



## Asia-Africa Growth Corridor: A positive initiative

October 28, 2017, 8:22 PM IST

SD Pradhan in ChanakyaCode | Economy, India, World | TOI

The real significance of the joint venture of India and Japan for the creation of a growth corridor from Asia to Africa gets obscured as it is seen as a counter move to the Chinese Belt & Road Initiative. An analysis of the components of the Asia-Africa Growth Corridor reflects that it is totally different from the Chinese project.

The Indian PM on 25th May 2017 during a meeting with African Development Bank in Gandhinagar, announced the launch of the Asia -Africa Growth Corridor in partnership with Japan.

However, the idea of the Asia Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC) had emerged in the joint declaration issued by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in November 2016. This also reflects the growing value of Africa in both economic and strategic terms for India and Japan.

Asia and Africa have several similarities in terms of economic growth and aspirations of people. There are ongoing efforts for faster economic growth and development and population in both the continents aspire for better future. There have been a number of multilateral efforts between the nations of the two continents to achieve the above objectives.

The two continents compliment each other in several ways. While Asia is a robust economy and needs markets and raw material, Africa is on the growth path and provides with markets as also raw material. This provides a significant opportunity to both the continents to establish strong partnership for common economic development. This is the main objective of the Asia-Africa Growth Corridor.

There are a few important dimensions of this initiative that make it a distinct effort. First, the AAGC would be raised on the four pillars of development and cooperation projects, quality infrastructure and institutional connectivity, enhancing capacities and skills, and people-to-people partnership.

The Asia Africa Growth Corridor envisages a people-centric sustainable growth strategy. The centrality of people-to-people partnership will be the unique feature.

Second, the process involves detailed consultations across Asia and Africa, engaging various stakeholders- governments, firms, think tanks and civil society, to work out its structure.

Third, the strengths of AAGC will be aligned with the development priorities of different countries and sub-regions of Asia and Africa, taking advantage of simultaneous homogeneity and heterogeneity among them. This would be undertaken to improve growth and interconnectedness between and within Asia and Africa for realizing a free and open Indo-Pacific region – a concept that India and Japan are jointly promoting.

Fourth, it would give priority to development projects in health and pharmaceuticals, agriculture and agro-processing, disaster management and skill enhancement.

Fifth, the guiding principle will be to ensure sustainability through respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and international law as well as boosting regional economic connectivity through the use of responsible debt financing practices.

In AAGC, there is no intent to convert the economic power into the political power and privileges.

Both India and Japan had been planning to strengthen relations with the African continent for quite some time. India has long historical linkages with African countries.

In the current situation, Africa is invaluable for India both economically and geopolitically. Besides, this being a nation that is rich in mineral resources, it can help in diversifying India's energy sources. It can also help in resolving the food security challenges and providing space for Indian investments. Geopolitically, African countries can help India in reforming the UN.

It also provides India with a space to display its soft and hard power. India can and is assisting African countries in capacity building. Africa's geostrategic importance is also significant for India. The threats of radicalism, piracy and organised crimes originate from this region and therefore the assistance of the African countries can be invaluable.

India's economic engagement with African countries has increased in the last 15 years with a large number of public and private sector companies from India investing in Africa. India is the second largest investor in Africa after China.

However, the gap is substantial and India's investment is through Mauritius. Trade has seen a five-fold increase from \$11.9 billion in 2005-2006 to \$56.7 billion in 2015-16. In trade too, India ranks second after China and again there is a substantial gap at present. It is worth mentioning that in 2000, both India and China were almost at par in terms of total value of trade with Africa.

India announced major steps to strengthen relations with African countries at the India Africa Forum Summit in 2015-known as the "Delhi Declaration". India declared its decision to raise the level of economic engagement with the African nations and help the latter in capacity building. It brought out a blueprint for enhanced cooperation in developing blue/ocean economy.

Blue economy aims at sustainable development of marine resources, which will drive growth and prosperity of India, Africa and other littoral states blessed with long coastlines. Cooperation in the fields of Peace and Security including conflict prevention, resolution, management and peace building through exchange of expertise and training programmes were also stressed.

Similarly, Japan also has a long standing relationship with African countries. The most important Japanese initiative in Africa is the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), which was set up in 1993 to promote Africa's development and security through multilateral cooperation.

