



The Siliguri Corridor: India's Geostrategic Chokepoint and National Security Dilemma

Maham Noor¹, Qurat ul Ain², Afzaal Ahmad³ & Muhammad Hammad⁴

^{1,2,4} BS International Relations, 8th semester, University of Sargodha, Sargodha

³ Visiting Lecturer, University of Sargodha, Sargodha

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Corresponding Author:

Afzaal Ahmad

Email:

afzaal786ahmad55@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The Siliguri Corridor, also described as the "chicken's neck" of India, is a narrow but crucial land link that connects India's mainland with its northeastern states. Despite its strategic significance, the corridor is highly vulnerable due to its narrow width, complex historical formation, and evolving geopolitical patterns. This study examines the Corridor as an important socio-economic and geostrategic structure shaped by colonial agreements and post-independence reorganization of the region. The study draws on historical analysis, geopolitical exploration, and urban mobility studies to access the corridor's key defense and development challenges. These findings indicate that the corridor faces multi fronts threats arising from Chinese militarism near the Doklam , illegal migration and transitional crimes from Bangladesh, shifting political relations with Nepal, and ultimately strategic issues with Bhutan. Internally, unplanned urbanization in the City of siliguri has created infrastructural problems, mobility constraints and challenges related to governance that further undermine the corridor's ability. The study argues that security of the chicken's neck requires a long-term strategic planning to integrate security planning, balanced diplomacy with neighboring states, and urban development, and sustainable urban development to transform this geostrategic curse into a stable and sustainable national blessing.



Introduction

The Siliguri Corridor is an important region in the foothills of the Himalayas, which connects India with its northeastern states. It is often referred to as the gateway to Northeast India. It creates a land link between India's three Neighbors, Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan. The corridor contributes substantially to India's development. Due to its strategic, geo-economic and geopolitical importance, it can create both development opportunities and security threats for

neighboring countries. For this reason, the strategic location of the corridor and its problems is the main subject of this study. Meanwhile, this study examines the key strategic elements in the Siliguri Corridor and makes the case that the corridor has significant strategic importance in the region and that India needs to develop a comprehensive and long-term plan to protect it and advance its interests.

Historical developments were, the Anglo-Gurkha War, Punakha and Sugauli Treaties, colonial policy of industrialization, introduction of railways, free movement of people between India and Nepal and the treaty of Peace and Friendship between India and Nepal in 1950s.

The emergence of globalization in India at the turn of the 20th century has complemented this. Migration of people in pursuit of better future and the process of globalization has led to more advanced living standards. Despite its small size, the town of Siliguri serves as an important hub for rail, air and road travel to Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and the northeastern regions of India. This has inevitably made it a desirable location for drug trafficking, human trafficking, and migrants from neighboring countries. It has also made it relatively easy for those who are hostile to India's national security to migrate abroad.

The most prominent ethnic groups in Siliguri town are currently Marwaris, Punjabis, Biharis, Nepalis and Bengalis, with Hindi, Marwari, Bengali and Nepali being the most spoken languages. The early 19th century saw the earliest examples of induced migration to the area. It was mostly focused on plantation and road construction activities. According to Dee (1990), a significant amount of plantation work involved manual labor, which was encouraged to migrate briefly in the 1830s from the Santhal Parganas and then from the secret region of eastern Nepal, following the significant deaths of tribal people in the construction of the Pankhabari road to West Bengal share 2,217 km of this 4,096 km border.

The Indian Border Security Force and Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB), formerly known as the Bangladesh Rifles or BDR, guard the Indo-Bangladesh border at Fulbari in Jalpaiguri district, which is close to Siliguri.

The border area here is densely populated, which led to the influence of the border economy in the region, especially enhanced by the establishment of border huts (markets) that are characterized by little to zero population, unlike many border areas around the world. However, the Indian Border area, particularly with Bangladesh, had previously enforced a shoot-on-sight policy for infiltrators due to increasing reports of violence between illegal immigrants by Bangladeshi and Indian border patrol troops. It is interesting that, in contrast to India's borders with Khatmandu, the border between India and Bangladesh is heavily guarded.

