

India in a Balanced Position in spite of China's CMEC in Myanmar

Oinam Ghanashyam **Khumancha***
Central University of Gujarat, India

Abstract

China under its flagship programme of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is increasing its presence and activities in India's peripheries undermining India's position. Programmes like China-Myanmar Economic Corridor (CMEC) and China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) are developed neglecting India's concern that arose from it. The development of CMEC, sidelining the previous economic corridor (BCIMEC) in which India is also participating, creates more concern for India. India also has some internal issues in its eastern parts that are bordering Myanmar, while China's newly released white paper talks about protecting its economic interest outside its territory, a notion that can be translated to "placing" of its military in India's peripheries. This paper will try to provide reasons why India is still in a well-set position even with the recent development of CMEC between China and Myanmar.

Keywords: *CMEC, BRI, geopolitics, China, India, Myanmar*

1. Introduction

China launched its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in 2013 with 40 billion USD (United States Dollar) as a fund to finance this ambitious project of the so-called ‘new silk route’. This BRI project is considered by many as the largest infrastructure project and compared with the United States (United States of America) Marshall Plan of the early Cold War era (Shen and Chan, 2018). As part of it, China developed many economic corridors like the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), China-Myanmar Economic Corridor (CMEC), China-Nepal Economic Corridor (CNEC), China-Indochina Economic Corridor, China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor, and Central Asia-West Asia Economic Corridor. China on its path with these Economic Corridors is trying to develop a new interconnected Global World Order with China itself as its center. China perhaps hopes the BRI will make China the ‘Middle Kingdom’ again. The United States on its part seems more concerned about its economy and enacts ‘protectionism’ for its international diplomacy with ‘America First’ policy and even asks for protection money from its allies. Three economic corridors of BRI created the most concern to India as all these are in India’s peripheries. The CPEC on West with Pakistan passing Kashmir (Pakistan Occupied Kashmir/POK), CMEC on East with Myanmar (discounting already negotiating economic corridor), and the CNEC on North of India. With these economic corridors, India is economically surrounded by China’s economic corridors which may or may not lead to other complications.

Bangladesh, China, India, and Myanmar meet in Kunming, China, in 1999 which later hail this event as the ‘Kunming Initiative’. A forum was developed after the talks and named as BCIM Forum with the initial of countries’ names in alphabetical order. This forum was negotiating for an economic corridor (BCIM Economic Corridor) for better economic cooperation among them. And this BCIM Economic Corridor remains a

non-starter for various reasons. China wishes the BCIM Economic Corridor to become part of the BRI. India was reluctant to participate in the China-led BRI project. In the later part of 2018, China and Myanmar formulated the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor (CMEC) sidelining the BCIM's BCIMEC (BCIM Economic Corridor) as part of BRI.

BCIM Economic Corridor (BCIMEC) is somehow a non-starter which may be due to CPEC (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor) as part of BRI. India feels that CPEC violates Indian sovereignty due to the fact that CPEC passes through Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (POK) which India feels like an integral part of India. China and Pakistan had offered India to participate in the CPEC and they were ready to rename the corridor to reduce India's concern. India declines the purpose and decides to stay out of BRI and develop its own with Japan and others. Then, China and Pakistan go ahead with CPEC giving less emphasis to India's concern. China wishes BCIMEC as a part of its BRI; India does not wish to join BRI without a solution addressing the CPEC's related issue (Kondapalli, 2017). China seems not eager to wait for India's participation in BRI or resolve India's concern on CPEC. China and Myanmar established their economic corridor not giving even an iota to India and other's concerns.

With the Marshall Plan, the United States was able to develop war-devastated Western Europe and at the same time able to carry out the American policy of Containment (O'Brien, 2014) in Europe. With the execution of the Marshall Plan, United States established itself as a world superpower; North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was formed to counter communist ideology with the "keep the Soviet Union out, the Americans in and the Germans down" slogan in Europe. The Soviet Union was not able to influence beyond the west of East Germany. The Marshall Plan in a way fanned the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. Many in India consider China's BRI

as a new form of Containment Policy towards India like the Marshall Plan of the United States. Indian foreign secretary Subrahmanyam Jaishankar expressed India's concern about BRI on 2nd March 2016 that the "interactive dynamic between strategic interests and connectivity initiatives – a universal proposition – is on particular display in our continent.....connectivity as an exercise in hard-wiring that influences choices..... Connectivity itself has emerged as a theatre of present-day geopolitics" (Jaishankar, 2016).

Many of China's already investing infrastructure projects in Myanmar is not considered as part of CMEC. Yet, those will be still physically and technically interlinked with the new projects of CMEC. For example, the natural gas and oil pipelines from Kyaukphyu to Yunnan (China) are not considered as part of CMEC. The 1.3 billion USD Kyaukphyu Deep Sea Port and Kyaukphyu Special Economic Zone which China is developing in Myanmar are part of BRI, but not part of the CMEC. The Dams, mines, and energy fields previously agreed upon are not included in CMEC. CMEC is a whole new dimension of investment in Myanmar. China President Xi Jinping visited Myanmar in 2020 January and signed 33 agreements on China-Myanmar Economic Corridor (Bhatia, 2020).

2. China-Myanmar Economic Corridor

China-Myanmar Economic Corridor (CMEC) will ensure China-Myanmar collaboration in many sectors including agriculture, basic infrastructure and construction, finance, human resource development, telecommunication, transport, and research and technology (Peng, 2018). China-Myanmar Economic Corridor will attract more than 10 billion USD in Myanmar. China and Myanmar signed the Memorandum of Understanding on CMEC on 9th September 2018 (Hammond, 2018).

CMEC mainly consists of two broad plans: (1) a physical connection of Yunnan and Kyaukphyu through Yangon and Mandalay by roads and high-speed railway; (2) greater economic integration through industrial zones, trade quotas, tax breaks, and even disaster mitigation and public health. The road and high-speed railway will stretch from Kunming (China) to Kyaukphyu (Myanmar) passing through Mandalay and Yangon. These infrastructures will give China access to the Bay of Bengal from Myanmar in a short distance and a faster means of transports.

CMEC project is developing five megaprojects for investors: (1) New Yangon City, (2) Yangon-Ayeyarwaddy Development project (Nga Yoke Kaung) and Patheingyi Industrial City, (3) New Mandalay Resort City, (4) Mandalay's Myotha Industrial Park, and (5) Muse Central Business District (Aung Naing Oo, 2018).

Some private players have also agreed to be a major part of CMEC: (1) 3 billion USD Yangon Sky Train by Myanmar conglomerate Jewellery Luck Group of Companies and China Road and Bridge Corporation; (2) 2.5 billion USD Yangon Central Railway Station led by Singapore's Oxley Holdings with Myanmar's Min Dhama and China's Sino Great Wall; (3) 2.18 billion USD Yangon Outer Circular Expressway by Min Dhama; (4) 1.39 billion USD in two industrial zones by Min Dhama.

As part of CMEC, China is giving diplomatic support to the Myanmar government in its negotiating with its ethnic rebels in the north (Thiha, 2018).