To some extent, TICAD refocused the world's attention on Africa. It was launched at a time when, following the end of the Cold War, Western donors had reduced their economic assistance to Africa and did not consider the region to be strategically important.

It is important to note that this forum meets every five years in partnership with the United Nations Office of Special Adviser on Africa, the United Nation Development Programme, the World Bank and the African Union Commission.

At the last TICAD summit, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe pledged \$30 billion in the form of public and private sector investments in Africa.

In view of the above, it would be wrong to conclude that India and Japan have formulated the AAGC to counter the Chinese move. Both India and Japan have interest in developing linkages with Africa.

India and Japan institutionalised a dialogue on Africa in 2010. Since then, they have been exploring the possibilities of cooperation in Africa's socio- economic development. However, it was only during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Japan in November 2016 that the idea of the two countries promoting a growth corridor between Asia and Africa was crystallised.

A comparison between the two projects- India-Japan AAGC and the Chinese One Road One Belt (BRI) reflects several differences.

First, while the Chinese project is centrally designed, the AAGC is based on consultations with all concerned and their approval.

Second, the Chinese project is designed to serve its interests, while AAGC is for common benefit of all in the region.

Third, while the Chinese projects are to generate employment for the Chinese companies, the AAGC is to focus on generating employment for local population.

Fourth, while BRI does not bother about the sovereignty of nations from where it passes through, the AAGC does pay attention to ensure that sovereignty of nation is respected.

Fifth, While BRI is Eurasia focussed, the AAGC is focussing on connectivity between Asia and Africa.

Sixth, while the Chinese BRI envisages grant of loans at exorbitant rates, the AAGC proposes to follow the best international debt practices. The experience so far shows that the Chinese aims at making the project unsustainable and then demand political concessions for financial assistance.

In essence, the AAGC is a positive initiative and would be to the advantage of both Asian and African countries. Its real worth would be known after sometime. The nations concerned should give it a greater push to achieve its objectives within a reasonable timeframe.

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Ensuring national security transcends strategic, military, diplomatic, economic, social and technological factors. The internal security situation remains grim with insurgencies, terrorism and Maoists acquiring dangerous proportions. The external security environment too reflects growing threats. Chanakya was a great security thinker of ancient India, who provided pragmatic solutions to protect the State. These concepts are extremely relevant in today's security environment. Like Chanakya's thinking, this blog covers all the national security aspects - not only politico-military but also non-military dimensions that contribute to the strengthening of national power.

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## The significance of the 14th India-EU Summit

October 10, 2017, 9:25 PM IST

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The 14th India-EU Summit on the 6th October reflects growing convergence between the two on regional and international issues. This year India and European Union are celebrating 55 years of diplomatic relations. European Union comprising 28

countries is India's largest trade partner accounting for more than 100 bn Euros in a balanced trade relations. India receives about 24% of FDI from EU. The EU's voice in International Community is on the rise. It has played a significant role in talks with Iran and in West Asia. Its members usually coordinate their position in accordance with the approach of EU.

President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker visited India for the 14th India-EU Summit and in the Joint Statement a number of significant issues were mentioned which indicated India and EU have common position on them. Significantly he stressed that India and EU are natural partners. President of the European Council Donald Tusk perceives that EU's objective is to have a strong strategic partnership with India by enhancing cooperation in economic field, on counter- terrorism and climate change.

An analysis of 53 paragraphs of the Joint Statement suggests India's growing engagement with EU. Important aspects deserve attention. First, this time on terrorism there were specific mention of "globally proscribed terrorists and terror entities, including Hafeez Sayeed, Zakiur Rehman Lakhvi, Dawood Ibrahim, LeT, JeM, Hizbul Mujahideen" etc. It was also stated that "responsible states should take adequate measures to ensure that their territory is not used for terrorist activities". This must have made Pakistan uncomfortable.

Second, the two have a common position on China's "One Belt and One Road". It stated that the connectivity issues must be based on "universally recognised international norms, good governance, rule of law, openness, transparency and equality and must follow principles of financial responsibility, accountable debt financing practices, balanced ecological and environmental protection, preservation standards and social sustainability". The indirect attack on the Chinese centrally designed project without respect to international norms was quite palpable.