Problem Statement

The Siliguri Corridor is India's most important but vulnerable geostrategic link with its northeastern states. Due to its small area, it faces serious internal and external security threats. This geostrategic weakness is compounded by increasing Chinese military presence in the Doklam region, crimes of transitional nature from Bangladesh, and switching geopolitical ties with Bhutan and Nepal. Corridor infrastructure is in danger because of unplanned development, rapidly growing urbanization and demographic changes. The region lacks long-term plans to address both defense and development issues.

Significance

This paper is of vital importance as it gives a comprehensive understanding of the Siliguri Corridor. The study deciphers various threats to India's national security and integrity by focusing

on the Chicken's Neck historical development, demographic changes, cross-border issues, and growing tensions with China, Bangladesh Nepal and Bhutan. Moreover, the study adds significantly to the policy discourse on sustainable development and urban planning by exploring the infrastructure deficiencies and mobility issues of Siliguri city. Finally, the study shows that there are many possibilities to make Siliguri walkable. However, implementation will require in-depth research and measurement of performance indicators. The findings will work as a framework for policymakers to develop long-term plans in order to protect their respective Corridors and improve regional stability and connectivity.

Research Questions

- What are the geostrategic, geopolitical and security curses of the Siliguri Corridor?
- What urban planning and mobility deficiencies currently challenge the stability and security of the corridor?
- How can India develop a strategy that simultaneously addresses its defense imperatives and regional development?

Research Objectives

- To examine the historical evolution, including migration patterns, post-colonial territorial and demographic changes?
- To assess the mobility infrastructural challenges of the corridor, and identify how walkability and transport network patterns can enhance regional stability and security.
- To propose a comprehensive strategic framework that integrates security, development and foreign policy considerations to strengthen the resilience of the Siliguri Corridor.

Research Methodology

This study is based on a qualitative and quantitative research framework that combines historical and geopolitical analysis, and urban studies approaches to explore the Corridor. Data is taken from government reports and policy documents on border management strategies and regional development. It is based on Secondary resources, which includes scholarly articles, ethnographies and books on cross-border scenarios, and connectivity in Northeast India. Understanding is further supported by maps review, regional dynamics and transport networks. Assessment of urban mobility challenges is made through existing walkability and infrastructure studies in order to synthesize different sources.

Theoretical Framework

The vulnerability and geostrategic importance of the Corridor can be better decipher through a multifaceted lens that captures the interplay between power, geography, security, cross-border dynamics, and urban transformation. As the narrow piece of land connects India to its northeastern states, its proximity with China adjacent to countries of Nepal, Bhutan, and Bangladesh, the corridor carries layers of geopolitical, infrastructural and socio-economic complexities.

Geopolitical theory analyze the Siliguri Corridor, often described as the "Chicken's Neck" of India. Classical geopoliticians such as Halford Mackinder and Nicholas Spikeman argued that state power is shaped by geography, security, and strategic behavior. The Chicken's neck manifests this concept, where a narrow land formation poses inherent security threats. Its 20-22 km width creates a central approach that can isolate India's northeastern region when threatened during political turmoil and military conflict.

Securitization Theory

Securitization theory, developed by Barry Buzan and Ole Weaver under the Copenhagen School, suggests that issues transform into security risks when political actors label them. To apply this theory the Siliguri Corridor is an ideal case as it hosts many of perceived and constructed threats that shape India's military and political strategy.

Cross-Border Relations Theory

Given the chicken's neck location at the junction of India, Nepal, Bhutan, and Bangladesh, regional cooperation and cross-border interdependence are crucial to understanding its dynamics and patterns. Theories of regionalism and New Regionalism emphasize how cultural, political and economic interactions shape borderlands.

The Corridor's Origins

The political choices made in pre-independence India have a significant impact on the current security situation in the Siliguri Corridor. Stated differently, the history of the states and districts that make up the Siliguri Corridor is essentially its history. Present-day West Bengal has gone through two partitions in the past: once in 1905 and again in 1947.

Many parts of Bengal, including Bihar and Orissa from 1765, were neglected and isolated under British rule because it was seen as too large for a single province and therefore difficult to administer. While parts of East Bengal were faring badly, Calcutta (now Kolkata) and the surrounding areas were developed.