This in a way shows 'China' as the benefactor, problem solver, and peace bringer of Myanmar between the government and ethnic rebels. These developments also indicate and uplift China to a higher position in the region. The role of negotiation facilitator will work as the 'People Relation' program of China with Myanmar's people. All these simply

mean that China will be playing a more crucial role in Myanmar than before. The CMEC also talks about some form of tax integration, customs. These will have implications in various aspects of Myanmar affairs and also raise much concern from India. J. Mohan Malik of the Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies feels the recent economic corridors of China in India's surroundings as Beijing's policy of *encirclement, envelopment, and entanglement* of India. He explains *Encirclement* as the Chinese strategic presence around India, keeping territorial dispute and the threat of two-front war active in ways that make India invest more of its scarce resources in military build-up, depriving developmental goals and resulting in hampering Indian economic growth. *Envelopment*, by developing economic and strategic relations with South Asian countries through China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, China-Myanmar Economic Corridor, China-Nepal Economic Corridor, and Belt and Road Initiative, will bestow China with greater presence and over-all leverage. By *Entanglement* he means exploitation of India's domestic contradictions, political divisions, religious and regional fault lines to keep India engaged with hydra security concerns with the confinement of South Asia (Malik, 2019: 35-36).

3. India's Concern due to CMEC

India and China are both hoping for a multi-polar world just a few years back. India sees itself as the power of the Indian Ocean and regional power in South Asia. China with systematic planning has outpaced India in every parameter of modern development – it may be economic growth in many forms of gross domestic product (GDP), education in all stages, expenditure in research and development (R&D), patent filings, industrial production, manufacture, Human Development Index as well as military growth. Many diplomats, think-tanks, policymakers, and

academics in many countries start to compare China with the United States (the sole superpower of the world after the disintegration of the Soviet Union). China on the other hand increasingly develops its "Two-Ocean" Strategy, a power in the Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean. China in recent times is showing a prominent presence in the Indian Ocean. Moreover, India and China had fought a war in 1962, in which China defeated India and unilaterally practiced a ceasefire in a humiliating manner to India. Still, India and China have unsettled boundary issues in many points and regions. There are also some reports of Chinese support towards the insurgents of Northeast and Maoist groups of India. And the recent development of CMEC as part of BRI, sidelining the BCIM Economic Corridor, does raise concern on the Indian side. China is developing the other two more Economic Corridors, in a way encircling India through them (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and China-Nepal Economic Corridor). India's Act East Policies, Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) and Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC) are all very connected to the neutrality or pro-India orientation of Myanmar in any India-China diplomatic strategic moves and counter moves.

India maintains its wishes for the better economic development of both China and Myanmar and does not oppose initiatives for such development. But its eyes brow were raised when the already placed BCIMEC was discarded and a new one was developed without its being informed. Hu Weijia, a reporter of the Chinese state-owned newsgroup 'Global Times', indicated that China could strengthen its economic cooperation with Myanmar, Bangladesh and Nepal to put pressure on India regarding issues related to the disputed region (*Global Times*, 5th February 2018). Many considered this newsgroup as the mouthpiece of the hardliner faction of the top leadership of the Central Committee of

the Communist Party of China. So, naturally, the development of the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor always created concern. And India's North Eastern Region (NER) which is bordering Myanmar is mired in conflict since the merger with India in the 1940s and 1950s (Sen, 2011). Therefore, India has its reasons to be concerned, wary, and suspicious about Chinese investment in its peripheries.

In history the United States with its Marshall Plan in Europe and other infrastructure development plans in Japan, South Korea, Thailand, etc. was able to efficiently enact the Policy of Containment against the Soviet Union. With such historic effective use of infrastructure development policies as foreign diplomatic tools to counter other rival powers, India needs to be wary and wary it is.

The major concerns of India are:

(a). *PLAN (People's Liberation Army Navy) usages of ports and river navigation in Myanmar:* From the 16th to the 17th century the Kingdom of Kathe (present-day Manipur, an Indian state) had a history of attacking the Ava kingdom (Burmese) 11 times (Royal Historical Commission, 1832: 371). According to local oral history, the Meitei used the river-system of Chindwin and Ayeyarwady (Irrawaddy). The whole Kathe (Meitei) Army included horse cavalry with Arambai, Archers, foot-soldiers with 'spear and sword' and required ration raiding Myanmar riding rafts in the river system. Each cavalry took three horses with them – two horses are primarily used to ride alternately and one to carry rations and spoil-of-war. Japanese used the same river system to fly their aeroplane to avoid detection by Allied forces stationed in 'Palle Airfield' in Kakching district when they bombed Imphal in the Second World War, as old local peoples narrate. After the Second World War, these river systems were not used for transportation between India and

Myanmar as their relations were not vibrant in the Cold War era. Then recently the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Projects reopen the ideas of rivers system transport. India's developed Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Projects can handle 300-ton barges and this Kaladan River is smaller than the Chindwin and Ayeyarwady (Irrawaddy) river. So, Chindwin and Ayeyarwady/Irrawaddy river system can handle a larger vessel or similar vessel with better efficiency.

In the past, China's PLAN visited the seaports of Myanmar; with the Yangon-Ayeyarwaddy Development project (Nga Yoke Kaung) of the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor, China will gain access to the World Bank-revived Irrawaddy river transport system. Small mobile coast-guard ships, naval vessels, or spy vessels can come up very close to the Indian boundary through the river system. These vessels can be equipped with a portable radio system or warning system and can drop an ear on the Indian side of affairs. These may create some concern to the Indian security management who are already dealing with insurgents in that region, and affect the utility of India's deterrent mechanism against any power attacking from the east. China's PLAN has already some sort of an access agreement with Myanmar sea-port facilities as the Chinese are already upgrading Myanmar naval ports. Kyaukphyu deep seaport is also being developed by China as part of BRI.

(b). Chinese intelligence activities in Myanmar: China had installed many radios, radar stations in coastal areas of Myanmar which are presumed operated by the Chinese under shared intelligence between China and Myanmar (Asia Pacific Media Service, July 2000). Moreover, with CMEC, China earns the right to be a negotiator between the Myanmar government and ethnic rebels of Myanmar; many of these rebels operate near the Indian border. This means that Chinese intelligence can freely move to those areas very near to the Indian side

by pretending to be facilitating negotiations. China had already established relations with those Myanmar's rebels and these rebels have a report of good relations with Indian separatist insurgent groups (Lintner, 2015). China could use this position to gather information from these rebels and insurgents. China might also use its position to establish a small observation-cum-communication center in the region citing the need for a fast communication system between them and those Myanmar's rebels and the Myanmar government. Many of the Indian strategic positions and secrets in Northeast India will be exposed in some way to China.

(c). Possible Chinese military based in Myanmar: China had invested a lot of resources in Myanmar infrastructure which are very crucial for the Chinese economy and stability. Myanmar is at present in relative peace, but the haze of its ethnic rebels is always there. In 2010, some of these rebels had attacked the Chinese-built infrastructures, hurting both China and Myanmar (Steinberg and Fan, 2012: 177). The pipelines (Kyaukphyu-Yunnan) start supporting around 10 percent of China's energy needs. China is going to build roads and high-speed railways from Kunming to Kyaukphyu passing through Mandalay and Yangon as part of CMEC. The pipeline, roads, and high-speed railways will be very vital for the Chinese economy and stability. China will need some form of physical protection of this investment which they may attain by outsourcing this task to the ethnic rebels of Myanmar or the Myanmar government. Still, they would like to negotiate with the Myanmar government or ethnic rebels to place some of its men for assurance. If this happens, it will serve a dual purpose: (a) to safeguard its economic interest in Myanmar, and (b) to serve its geopolitical needs in the region. There are already allegations or rumors of the presence of Chinese military personnel in Pakistan on 'China-Pakistan Economic Corridor'

sites (PTI, 2018). According to China's *National defense in the new era* white paper (2019), China's national defence includes the safeguard of China's maritime rights and interests and its overseas interests (State Council Information Office, China, 2019). This means that these ports can be classified as 'China's maritime interest and overseas interests' and placed under Chinese military protection.