Third, keeping in mind the Chinese aggressive activities in the South China Sea, it underlined the "importance of freedom of navigation, overflight and peaceful resolution of disputes, in accordance with the universally recognised principals of International Law, notably the United Nations Convention on the Laws of the Seas (UNCLOS) 1982."

Fourth, on Afghanistan EU appreciated India's role in "extending development assistance including for building social and economic infrastructure, governance institutions and human resource development and capacity building". This too is a rebuff to Pakistan which does not want India to have any role there.

Fifth, on Iran it re-affirmed their support to the Iranian nuclear deal as a "crucial contribution to the non-proliferation framework and international peace, stability and security".

Sixth, on the North Korean nuclear tests it indirectly attacked China and Pakistan for providing support. It stressed the responsibility of those who support the North Korean nuclear and missile programmes.

Though there had not been any significant development on trade, the above significant understanding on several issues reflect that the partnership goes beyond trade to strategic issues. The significance of this summit lies in the positive developments.

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## Is India's effort towards marginalisation of 'Terroristan' yielding results?

September 24, 2017, 4:10 PM IST

SD Pradhan in ChanakyaCode | India, World | TOI

The war of words between India and Pakistan at the UN is not unusual. Every year this happens. Pakistan, as usual, rakes up the Kashmir issue projecting the support of OIC and a few other states to boast its 'International support'. However, this year, the support from its all-weather friend China was different, to the discomfort of Pakistan. This comes soon after US condemning Pakistan for its policy of supporting terrorism in the region, suggesting growing isolation of Pakistan.

Notwithstanding an element of unpredictability of Trump, he minced no words in criticising the Pak duplicity in Afghanistan.

While outlining his South Asia Policy on 22nd August 2017, Trump slammed Pakistan for its continued support to terrorist groups and claiming to be fighting against them. He warned Islamabad of consequences if it continued to do so.

He further stated, "We can no longer be silent about Pakistan's safe havens for terrorist organisations, the Taliban, and other groups that pose a threat to the region and beyond."

The second part of Trump's policy was highly unpalatable to Pakistan. Trump, in a prime-time televised address to the nation, laid out the second dimension of his South Asia policy saying a "critical part" of it was to further develop US' strategic partnership with India. The US President's seeking an enhanced role for New Delhi, especially in the economic field, to bring peace and stability in Afghanistan, must have horrified Pakistan.

Pakistan got another jolt. The BRICS meeting in its Joint Declaration this year mentioned the names of Pak based terrorists organisations- JeM and LeT- along with global terror groups like Haqqani's network, Islamic State and al Qaida. This worried Pakistan all the more as it expected that sanctions may be imposed. Pakistan's Foreign Minister made hectic efforts to get the support from Russia and China that they would not allow the sanctions to be slapped on Pakistan. In this Pakistan got assurance from China and Russia.

Encouraged by this promise, Pakistan PM in his usual style raved and ranted about the so called 'human rights violations in J&K'. In his maiden address to the UN General Assembly on 22nd September, 2017 Pak PM Abbasi also accused India of indulging in terror activities against his country and warned of a "matching response" if it "ventures across the LoC" or acts

upon its doctrine of “limited war” against Pakistan. Abbasi also urged the United Nations to appoint a special envoy to Kashmir, claiming that the struggle of the people in the region is being “brutally suppressed” by India. The tone of Pak PM though remained aggressive, reflected more of Pakistan’s frustration and lacked any conviction.

Abbasi, who assumed office a few months ago, mentioned Kashmir a total of 17 times and India 14 times among other accusations in his speech. This clearly reflected that the speech was written by the Pak Army, which has the single point agenda of attacking India for keeping itself in power.

India, in its response, exposed Pakistan’s lies on terrorism at the UNGA. Terming Pakistan as “Terroristan”, the First Secretary in the Permanent Mission of India to the UN, Eenam Gambhir said, “In its short history, Pakistan has become a geography synonymous with terror. The quest for a land of pure has actually produced “the land of pure terror”.