It has also often been argued that this led to the emergence of organized piracy in the rivers and canals that flowed through these areas. Under the provinces of East Bengal and Assam which were formed after the partition of Bengal in 1905, Danjpur district had an area of 3946 square miles (or 10,220 sq. km.) Its greatest length from north to south is 105 miles (or 169 km) and its greatest width is 76 miles (or 122 km) between the Karatoya and Mahananda rivers near its southern end. According to the Danjpur District Gazetteer, it had a population of 1,687,863 in the 1911 census.

In ancient times, the area was known for malaria which led to the migration of most of its inhabitants. The wastelands, with few people and many forests, were another feature of the southern "thanas". A government estate manager believed that if the Santals could be taken away and forced to live there, such lands could be reclaimed. After the experiment proved successful, their arrival continued for several decades. As a result, the Santals were among the first groups to settle in the southern "thanas" of Danjpur. "Thana" is a division for the purposes of local governance in modern-day Bangladesh.

Union Council and Upazila are the other divisions. After the Santals, Mundas and Orons from Ranchi arrived in the area, and were welcomed by the landlords for their resilience. Majority of Rajshahi, Denjpur, Rangpur, Pabna, and some other regions under Rajshahi Division of Bangladesh are included under Bangladesh in Bengali, also known as "Varinder Bhoomi" in Bengali. Santal inflows from this Barande route were comparatively lower, and immigration was halted in parts of Danjpur until the outbreak of malarial fever. The Rajbansis are believed to have been the first people to inhabit the Danjpur district.

It is important to understand why many people believe that Rajbansis was the town of the original inhabitants of Siliguri. At present, it appears that seasonal and manual jobs are the main reasons for migration. Rajbansis also had a large population of Rajbansis in Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar. Paharpur, Denjpur proper, Raiganj, and Kanchinghat were the four main divisions of Denjpur in the past.

After India's independence, Danjpur was divided into West Danjpur under East Pakistan and Danjpur under India as per the Radcliffe Award and the resulting boundary line between India and East Pakistan. The States Reorganization Act of 1956 resulted in the incorporation of some Bengali-speaking areas from Bihar into West Dinjpur, which changed the boundaries of India's states and essentially aligned them along linguistic lines. In April 1992, West Dinjpur was further divided into Dhak Dinjpur (South) and Uttar Dinjpur (North) districts. The northern part of Uttar Dinjpur district is mainly a part of the thin Siliguri Corridor.

In 1901, the Jalpaiguri district was made up of the Western Duars, which had been captured in 1865 after a dispute with Bhutan. In 1869 and 1870, the thanas of Jaliguri, Buda, Rajganj, and Petgram were separated from Rangpur district. The newly created district of West Dinjpur, which was a part of West Bengal, was not directly connected with the districts of Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, and Cooch Behar as a large part of what was then East Pakistan and Bihar lay between them when the former district was divided between Dinjpur.

The Bihar and West Bengal (Transfer of Territories) Act, 1956 established a connection by transferring a strip of land from Purnia district of Bihar to West Bengal. In 1956, the state government initially attached the entire transfer region to Darjeeling district. However, within a day, the area, which included three police stations and 906 villages, was once again transferred to West Dinjpur district.

The Mahananda River became the northern boundary of West Dinjpur, now Uttar Dinjpur District, after which some parts of the lands north of the river were transferred to Darjeeling District in 1959. The police stations of Chopra, Islamor, Golpokhar, and Karandighi were established in the same year along with a new sub-division called Islampur. Assam seceded from Bengal in 1874, and the provinces of Bihar and Orissa did the same in 1912. Interestingly, the protests that followed the partition of Bengal in 1905 forced the government to reverse Lord Curzon's strategy of divide and conquer, which led to the reunification of the region in 1911.

But the situation was different from the first partition when Bengal was partitioned in 1947. Although it is generally accepted that the British were mainly considering linguistic considerations when they partitioned Bengal in 1905, the reaction has indicated that it could be repeated in the future along religious lines. In support of this claim, Chatterjee (2002) claims that "an organized protest that demanded loyalty to the province on the basis of religion" preceded the second and definitive partition of Bengal. The Great Calcutta Massacre, also known as the Calcutta Riots, was a massive Hindu-Muslim riot in Bengal that lasted three to four days in 1946.