Even if there are no Chinese military bases in Myanmar in the future, the newly developing infrastructures of six-lane highways, expressways, and high-speed railways will be very handy to transport the Chinese military to the east of Northeast India if needed. The German's "Blitzkrieg" tactics deployed large-scale users of its highways and railways network of Belgium to transport the military adjacent to battlegrounds (Mierzejewski, 2003).

(d). Possible renewed Chinese support to Northeast insurgents: In 1967, China had given training to and armed the Naga National Council (NNC) in its quest for an independent Nagaland. In 1980, from Beijing, Thuingaleng Muivah with Isak Chishi Swu and S.S. Khaplang formed the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) after the NNC signed agreement with the government of India. In 1966, the Mizo National Front (MNF) received wireless transmitters, medicines, and 400,000 Yuan from China. The Revolutionary Government of Manipur (RGM) was offered weapons by the Chinese but the RGM declined the offer and just took political and military training in 1976. Manipur's PLA (People Liberation Army of Revolutionary People's Front) and UNLF (United National Liberation Front) had bought weapons from Kachin Independent Army (KIA), a group that supports the Chinese (Lintner, 2015: 240). Now, with CMEC the Chinese can freely operate under the pretense of supporting talks between Myanmar and its ethnic insurgents. These could surely translate into more frequent interactions

with the Northeast separatists of India. The temptation of supporting such insurgents as a ploy to tackle India will always be there. China has good working relations with Myanmar. Still, it does not stop them from supporting Myanmar's ethnic rebels. Recently NSCN-IM (Isak-Muivah) of India is found seeking aid from China to face India (*The Week*, 22nd November 2019). These rebels are fighting against the notion of India as a nation-state. They feel that they are not a part of India and wish to attain independence from India and stay like normal neighbours. In 2009 an influential Chinese think-tank online article written by Zhan Lue in Mandarin (*Putonghua*, China's official language) put forward the option of disintegrating the Union of India into 20-30 independent states with help of friendly countries (*Zee News*, 11th August 2009).

(e). *The possibility of Myanmar becoming a client state of China*: In the 1990s, many scholars like Mya Maung, Donald Seekins, Mohan Malik, etc. had declared Myanmar as a client state of China or Chinese satellite or strategic pawn of China or Chinese puppet (Egreteau and Jagan, 2013). Later, together with Myanmar's efforts other countries are willing to support Myanmar to help in removing those tags of China's client state. Countries like India, Japan, Thailand, South Korea, etc. started aiding Myanmar's economy in the mid-90s. These aids give room to Myanmar to maneuver its foreign policy independently. However, again, after the May 2017 Rohingya crisis, China is able to project itself as Myanmar's ally in a time of need (Yhome, 2019b).

Many sectors like agriculture, basic infrastructure and construction, finance, human resource development, telecommunication, transport, and research and technology are included as part of CMEC which is almost included in every aspect of day-to-day life. With such a kind of unbalanced, one-sided integration of two entities, it is natural to gravitate towards the more powerful side, leading to the fear of Myanmar

becoming a satellite state of China in the future. As a satellite state Myanmar will be under pressure to do Chinese bidding in regional affairs (Atmakuri and Izzuddin, 2020). This might cause multiple harms to India's interest with security implications. This will make it hard for India's grand strategy of 'Act East Policy' which is working for better connectivity with ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) countries. Myanmar practically is the physical bridge between India and ASEAN countries.

(f). China's possible containment of India: China does not officially state the containment of India in South Asia (the Indian subcontinent) or the string of pearls. However, some of the official policies of China like China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, China-Nepal Economic Corridor, China-Myanmar Economic Corridor, etc. do indicate a policy of containment toward India. Incorporating all the above-cited reasons China may practically create a containment policy toward India. China needs to give some room to India so that India does not feel cornered in its own country (Mukherjee, 2018). Otherwise, it will be very troublesome for India in exercising its policies and a hurdle to Indian economic growth and development as well as to India's overall progress.

These concerns are not just for India's larger strategic manoeuvre in the geopolitics of the world. Some of these concerns are very vital to the core concept of India as a nation-state.

4. Factors Working for India

It is a reality that China is investing a lot in Myanmar for its benefits as a part of its state capitalism. India for safeguarding its interest in the regions thus formulates many policies and programs. India's Act East

Policy, Mekong Ganga Initiative, BIMSTEC, etc. are slowly and steadily progressing forward. India's effort and other factors are working for India's interests. These factors are as below:

(1). *India is also investing in Myanmar*: India on its part is investing heavily in Myanmar with policies like Act East Policy, BIMSTEC, Mekong Ganga Initiative, etc. And sometimes India invested in collaboration with a like-minded country like Thailand and is looking to work out with Japan in projects inside Myanmar (*Hindustan Times*, 18th September 2020; Jain and Maini, 2015). At present, India is engaging in constructing the Trilateral Highway (Asian Highway 1) from Moreh (India) to Mae Sot (Thailand) passing Myanmar horizontally, Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project (including Sittwe Port), Sittwe Special Economic Zone, Sittwe-Gaya Gas pipeline, Aizawl–Seling–Champhai–Zokhawthar (Mizoram, India)–Rhi–Tiddim–Kalewa (Myanmar), Asian Railway (Delhi, India, to Hanoi, Vietnam, passing Myanmar). India is also developing Myanmar Post and Telecommunications ADSL (Asymmetric digital subscriber line), hydro-electric power projects, and railway transport system. Apart from the above, India is supporting capacity development projects like Industrial Training Centre, Language and Entrepreneurship Development Centre, Centre for Enhancement of IT Skills, erection of disaster-proof rice silos, upgrading Yangon Children's Hospital and Sittwe General Hospital, etc (Lt Gen J R Mukherjee, 2018).

(2). *India has lots of good-will within Myanmar*: Many of the present electoral lawmakers of Myanmar were educated in India. Even Aung San Suu Kyi the present State Counsellor of Myanmar and leader of the ruling party (National League for Democracy) is one of them – she was educated in New Delhi till her graduation from the University of Delhi.

These notions will aid these policymakers of Myanmar in realising what they gain in partnering with India. And many in the present military hierarchy of Myanmar spent their initial lives fighting the Chinese-supported ethnic rebels. Analysing the Myanmar security complexity, India provides military training to the Myanmar Army in the form of joint military exercises like India-Myanmar Bilateral Military Exercise 2017 (IMBAX-2017) and IMBAX 2018-2019 to equip the Myanmar military, including with the skill to participate in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations under the United Nation Flag (*The Times of India*, 18th November 2017; *Business Standard*, 14th January 2019). Indian Navy and Myanmar Navy practice sea warfare in the form of Indian Navy - Myanmar Navy Bilateral Exercise (INMNBE) with Indian Navy ship Sahyadri, Indian Navy ship Kamorta, and Indian Navy submarine Sindhushastra along with Myanmar Navy ship King Sin Phyu Shin and Inlay (Indian Navy, 2019). India is also giving or ceding its sovereignty of territory to Myanmar now and then, from its annexed territory of Manipur (more details in '8' below) in a salami-slicing manner.