Pakistan is now “Terroristan”, with a flourishing industry producing and exporting global terrorism. Its current state can be gauged from the fact that Hafiz Mohammed Saeed, a leader of the UN designated terrorist organization Lashkar-i-Taiba, is now sought to be legitimized as a leader of a political party.” Her measured and balanced response without getting aggressive received kudos from those who heard her.

External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj pointed out that while India is fighting poverty, Pakistan is fighting with India. She also projected that while India has created IIMs, AIIMs and IITs, Pakistan is only producing terrorism. She asked the Pak politicians to introspect as to why India is recognised globally as an IT superpower while Pakistan is infamous as the “pre-eminent export factory for terror”.

After Sushma Swaraj’s appropriately hard-hitting speech at the United Nations General Assembly, Pakistan fielded a known anti -India diplomat to counter the external affairs minister. Maleeha Lodhi, Pakistan’s permanent representative to the United Nations, not only once again raked up the Kashmir issue, but also targeted Prime Minister Narendra Modi (though without naming him) and his government reflecting the height of Pak frustration.

What has shocked Pakistan is the statement of its all-weather ally China on 22nd September. Pakistan failed to find support on Kashmir issue from China at the UN General Assembly. China said Kashmir issue should be resolved bilaterally by India and Pakistan through talks. Beijing also dismissed calls by the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation for the implementation of the UN resolution on the dispute. This was in complete contrast to what China had said last year. In 2016, China had stated that it supported Pakistan’s stance on Kashmir.

While China is not likely to leave Pakistan as it has strategic interests in that country, it’s distancing on the issue of third party involvement in the Kashmir issue indicates the Chinese desire to keep itself focussed on its own interests. China having turned Pakistan virtually its colony may not be seeing any point in getting involved unnecessarily in Pak affairs. The increasing marginalisation of Pakistan should bring reason to change its approach towards terrorism as an instrument to bleed India. Otherwise it will keep on producing terrorists which will ultimately prove disastrous to its own population.

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## China moves its gears to Integrated Strategic Deterrence

August 20, 2017, 7:46 AM IST

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China getting frustrated at the Dokalm stand-off is moving its war propaganda machinery from “Three Warfares” to the next higher level in its “Integrated Strategic Deterrence” doctrine against India to achieve its objective of withdrawal of the Indian troops. It has opened other fronts at the border to project that it could raise the level of the present stand-off to a full-fledged war. Stone pelting incident at the Pangong Tso on the 15th August is a testimony of this stratagem.

In the above context, it is important to understand what the Chinese objective behind such acts is. Strategically speaking, China is in expansionist mode. Since 1949, China in accordance with its well-crafted strategy is expanding its territory. After consolidating itself through the demographic changes in Tibet and brutally crushing the Tibetan autonomy supporters resulting in the suicide of several monks, it has decided to annex more and more territory in the periphery.

Since the Xi’s coming into power, China has adopted an aggressive policy to acquire territories in its periphery in three areas- South China Sea, East China Sea and at the Sino-Indian border in accordance with its 18th Century expansionist mind-set. The Chinese strategy has several steps to achieve its objective of acquiring territories without firing a bullet in line with Sun Tzu’s advice that supreme art of war is to subdue enemy without fighting. Overall the strategy is “Integrated Strategic Deterrence”.

This has the aim of achieving strategic deterrence by non-fighting means or fighting a small war. Several military and non-military capabilities like nuclear, conventional, space and information warfare, economic, diplomatic, scientific and technological as also the collective will of the nation constitute the ‘Integrated Strategic Deterrence’. This demands the following three components-

1. Possession and projection of an adequate credible military force.
2. The will and determination to use that force.
3. Communication using different means to the adversary that such a force can be actually used.

For the above purpose, China has evolved the Three Warfares. This has three elements. The first is the **psychological campaign** aimed at building the psychological pressure to scare, demoralise and deter its adversaries. The second is **media warfare** aimed at projecting that it is an injured nation to build international opinion in its favour and to 'expose' the weaknesses of adversaries. This is also used for convincing its domestic audience of the righteousness of its stance. The main theme is project that it lost its territories to the forces of colonialism and imperialism and it must work to retrieve its lost territories and past greatness. This was projected as the 'Chinese dream' in 2014. The third is the fabricated **legal arguments** to justify its stand. The cartographic aggression forms an essential element of this process. The Three Warfares is based on use of its official media and exploitation of social media platforms. Its projections are based on disinformation and mendacity.

