less than Burma's to see that its frontiers remained inviolate. Infact, no responsibility can be considered too heavy for India when, it came to the question of defending Burma."

Myanmar-India relations were likely to thrive further on their own steam. But through a conscious and well planned endeavour, they could be strengthened and deepened in a far more perceptible manner and in a relatively short period. It is hoped that the two nations, not just their governments, but their societies too - will make the necessary investment in this vital relationship. There were no dearth of good ideas. What was needed was an increased public awareness of the potential of the relationship, the geopolitical stakes involved and the costs of suboptimal action. A new fountain of synergy should be created in the future, which would be pulled by a clear mutuality of interests, common values, shared experiences and a determined leadership.

China had boundary disputes with all its neighbours, including India. Displaying great strategic foresight, China signed its first boundary agreement with a neighbour, i.e., with Myanmar in 1960, in which China accepted the McMohan Line delineation, though not its nomenclature. Myanmar was thus, greatly relieved.

What was likely to be the future shape and direction of the triangle under discussion? From his detailed study, Maung Aung Myoe concludedif Myanmar's engagement with China in the past decades offered any lesson for future reference, it was most likely that Myanmar would be very cautious in dealing with China, because Myanmar was thoroughly convinced that China, like all other countries, would determine its policies towards Myanmar, according to the calculation of her own interests.

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(Yasharth Gautam)

List of Abbreviations

1. ABSDF All Burma Students Democratic Front
2. ADMM ASEAN Defence Ministers Meetings Plus
3. AEP Act East Policy
4. AFPFL Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League
5. AFSPA Armed Forces Special Powers Act
6. APC Armoured Personal Carrier
7. ALH Advanced Light Helicopter
8. ARF ASEAN Regional Forum
9. ASEAN Association of South East Asian Nations
10. BCIM Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar
11. BCP Burma Communist Party
12. BCP Burma Communist Independence Army
13. BIA Burma Independence Army
14. BIMSTEC Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation
15. BSPP Burma Socialist Programme Party
16. C- in-C Commander-in-Chief
17. CECA Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement
18. CIJWS Counter Insurgency & Jungle Warfare School
19. CLAWS Centre for Land Warfare Studies
20. CLMV Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam
21. CNA Chin National Army
22. CNP Chin National Party

23. CNPC China National Petroleum Corporation
24. EAS East Asia Summit
25. ERI Earth Right International
26. ERIA Economic Research Institute for ASEAN
27. EU European Union
28. HADR Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief
29. IAI Initiative for ASEAN Integration
30. ICWA Indian Council of World Affairs
31. IDSA Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis
32. IIG Indian Insurgent Group
33. IMF International Monetary Fund
34. IIM Indian Institute of Management
35. IIT Indian Institute of Technology
36. IIIT Indian Institute of Information Technology
37. INA Indian National Army
38. INC Indian National Congress
39. IPR Indo - Pacific Region
40. IT Information Technology
41. ISEAS Institute of South East Asian Studies
42. JICA Japans International Cooperation Agency
43. JNU Jawaharlal Nehru University
44. KIA Kachin Independence Army
45. KIO Kachin Independence Organisation
46. Km Kilometers
47. KMMTTP Kaladan Multi-Model Transit Transport Project
48. KNPP Karenni National Progressive Party
49. KNU Karen National Union

50.	LCS	Land Customs Stations
51.	LDC	Least Developed Country
52.	LDP	Liberal Democratic Party
53.	LEP	Look East Policy
54.	LOC	Line of Credit
55.	MEA	Ministry of External Affairs
56.	MEC	Myanmar Economic Cooperation
57.	MGC	Mekong- Ganga Cooperation
58.	MIEC	Mekong- India Economic Corridor
59.	MNDAA	Myanmar National democratic Alliance Army
60.	MLAT	Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty on Criminal Matters
61.	MNC	Multi National Corporations
62.	MNDAA	Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army
63.	MNF	Mizo National Front
64.	MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
65.	MOGE	Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise
66.	MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
67.	MSR	Maritime Silk Route
68.	MW	Megawatt
69.	NCGUB	National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma
70.	NDFB	National Democratic Front of Bodoland
71.	NEC	North East Command
72.	NER	North East Region
73.	NLD	National League for Democracy
74.	NSA	National Security Advisor
75.	NSCN(K)	National Socialist Council of Nagaland - Khaplong

76.	NTS	Non-Traditional Security
77.	PLAN	Peoples Liberation Army Navy
78.	PM	Prime Minister
79.	PMO	Prime Minister's Office
80.	PLAN	People Liberation Army Navy
81.	PRC	Peoples Republic China
82.	PREPAK	People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak
83.	SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
84.	SEATO	Southeast Asia Treaty Organisation
85.	SEZ	Special Economic Zone
86.	SIGINT	Signal Intelligence
87.	SLOC	Sea lines of communication
88.	SLORC	State Law and Order Restoration Council
89.	SNDP	Shan Nationalities Democratic Party
90.	SPDC	State Peace and Development Council
91.	SSA	Shan State Army
92.	TCF	Trillion Cubic Feet
93.	TERI	The Energy and Resources Institute
94.	ULFA	United Liberation Front of Assam
95.	UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee
96.	UNHRC	United Nations Human Rights Council
97.	UNLF	United National Liberation Front
98.	UNSC	United Nations Security Council
99.	USA	United States of America
100.	USDP	Union Solidarity and Development Party
101.	YMBA	Yong Mons Buddhist Association