(3). *India's cultural ties with Myanmar*: Most of the Myanmar citizens are Buddhist. And India is considered as "Land of origin of Buddhism". The ancient university of Nalanda, Bodh Gaya (where Buddha achieved enlightenment), Sarnath (the place where Buddha started teachings), and Kushinagar (where Buddha reached Nirvana) are holy and sacred places to the Myanmar citizens. Like any devoted religious people, Myanmar's citizens also wish to conduct a pilgrimage to their holy places in India (MEA, 2018). According to Thant Myint-U in his book *Where China meets India*, he wrote that people spent considerable amounts of life savings, just to take on Buddha's pilgrimage in India (Thant Myint-U, 2012). This makes a citizen of Myanmar somewhat emotionally

connected with India. In 2014, India under Prime Minister Narendra Modi was developing a Buddhist Circuit with a 450 lakh Indian Rupee. This Buddhist Circuit of India Government is to develop infrastructure and skills, increase market access and the involvement of communities, and enhance the visitors' experience (*Business Standard*, 2014). India's Buddhist diplomacy is to boost India's diplomatic pool of goodwill and trust with Buddhist-majority countries such as Myanmar (Atmakuri and Izzuddin, 2020). Myanmar is on its path to democracy from a military junta with its troublesome internal issues of separatism, ethnic issues, and others. India is promoting itself as 'Vishwaguru', with ideas like unity in diversity, secularism, a balance of capitalism and socialism, vibrant democracy, etc. (Dhamija, 2017) The Burmese/Myanmar script was developed from Brahmi scripts of India. There are lots of ethnic communities living on both sides. Furthermore, there are also lots of Indian Diaspora living in Myanmar.

(4). *China-Myanmar uneasy relations*: Chinese empire used to attack Burma many times in history. In the Chinese Civil War, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) established by the Communist Party of China crossed the international boundary with Myanmar to hunt down the Kuomintang (KMT) forces of the Republic of China (Yhome, 2019a). Even after the Cold War era, China had supported the communist rebels and later many ethnic rebel groups operating in Myanmar against the Myanmar government. The communist party fights for the change of government in Myanmar, while the ethnic rebel groups fight for independence from Myanmar (Yhome, 2019a). Military-aligned "Government of Myanmar" has many policymakers who rose fighting these Chinese-supported ethnic separatists or insurgents. On the other hand, the question of the debt trap is always ringing to the ears of Myanmar's ruling elite in both the military establishment and National

League for Democracy. Questions of ecological concerns, environmental issues, exploitation of Myanmar's natural resources, human rights or more correctly indigenous people rights, loss of agricultural land, pop up from time to time. Due to the Chinese projects, armed skirmishes break out from time to time between the Myanmar military and the regional ethnic rebels fighting for independence from Myanmar. Like the Kachin Independence Army and Myanmar military fighting over the Myitsone Dam issue, the Myanmar military fights with Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army over the Muse-Lashio-Mandalay railway project (Green, 2019). In a TV interview of Russia's state-own channel Zvezda with Myanmar's Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, he reveals that 'strong forces' are backing the insurgent groups in Myanmar, in a manner indicating China as that strong force, and seeks international aid and cooperation to solve the insurgent issues (*The Federal*, 2nd July 2020). Also, a Myanmar deputy government minister accuses China of interfering with Myanmar internal peace effort by controlling the rebel alliance, the Federal Political Negotiation and Consultative Committee (FPNCC) with the largest and strongest rebel groups of Myanmar as members, after the peace conference of 2020 not happening citing Covid-19 (Kyaw Ye Lynn, 2020). Even with all this economic cooperation with China, Myanmar still has some reservations towards China.

(5). *Myanmar's policy of hedging*: Myanmar policymakers know the importance of China and the Chinese role in its internal and external affairs. China has provided hardwares to fight off the revolutionaries and insurgent groups within the country. China helps Myanmar in international bodies avoiding sanctions and others. China has been helping Myanmar in its infrastructure developments. Still, Myanmar is an independent country that wishes to have its independent foreign

affairs, sovereignty, and others that an independent nation-state should have. It seems that Myanmar has been depending too much on China for many purposes which many in Myanmar feel as “Sinonisation” of Myanmar. Myanmar is a country where nationalism is always very high and this “Sinonisation” is unacceptable to the Myanmar people (Min Zin, 2012). Myanmar looks for an alternative to China in India, Japan, South Korea, Thailand, and others. India seems to be the most suitable for the purpose as India shares borders with it, has good military might which can aid the Myanmar army, a large economy, and good diplomatic relations in international bodies.

(6). *Indian military presence in Andaman and Nicobar Islands*: It is a fact that whatever ship or any other vessel coming to the Myanmar port of Kyaukphyu must sail between the Indian mainland and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands in the West or Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Myanmar coastal strip in the East (strategically unreasonable for such venture). India has five naval bases and one air force base in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. These islands will serve as an unsinkable aircraft carrier of India in any event. These Islands are under Indian sovereignty and India has its right to develop any strategical infrastructure on them to serve its interests.

(7). *India’s military aid to Myanmar*: According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), India is one of the largest military weapon suppliers for Myanmar (Shakeeb Asrar, 2017). India classifies its defence cooperation with Myanmar as a medium for ‘better border management’ (maybe considering Indian Northeast rebels) and ‘capacity building’ exercise (maybe with China in mind) for the Myanmar military. In 2013, India provides offshore patrol vehicles, and trains pilots on Russian-built MI-35 helicopters. India also makes

available four marine patrol aircraft, naval gunboats, a few 105mm light artillery guns, mortars, rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs), rifles, etc. In 2017, India also supplied 'Tal Shyena' torpedoes for 37.9 million USD (Bibhu Prasad Routray, 2019). India also loaned INS Sindhuvir, a Kilo-class submarine, which Commodore Moe Aung, Chief of Staff (Myanmar Navy), was ready to receive (*The Economic Times*, 30th July 2019). India's military aid and supply are becoming handy to the Myanmar Armed Forces in its works relating to Myanmar security. Thus, India is positioning itself as a vital component for Myanmar's overall security.

(8). *India is ceding its sovereignty in Myanmar's favour*: The ceding of sovereignty by India to Myanmar was normally happening in the state of Manipur. Manipur used to be an independent kingdom before 'Dominion of India', later 'Union of India', annexed it in 1949. The Pt. Nehru, then Prime Minister of India, gave up the rights of the Manipur Kingdom over Kobo Valley to Myanmar in 1953. Kobo Valley measures about 7000 sq. miles of fertile land with rich natural resources (Manimohan, 2018). In 2018 again India ceded 3 sq. km to Myanmar in Kwatha Khunou, Manipur (*Firstpost*, 21st August 2018). Repeatedly again, in September 2020, people found out that the government of India was trying to cede a village called Zingshophai Choro in Manipur state to Myanmar (*The Sangai Express*, 6th September 2020). India is giving up its sovereignty in its annexed territory of Manipur to Myanmar. So, may Myanmar support and remain to support India in its quest to counter China in western Southeast Asia?