The aggressive behaviour is thus a function of its 'rise' and 'dream' aimed at changing the strategic environment in its favour in line with its expansionist policy. Since India has not been deterred by the use of means of Three Warfares, China has begun using other tactics to deter India. This suggests that China could launch an extensive cyber-attack and intrude at other points along the Sino-Indian border to deter India. To project its intentions of using force, the Chinese deployment of force may also be increased.

The problem is also partly domestic for China. Having raised the level of propaganda to this level Xi cannot withdraw without a loss of face. With Congress likely to meet in November, any withdrawal will project Xi in a weaker position. While second term for him is not going to be a problem, the criticism against his policies is increasing. There are persons who think that Xi is incapable of handling the Chinese economic problems.

As far as India is concerned, it cannot accept unilateral changes at the border. The Chinese arguments are hollow. China does not take into account the agreements reached in 1988 and 1998 with Bhutan and in 2012 with India. It also does not take into account that Bhutan was not a party to 1890 treaty. The Sikkim documents prove that the current position of tri-junction is in accordance with the treaty of 1890. China is also unhappy over India's stand on the Belt Road Initiative and on the South China Sea. India has exposed the Chinese neo-colonial policy behind the Belt Road Initiative which has the objective of placing smaller nations into debt traps and controlling their policies to its advantage. India's stand on the South China Sea is also being disliked by China. India has supported the implementation of the Permanent Court of Arbitration's Ruling that has declared the Chinese claims of the region in the nine-dash lines as illegal, unacceptable and unjustified.

India's calm reaction coupled with firmness at the Doklam is unnerving the Chinese authorities. As a reaction China has intensified its false propaganda. The more it indulges in falsehood the more it exposes its weaknesses in arguments. India without getting provoked has reflected that it is not going to be deterred by the escalation of level of deterrence by China.

The Chinese authorities should see that in the 21st Century it cannot deter nations like India. It should also realise that if India is further pushed, it can stop or reduce trade with China which will be disastrous for the latter. That would make Xi's position very weak before the Congress meet of the Chinese Communist party. Xi should take advantage of India's initiative to resolve the issue peacefully and through negotiations. Indian PM's initiative to attend the BRICS meeting in the Chinese city of Xiamen 'in the interest of all nations' should be utilised by Xi to diffuse the tension at the border.

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## Dragon gets a jolt at ASEAN Regional Forum

August 8, 2017, 7:32 AM IST

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Despite China's hectic manoeuvring through the use of economic aid as carrot and threats carried out in the official media-Global Times, the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' meet finally has come out with an agreed statement that called for militarisation to be avoided and noting concern about island-building. This also brought to an end the impasse on the 6th August 2017 in Manila. Crucially, the Foreign Ministers also mentioned in their 46-page statement a vague reference to an international arbitration ruling last year that invalidated China's historical claims to virtually all of the strategic waterway. As in past, they did not mention China by name. It noted concerns of some members about land reclamation "and activities in the area which have eroded trust and confidence, increased tension and may undermine peace, security and stability". This is a slap on the Dragon's face. Last year in September, a very mild reference was made indicating that most of the ASEAN members were willing to toe the Chinese line either out of fear or in the hope of getting aid from China.

Since the award of verdict by the Permanent Court of Arbitration in July 2016, China had been using all the means to ensure that none talked of the implementation of the verdict that went against China's unjust and illegal claims in the South China Sea. China had been aggressively applying economic pressure on the members of ASEAN since July 2016 to neutralise any demand for implementation of the award or challenging the Chinese claims. China had been projecting the benefits of 'Belt Road Initiative' to the Southeast Asian nations to keep them in the Chinese camp. China had also opened talks with the Philippines and offered it \$24 billion in economic aid and stepped up discussions on maritime cooperation with Vietnam. These two countries were very vocal in opposing the Chinese activities though under Duterte the approach of the Philippines changed. Malaysia already counts China as its top source of investment and trade, and Beijing was working with Brunei on a joint port venture and increased trade cooperation before the world court ruling.