These steps are completely opposite to the direction and step India has taken with its border with China. With the Chinese, India fights against every inch of presumed incursion with media headlines, parliament session, claims, western allied support, and deployment of

maximum forces. This indicates that the India-China border tussle is not about territory, as the data above show that India does not mind losing territory. If India is fighting to gain territory it will also fight with Myanmar which is a weaker country on all counts but here India is willingly ceding its territory in Myanmar's favour and these territories that are ceded to Myanmar are economically more rewarding than the barren land of Ladakh or Arunachal Pradesh. Even Jawaharlal Nehru, the then Prime Minister of India, reported to the Indian parliament or Lok Sabha House of Common (Lower House) about Aksai Chin of Ladakh on August 28, 1959, that "where not a single blade of grass grows. There is a large area in eastern and north-eastern Ladakh which is practically uninhabited" (Sinha, 2019). Now India is claiming to be fighting for those barren lands in Ladakh, opposing BRI due to CPEC passing Gilgit-Baltistan in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, while giving up its annexed territory in Manipur to Myanmar.

(9). *India trying to work with allied countries in Myanmar and the Indian Ocean region*: India is developing a mechanism to work together with Japan, South Korea, Vietnam, Thailand, and others in many projects inside Myanmar. Oinam Ghanashyam Khumancha, a security studies analyst, had written that "India has no official policy of 'Necklace of Diamonds'. India's Act East Policy, Bilateral relations with 'Indonesia, Singapore, Philippines, Vietnam, Taiwan (ROC), Japan, South Korea, Mongolia, Russia, with Central Asian Countries, Oman, the United States and Seychelles', Multi-lateral relations like Quad, Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS), Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), Asia-Africa Growth Corridor, BIMSTEC, Project Sargarmala, etc. clearly an indication of holistic policy to give the impression of 'Necklace of Diamond' to counter China" (Khumancha, 2020).

(10). *India is willing to work with any form of government:* Tatmadaw (Myanmar military) overthrew the prominent civilian government in a coup d'état on 1st February 2021. With absence of any form of criticism against Tatmadaw, India shows its willingness to work with any form of government in Myanmar. Union Home Ministry also directs provincial governments to bar any Myanmar citizen entering India (ANI, 13th March 2021). India sends its military to parade on Armed Forces Day of Myanmar on 27th March (*India Today*, 30th March 2021). These actions are directly against India's principle of a rules-based international system and democracy which India with its allies cited at the formation of Quad.

5. The Manifestation of These Factors

To verify that the 'factors working for India' are functioning, this paper investigates events that happened in the recent past in Myanmar in favour of India.

(i). *India able to get the Sittwe area to develop:* China initially wants its gas and oil pipeline in Myanmar to start from Sittwe to Kunming. Many scholars of Yunnan University purposed to the government the building of a gas and oil pipeline from Sittwe to Kunming in 2004 (Steinberg and Fan, 2012). Later, China built its pipelines from Kyaukphyu to Kunming, changing its original starting point. And Sittwe is very near to Bangladesh and India. At the same time, India is developing the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project around the Sittwe area and finishing the building of Sittwe Port for Myanmar. India is also developing the Sittwe Special Economic Zone (Lt Gen J R Mukherjee, 2018). The prospect of developing Sittwe by India, when there is already a plan of China to develop, is a great diplomatic achievement for India.

This also shows that Myanmar is taking into consideration India's concerns.

(ii). *Recent Indian military surgical strikes against Indian insurgents in Myanmar:* According to Indian government sources that come up in news, India had conducted a “surgical strike” inside Myanmar against the anti-India insurgent groups of NSCN-K (Khaplang) and Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup (KYKL). The surgical strike in Myanmar took out forty to fifty insurgents using two Dhruv helicopters on June 5, 2015. Such action cannot be taken without prior information or understanding with the Myanmar government. The actualization of such actions only means that India and Myanmar have developed a good working relationship.

(iii). *Recent Myanmar military actions against anti-India Insurgents:* With the coming of 2019, the Myanmar Army stormed the NSCN (Khaplang) and the Arakan Army-occupied territory and hunted for anti-India insurgents in the area. In that process, the headquarter of the NSCN (Khaplang) was taken by the Myanmar Army. Even members of NSCN (Khaplang) were arrested with members of anti-India insurgents and with “arm and ammunition” on a charge of harboring anti-India insurgents (*News18*, 20th February 2019). Ten of the Arakan Army camps were also destroyed in the Myanmar Army operations against anti-India insurgents (*The Economic Times*, 15th March 2019). This operation was known as “Operation Sunrise”. These military actions of Myanmar against anti-India insurgents show the willingness of the Myanmar government to make good relations with India. The Arakan Army in the Rakhine State of Myanmar asked India to pay “taxes” to continue India's flagship connectivity project (Kaladan Multi-Model Project), a crucial part of India's Act East Policy, and recognise them as

the local government there. This Arakan Army also kidnapped five Indian nationals of which one died in captivity (*The Wire*, 11th December 2019). After these, the Myanmar Army is hunting down the Arakan Army in Rakhine State and the Indian Army is guarding the Indian side to block illegal crossing.

(iv). *Operation Sunrise Two*: The Indian Army, Armed Forces of India, and Myanmar Army jointly conducted a three-week-long military operation “Operation Sunrise Two” from 16th May 2019 on the Myanmar side of the Indo-Myanmar border destroying camps of the Kamtapur Liberation Organisation (KLO), NSCN (K), United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA-I), and National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) (*Times Now*, 16th June 2020). Operation Sunrise Three is also in the plan which is expected to be conducted in the near future.

(v). *Cancellation of project and renegotiations of projects*: In 2011, Naypyidaw canceled the crown project of China, which is designated as Myitsone Dam, a hydroelectric dam of 3.6 billion USD under protest from various sections. This dam is supposed to be the largest dam in Myanmar and the fifteenth largest hydroelectric power station in the world. A joint venture between China Power Investment Corporation (CPIC), the Burmese government’s Ministry of Electric Power, and the Asia World Company was supposed to own this project. Later, WikiLeaks declassified that the United States Embassy in Yangon funded some of the activist groups against the projected Dam (*The Guardian*, 30th September 2011). When a China International Trust and Investment Corporation (CITIC)-led consortium won the tender to build the Kyaukpyu Deep Sea Port in December 2015, it was agreed that the CITIC-led group will own eighty-five percent stakes of the project and the rest will be shared between the Myanmar government and the other

forty-two domestic companies. The Kyaukphyu Deep Sea Port was originally a 7.2 billion USD project with a 10-berth port (CSIS). Now the Kyaukphyu Deep Sea Port project is reduced to an only 1.3 billion USD project with a huge increase in Myanmar government share, i.e. to 30 percent from just 15 percent, after the warning by Deputy Minister of Planning and Finance U Set Aung of Myanmar as a ‘debt trap’. China had purposed thirty-eight megaprojects under the CMEC, but the Myanmar government accepted only nine till now. Myanmar also declares that it will implement projects that are beneficial to Myanmar (*The Economic Times*, 22nd August 2020; Kyaw Ye Lynn, 2020). Myanmar is also holding the Myitkyina Economic Development Zone (MEDZ) in Kachin state against the will and interest of the Chinese establishment. Myanmar also decided to invite other international groups in addition to Chinese groups in the Chinese-funded megaproject called Yangon City Project, a part of CMEC (*The Economic Times*, 5th August 2020; Kyaw Ye Lynn, 2020). China Communications Construction Co. Ltd. (CCCC) purposed the New Yangon City (Development) project to the Myanmar government as a part of the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor (CMEC) of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in 2018. CCCC signed a deal with New Yangon Development Company (NYDC), a government enterprise, in the same year for US\$1.5 billion for the first phase which was later reduced to US\$800 million by Myanmar’s government. The project was placed on the “Swiss challenge” model and Myanmar’s government put a German consulting firm “Roland Berger” as overseer (*Belt & Road News*, 17th October 2020). Many local Yangon areas are protesting the New Yangon City citing the humongous size of the project and environmental concerns that arose due to it (*The Week*, 19th August 2020). Myanmar also hired a Swiss company to scrutinise the work of a Chinese company working in the Chinese-funded Muse-Mandalay Electric Railways (*ibid.*).

(vi). *Ahlon International Port Terminal 2 (AIPT-2), no debt trap policy:* On 26th April 2019, Adani Myanmar, a subsidiary company of India's Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Limited (APSEZ), got the right to build and operate AIPT-2. The Adani Myanmar will invest 290 million USD for the terminal, Adani Myanmar christened the terminal as Adani Yangon International Terminal (AYIT), Adani Myanmar got the right to build the terminal, also got the AYIT to operate it for fifty years and transfer it to the Myanmar military's Myanmar Economic Corporation (*The Loadstar*, 6th June 2019; *Port Technology*, 9th May 2019). When China built and transferred, later acquired operation of Hambantota Port or Magampura Mahinda Rajapaksa Port in Sri Lanka for 99 years, the international community – Japan, United States as well India – decries it as a fault and criticises it as the 'debt trap policy' of China, which China is going to repeat and adopt across the globe with BRI partner countries. However, the international community does not take Indian actions as the 'debt trap policy' of India. While Myanmar is afraid of debt trap by China in the whole Kyaukphyu Deep Sea Port, Myanmar seems not to mind or count a similar policy of India as a debt trap.

(vii). *Tatmadaw taking harsh action against rebels:* Tatmadaw is using fighter jets and helicopters to attack Kachin Independent Army and Karen National Union (*Malay Mail*, 28th March 2021; *AP News*, 1st April 2021) as part of the actions to suppress the pro-democracy movement in Myanmar. These rebels have for a very long time been helping anti-India separatists with training and supplying arms. The current military government of Myanmar is in a way helping India to solve its problem.

6. Conclusion

China has already been investing a lot in Myanmar as a part of BRI and others. China is building special economic zones, highways, ports, pipelines, railways lines, hydro-power stations, mines, etc. even before CMEC. And the recent surprising addition of CMEC to the already over-investment in Myanmar by China, neglecting the multi-national BCIM Economic Corridor, is a concern to a country like India.

Any country will be concerned with the investment of 10 billion USD to its neighbouring countries by other countries with additional royalties. China's new CMEC is no doubt a concern of India from many angles. CMEC ensures an additional investment of 10 billion USD to Myanmar and with royalties of the role of negotiator between rebels and the Myanmar government. It gives a lot of influence to China; the right to navigate in the river system of Myanmar is also a concern of India reading historical warfare. Integrating various components of economy and agriculture between China and Myanmar as a part of CMEC put India a few steps back.

The government of India with its machinery is working hard to address these concerns of India arising in Myanmar due to BRI and CMEC. Mandira Nayar of *The Week* wrote that Myanmar is the only country in the region that has resisted the magnetism of the Chinese money gambit. The author also talks about the need for India's diplomatic offensive charm with its neighbours, especially with Myanmar to prevent Myanmar from becoming another Nepal (*The Week*, 19th August 2020). India does not have the veto power in the United Nations Security Council like China and does not boast the economic prowess of China. Still, factors are working for India in spite of the lack of veto power and economic super-power. These factors are manifest time upon time, working in favour of India like India being able to work in the Sittwe area for Sittwe port and Sittwe Special Economic Zone

which was Chinese first choice, solo Indian military operations against Northeast insurgents in Myanmar, joint military operation with Myanmar Army against Northeast insurgents in Myanmar, cancellations of Chinese projects in Myanmar by the Myanmar government, Adani Yangon International Terminal of 260 million USD with the right to operate for 50 years being not counted as a debt trap and allowed, etc.

It is clearly shown that India is in a well-balanced position in Myanmar in spite of all the Chinese investment and influence. Even with evidence and facts in Myanmar of India's favourable position, India still needs strategies to address unseen concerns that will arise due to BRI and mainly after this CMEC in long run. India opting to walk out of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) is a huge blow to Myanmar as well as to other Indian-friendly countries in the ASEAN+ group.

The recent development of the military coup in Myanmar brings an interesting twist to the already complicated geopolitics of the region. Even though the leaders of the military coup have a bit more favourable opinion on India and the general public have a negative opinion on China, India somehow finds itself in a tough position as India is claiming itself as a leader of 'democracy and rules-based system' in the Indo-Pacific region together with its Quad partners. Many pro-democracy and human-rights groups have started asking questions as many Indian companies are working with the Myanmar military and India's military is participating in Myanmar's national military parade. China as a Communist Party-ruled country and having an official stand of non-interference in other countries' domestic affairs is placing itself on safe moral ground. Till 31st March 2021, the Indian government is not expressing an opinion on the current chaos of Myanmar but orders the regional/provincial government of Northeast India not to take any refugees or help any Myanmar citizens who seek shelter in India.

Nevertheless, for a better understanding of the result of this military coup-led crisis, one has to wait for further development.

Note

- * Oinam Ghanashyam Khumancha is a Ph.D. candidate at the Centre for Security Studies. He has completed his M. Phil. at the Centre for Security Studies, the Central University of Gujarat, India, with a study area on “Sino-U.S. Relations in the South China Sea: A Case study of Philippines (2009-2016)”. He has written “Indo-Sino relation should be a strategic partner”, a book chapter in *Internal changes in South Asia: Challenges and opportunities* edited by Bibhuti Bhusan Biswas, which is his most cited work. He has contributed chapters in three different edited books by different publishing houses so far and is a regular contributor to newspapers. <Email: Oinam.ghanashyam@cug.ac.in>

References

- AP News* (1st April 2021). Junta’s foes woo ethnic allies with new Myanmar constitution. <<https://apnews.com/article/thailand-yangon-myanmar-587c55a3227917ccf34ea9052bea41ee>>
- Asia Pacific Media Service (Hong Kong) (July 2000). China’s Ambitions in Myanmar. <http://www.asiapacificms.com/articles/myanmar_influence/>
- Asian News International (ANI) (India) (13th March 2021). Union Home Ministry writes to Mizoram, Nagaland, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh to check illegal influx from Myanmar. <<https://www.aninews.in/news/national/general-news/union-home-ministry-writes-to-mizoram-nagaland-manipur-arunachal-pradesh-to-check-illegal-influx-from-myanmar20210313000928/>>
- Atmakuri, Archana and Mustafa Izzuddin (2020). Why Myanmar should matter to India. *The Diplomat* (United States of America), 2nd January 2020

(Opinion). <<https://thedi diplomat.com/2020/01/why-myanmar-should-matter-to-india/>>

Aung Naing Oo (2018). Myanmar to showcase investment projects, reforms in Hong Kong's Belt and Road Forum. *The Myanmar Times*, 26th June 2018

(Opinion). <<https://www.mmtimes.com/news/myanmar-showcase-investment-projects-reforms-hong-kongs-belt-and-road-forum.html>>

Belt & Road News (17th October 2020). The New Yangon City project gets closer to implementation. <<https://www.beltandroad.news/2020/10/17/the-new-yangon-city-project-gets-closer-to-implementation/>>

(Accessed November 15, 2020).