The Tribunal's verdict is based on international law particularly UNCLOS and international practices and norms and is significant in several respects. First, it found "no legal basis" for the Chinese claims in the nine dashed-line region—the main

issue between China and other disputants. Second, the verdict also clearly pointed out that the artificial islands would not generate extra territorial water limit. It clarified that that rocky outcrops claimed by China – some of which are exposed only at low tide – cannot be used as the basis of territorial claims. Significantly the Court also ruled against the Chinese ‘land-reclamation activity’ stating that this had caused ‘severe harm to the coral reef environment’. Third, the judgement also noted that the EEZs of nations should be respected. Fourth, it observed that the behaviour of the Chinese ships in obstructing the Philippines vessels was unlawful i.e. it opposed the use of force. Fifth, it has defined the natural islands, which too was proving problematic in the resolution of the South China Sea disputes. This paved a way to resolve the dispute peacefully and thus the verdict is really a milestone not only in the case involving the Philippines and China but for all the disputants and would be reference case for such disputes elsewhere.

The present mood of ASEAN members reflects their confidence and ability to face the Chinese coercion. China must realise that its illegal demands in the periphery areas are going to be opposed by the concerned nations. China through its acts of creation of artificial islands is trying to strengthen its claims in the South China Sea. Their militarisation is a part of its power projection to deter the smaller nations from challenging China. However, Vietnam led the group and pressed for the inclusion of the facts and show the concerns of all though most nations did not want to annoy China.

The current moves by the ASEAN Foreign Ministers reflect that they would not accept any compromise with their sovereignty. This is an appropriate reply to the Chinese threats of use of force as was indicated on the 1st August when President Xi appeared in military dress and averred that China would not compromise any piece of its territory. This is indicative of the future trend. China should realise that international water cannot be turned into a Chinese lake. It should shed its 18th Century expansionist mind-set as pointed out by the Indian PM Modi in Japan in 2014. The Chinese aggressiveness is a function of its ‘rise’ and concomitant desire to change the strategic environment in line with its expansionist policy in the neighbourhood. It had been presenting itself as a victim of colonialism and imperialism which had lost its territories. Irredentism is central to the Chinese plan for expansion. It is whipping up passions through psychological campaign. Its cartographic aggression is aimed at propagating that its claimed areas belonged to it in the past. Cartographic aggression is followed by attempts to of physical occupation often through ‘salami tactics’. Dragon also uses of social media for this purpose. Then the legal interpretation is given to suit its claims. This is in nut-shell its ‘three warfare’ policy.

The fact is that Tibet, Xinjiang and Mongolia were not parts of the Chinese nation and it never had control over the South China Sea. A map made by French cartographer that depicted Chinese territory in 1735 clearly indicates this. This map was presented to President Xi by German Chancellor Merkel in 2014 on the former’s visit to that country.

If China does not see the writings on the wall, it would face a strong opposition from the neighbouring countries. Opposition to the Dragon’s approach is resulting in internationalisation of the issue which China wants to avoid. US, Japan, India and Australia as external powers are showing their concerns and it may take a form of caucus to oppose Chinese unjustified acts. UK has also recently decided to send its ships to press for freedom of navigation. Spain and India had come out in their joint statement that international norms and laws be followed in the South China Sea. They all desire that freedom of navigation and over flights in accordance with UNCLOS be available in the South China Sea. They had been opposing the land reclamation and militarisation of artificial islands. If all nations unite, Dargon’s economy would suffer irreparable loss. One hopes that good sense would prevail on China and it would stop all unjustified and illegal activities to destroy the strategic balance in the South China Sea which is an important region for world commerce.

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- Bike Price India
- Car Price
- Used Cars

**Services**

- Book print ads | Online shopping |
- Matrimonial | Ringtones | Astrology | Jobs | Tech Community | Property
- Buy car | Bikes in India | Free Classifieds | Send money to India | Used Cars
- Restaurants in Delhi | Remit to India | Buy Mobiles | Listen Songs
- Real Estate Developers | Restaurant Deals in Delhi

**Trending Topics**

- Samsung Mobile | Micromax Mobile | You Tube | Delhi Travel Guide | Renault Duster | Katrina Kaif Photos | Sony Mobile | Hindi Songs | Horoscope 2015
- Predictions | Asus Mobile | Facebook | Sunny Leone Photos