Bhatia, Rajiv (2020). Myanmar's growing dependence on China. *The Hindu* (India), 23rd January 2020 (Opinion). <<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/myanmars-growing-dependence-on-china/article30627576.ece>>

Bibhu Prasad Routray (2019). Analysis: India's defence diplomacy with Myanmar: State of play. *Mantraya*, 30th January 2019. <<https://mantraya.org/analysis-indias-defence-diplomacy-with-myanmar-state-of-play/>>

Business Standard (India) (17th July 2014). Project to develop Buddhist circuit launched. <https://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/project-to-develop-buddhist-circuit-launched-114071701026_1.html>

Business Standard (India) (14th January 2019). India-Myanmar begin army exercise for UN peacekeeping. <https://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ians/india-myanmar-begin-army-exercise-for-un-peacekeeping-119011400755_1.html>

CSIS, *Reconnecting Asia*. Kyaukpyu Deep Sea Port (Construction). <<https://reconnectingasia.csis.org/database/projects/kyaukpyu-deep-sea-port/3bcb9243-cbba-4705-aff6-2e62f52a6c06/>> (Accessed September 21, 2020).

Dhamija, Bhanu (2017). How to Be Vishwa Guru: India must stop squandering its strengths and help solve today's global problems. *The Times of India* blog, 24th November 2017. <<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/toi-edit-page/how-to-be-vishwa-guru-india-must-stop-squandering-its->

strengths-and-help-solve-todays-global-problems/>

Egreteau, Renaud and Larry Jagan (2013). *Soldiers and diplomacy in Burma: Understanding the foreign relations of the Burmese praetorian state*. Singapore: National University of Singapore Press.

Firstpost (India) (21st August 2018). Kwatha Khunou village in Manipur feels betrayed as India cedes vast swathes of land to Myanmar in shoddy border survey. <https://www.firstpost.com/india/kwatha-khunou-village-in-manipur-feels-betrayed-as-india-cedes-vast-swathes-of-land-to-myanmar-in-shoddy-border-survey-5009531.html>

Green, David (2019). Renewed conflict in Myanmar slows China's Belt and Road projects. *Nikkei Asian Review* (Japan), 6th October 2019 (Opinion). <https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/Belt-and-Road/Renewed-conflict-in-Myanmar-slows-China-s-Belt-and-Road-projects>

Hammond, Clare (2018). The grand plan for the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor. *Frontier Myanmar* (blog), 26th September 2018. (Opinion). <https://www.frontiermyanmar.net/en/the-grand-plan-for-the-china-myanmar-economic-corridor/>

Hindustan Times (New Delhi) (18th September 2020). India, Japan looking at working together in Bangladesh and Myanmar: Jaishankar. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/india-japan-looking-at-working-together-in-bangladesh-and-myanmar-jaishankar/story-oMBX03xb696RNvZDtsoXiP.html>

Global Times (China). (5th February 2018). China can respond if India breaks status quo in disputed border area. <https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1088180.shtml>

India Today (30th March 2021). India attends military parade in Myanmar 2 months after coup. Why it's significant. <https://www.indiatoday.in/news-analysis/story/india-attends-military-parade-myanmar-months-after-coup-why-significant-1785075-2021-03-30>

- Indian Navy (26th February 2019). Indian Navy – Myanmar Navy (MN) bilateral exercise. <<https://www.indiannavy.nic.in/content/indian-navy-%E2%80%93-myanmar-navy-mn-bilateral-exercise>>
- Jain, Purnendra and Tridivesh Singh Maini (2015). India-Japan 'soft power' cooperation in Myanmar. *The Diplomat* (United States of America), 7th April 2015 (Opinion). <<https://thediplomat.com/2015/04/india-japan-soft-power-cooperation-in-myanmar/>>
- Jaishankar, Subrahmanyam (2nd March 2015). Speech by Foreign Secretary at Raisina Dialogue in New Delhi. <https://mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/26433/Speech_by_Foreign_Secretary_at_Raisina_Dialogue_in_New_Delhi_March_2_2015>
- Khumancha, Oinam Ghanashyam (2020). India's perception of "String of Pearl" and its implication (pp.189-221). In: Subhash Singh (ed.), *India's national security: Structure, strategy and contemporary challenges*. Delhi: National Book Centre.
- Kondapalli, Srikanth (2017). Why India is not part of the Belt and Road Initiative summit. *The Indian Express*, 15th May 2017. (Opinion). <<https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/why-india-is-not-part-of-the-belt-and-road-initiative-summit-4656150/>>
- Kyaw Ye Lynn (2020). Myanmar wary of China's Belt and Road investments. *Anadolu Agency*, 28th August 2020 (Opinion). <<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/myanmar-wary-of-chinas-belt-and-road-investments/1950686>>
- Lintner, Bertil (2015). *Great Game East: India, China, and the struggle for Asia's most volatile frontier*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Lt Gen J R Mukherjee (2018). India's infrastructure development projects in Myanmar: Game changer for the region (Part 2 of 3). *Science, Technology and Security Forum* (India), 13th July 2018 (Opinion). <<http://stsfor.org/content/indias-infrastructure-development-projects-myanmar-game-changer-region-part-2-3>>

- Malay Mail* (28th March 2021). Myanmar rebels say hit by army air strikes. <<https://www.malaymail.com/news/world/2021/03/28/myanmar-rebels-say-hit-by-army-air-strikes/1961669>>
- Malik, J. Mohan (2019). Chinese perspectives on India's rise (pp. 21-42). In: Jagannath P. Panda (ed.), *India and China in Asia: Between equilibrium and equations*. Abingdon and New York: Routledge.
- Manimohan, Waikhom (2018). Kabo Valley: A brief history. *E-Pao* (Manipur, India), 11th May 2018. <http://e-pao.net/epSubPageExtractor.asp?src=manipur.History_of_Manipur.Kabo_Valley_A_brief_history_By_Waikhom_Manimohan>
- Mierzejewski, Alfred C. (2003). *The most valuable asset of the Reich: A history of the German National Railway, Volume 2, 1933-1945*. Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press.
- Min Zin (2012). Burmese attitude toward Chinese: Portrayal of the Chinese in contemporary cultural and media works. *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, Vol 31, Issue 1, 2012, pp. 115-131. <<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/186810341203100107>>
- Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Government of India (2018). India-Myanmar bilateral relations. 31st December 2018. <https://mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/India_Myanmar_Bilateral_Brief_Website_jan_2019.pdf>
- Mukherjee, Tuneer (2018). China's maritime quest in the Indian Ocean: New Delhi's options. *ORF Online*, 21st April 2018 (Opinion), Observer Research Foundation (New Delhi). <<https://www.orfonline.org/research/china-maritime-quest-in-the-indian-ocean-new-delhi-options/>>
- News18* (20th February 2019). Myanmar army continues crackdown on Northeast insurgents operating from its soil. <<https://www.news18.com/news/india/myanmar-army-continues-crackdown-on-northeast-insurgents-operating-from-its-soil-2042669.html>>

- O'Brien, Sam (2014). Questioning the Marshall Plan in the buildup to the Cold War. *Inquiry Journal*, Spring 2014, Durham and Manchester: The University of New Hampshire. <<https://www.unh.edu/inquiryjournal/spring-2014/questioning-marshall-plan-buildup-cold-war>>
- Peng Nian (2018). Can China-Myanmar Economic Corridor overcome hurdles to progress. *Global Times* (China), 18th July 2018 (Opinion). <<https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1111321.shtml>>
- Port Technology (9th May 2019). Adani gets green light for new Asia terminal. <https://www.porttechnology.org/news/adani_gets_green_light_for_new_asia_terminal/>
- Royal Historical Commission (1832). *Hmannan Yazawin*, Vol. 3. Mandalay: Kingdom of Burma.
- Sen, Arijit (2011). Marginal on the map: Hidden wars and hidden media in northeast India. *Journalist Fellows' Papers*. Oxford: Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, University of Oxford. <*Marginal on the Map: Hidden Wars and Hidden Media in Northeast India | Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism (ox.ac.uk)*>
- Shakeeb Asrar (2017). Who is selling weapons to Myanmar? *Al Jazeera*, 16th September 2017. <<https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/interactive/2017/09/selling-myanmar-military-weapons-170914151902162.html>>
- Shen, Simon and Wilson Chan (2018). A comparative study of the Belt and Road Initiative and the Marshall Plan. *Palgrave Communications*, 4, Article number: 32 (2018). DOI: 10.1057/s41599-018-0077-9 <<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41599-018-0077-9>>
- Sinha, Rakesh (2019). History Headline: Aksai Chin, from Nehru to Shah. *The Indian Express*, 18th August 2019 (opinion/columns). <<https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/aksai-chin-from-nehru-to-amit-shah-china-karakoram-great-game-5913508/>>
- State Council Information Office, China (July 2019). China's National defense in the new era. (White Paper) <<http://english.www.gov.cn/archive/whitepaper>>

per/201907/24/content_WS5d3941ddc6d08408f502283d.html>

Steinberg, David and Hongwei Fan (2012). *Modern China-Myanmar relations: Dilemmas of mutual dependence*. Copenhagen: NIAS Press.

Thant Myint-U (2012). *Where China meets India: Burma and the new crossroads of Asia*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

The Economic Times (India) (12th July 2018). Chinese army troops spotted along line of control in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. <<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/chinese-army-troops-spotted-along-line-of-control-in-pakistan-occupied-kashmir/articleshow/51380320.cms>>

The Economics Times (15th March 2019). Indian army: India tightens vigil along Myanmar border after coordinated operations against insurgent groups. <<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/india-tightens-vigil-along-myanmar-border-after-coordinated-operations-against-insurgent-groups/articleshow/68430714.cms?from=mdr>>

The Economic Times (30th July 2019). Taking It to next level, India readies submarine for Myanmar. <<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/taking-it-to-next-level-india-readies-submarine-for-myanmar/articleshow/70442448.cms>>

The Economic Times (5th August 2020). Myanmar continues pushback against BRI: Chinese eco development zone faces turbulence. <<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/world-news/myanmar-continues-pushback-against-bri-chinese-eco-development-zone-faces-turbulence/articleshow/77364893.cms?from=mdr>>

The Economic Times (22nd August 2020). Myanmar's pushback against China-funded economic corridor inspired by debt trap in S Asian states. <<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/world-news/myanmars-pushback-against-china-funded-economic-corridor-inspired-by-debt-trap-in-s-asian-states/articleshow/77688207.cms>>

The Federal (India) (2nd July 2020). Myanmar seeks international help against 'China-backed' rebel groups. <<https://thefederal.com/international/myanmar>>

ar-seeks-international-help-against-china-backed-rebel-groups/>

The Guardian (United Kingdom) (30th September 2011). WikiLeaks Cables: Americans funded groups that stalled Burma dam project. <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/sep/30/us-embassy-cables-burma-myitsone-dam>>

The Sangai Express (Manipur, India) (6th September 2020). TNL against gifting Z Choro village to Myanmar in exchange of land elsewhere. <<https://www.thesangaiexpress.com/Encyc/2020/9/6/TNL-against-gifting-Z-Choro-village-to-Myanmar-in-exchange-of-land-elsewhere.html>>

The Times of India (18th November 2017). India-Myanmar joint military exercise to begin on Nov 20 in Meghalaya. <<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/india-myanmar-joint-military-exercise-to-begin-on-nov-20-in-meghalaya/articleshow/61703643.cms>>

The Week (India) (22nd November 2019). NSCN(IM) seeks support from China as India hardens stand on Naga deal. <<https://www.theweek.in/news/india/2019/11/22/ns-cn-im-seeks-support-from-china-as-india-hardens-stand-on-naga-deal.html>>

The Week (19th August 2020). India tries to woo Myanmar amid tussle with China. <<https://www.theweek.in/news/india/2020/08/19/india-tries-to-woo-myanmar-amid-tussle-with-china.html>>

The Wire (India) (11th December 2019). Ethnic armed group in Rakhine wants India to pay 'taxes' for Kaladan project. <<https://thewire.in/south-asia/ethnic-armed-group-in-rakhine-wants-india-to-pay-taxes-for-kaladan-project>>

Thiha, Amara (2018). Myanmar Speeds up Progress on China's Belt and Road. *The Diplomat* (United States of America), 8th December 2018 (Opinion). <<https://thediplomat.com/2018/12/myanmar-speeds-up-progress-on-chinas-belt-and-road/>>

Times Now (India) (16th June 2020). Operation Sunrise: In a joint operation with Myanmar, Indian Army targets NE insurgents; 72 militants nabbed.

<https://www.timesnownews.com/india/article/operation-sunrise-in-a-joint-operation-with-myanmar-indian-army-targets-ne-insurgents-72-militants-nabbed/437753>

The Loadstar (6th June 2019). Indian terminal operator Adani Ports breaks into Myanmar box business with Yangon investment. <https://theloadstar.com/indian-terminal-operator-adani-ports-breaks-into-myanmar-box-business-with-yangon-investment/>

Yhome, K. (2019a). "Understanding China's Response to Ethnic Conflicts in Myanmar. *ORF Occasional Paper*, April 2019, Observer Research Foundation (New Delhi). <https://www.orfonline.org/research/understanding-chinas-response-to-ethnic-conflicts-in-myanmar-49759/>

Yhome, K. (2019b). Emerging Dynamics of the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor. *ORF Online*, 15th May 2019 (The China Chronicles), Observer Research Foundation (New Delhi). <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/emerging-dynamics-of-the-china-myanmar-economic-corridor-50847/>

Zee News (India) (11th August 2009). China should break India into 20-30 states. https://zeenews.india.com/news/nation/china-should-break-india-into-20-30-states_554432.html