The Muslim League Council disapproved of the Congress during these riots, also known as "Direct Action Days", because it thought that Muslims would be at the mercy of Hindus after India's independence. Earlier, the All India Muslim League adopted the Lahore Resolution, also known as the Pakistan Resolution, a formal political statement calling for the establishment of independent states for Muslims in northwestern and eastern British India. It served as the foundation for the creation of East Pakistan, which became Bangladesh in 1971. Although social identity existed before colonialism, it can be argued that communal and sectarian politics became contested and disputed during the colonial period.

With regard to Indian society, Hasan (1982) asserts that the incompleteness of the financial revolution created backward conditions that allowed communal ideology to flourish. These events had an impact on the post-independence situation in Bengal and undoubtedly in the current political, demographic, economic, cultural, social, linguistic and religious disparity that exists in the Siliguri corridor

In essence, they are flanked by mountains that connect the northeastern Indian states to the interior of Bhutan. Marimama (2006) claimed that after a rebellion in 1857, territorial disputes led to the Duar War in 1865, during which the British took control of Har Doghala and cut off Bhutan from the Assamese and Bengali lowlands. In the same year, the Treaty of Sinchola established the final settlement. According to this agreement, the Government of British India promised to pay an annual sum of money to the Government of Bhutan in return for retaining ownership of all eighteen Dovers.

Bhutan ceded land in Bengal and Assam duars through this treaty. This treaty remained in force until 1910, when the Treaty of Pancha was signed. When discussing the multiple aspects of the development and security scenarios that are closely intertwined in Siliguri

Location and measurement

Corridor measurements are subject to interpretation. According to the description, it is 170 by 60 km (106 by 37 mi) in size, with the narrowest part being 20–22 km (12–14 mi). According to Kamal Jat Singh, the area is about 12,200 km (4,700 sq mi), with a length of 200 km (120 km) and a width of 17 to 60 km (11 to 37 mi). According to another version, it is about 200 km (120 mi) long and 20 to 60 km (12 to 37 mi) wide, with an area of about 12,200 km² (4,700 sq mi). The corridor lies between Bangladesh in the southwest, Nepal in the northwest, and Bhutan in the north. Chambai Valley is a Tibetan region between Sikkim and Bhutan. The southern tip of the Doklam Plateau, also known as the Doklam Tree Boundary Area, slopes into the corridor. The Mechi River generally forms the narrowest stretch of the corridor in the east.

Transportation

India has initiated several initiatives. These include the development of Advanced Landing Grounds (ALGs), including the Pneuma Advanced Landing Ground and India-China border roads, where several sections of border roads have been constructed. Additional initiatives include strategic connectivity programs such as BIMSTEC and BBN to develop multiple options for the Siliguri Corridor, including connectivity to Bangladesh and the sea, and northeast India. All land transport between the rest of India and its northeastern states uses this corridor. Electrification of this double-track corridor is underway with the help of Central Organization for Railway Electricity (COR).

Security Threats and Vulnerability

Through the ethnography of India's infamous Siliguri Corridor, sometimes referred to as the "chicken's neck," this study retraces the relationship between connectivity and security. Between the "mainland" of India, its northeast, and beyond China, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Southeast Asia, this small area acts as a conduit for numerous goods. This narrow area is used by railways, pipelines, migrants, smugglers and extremists. Corridors require communication and security because they are both critical and vulnerable.

Due to multiple insurgency movements and often uncertain political conditions, the Northeast is essentially a turbulent region. As a result, the Siliguri Corridor serves as India's only conduit through its volatile northeastern region. The corridor is extremely important for India as it passes through important networks of highways and railways. In light of rising tensions and hostilities between China and India in the future, these networks are essential to maintain the armed forces deployed in the Northeast and connect them with India.

China has experienced significant growth in both its economy and its soft and hard power implications. So, India will suffer a lot if China ever closes the passage. Consequently, the

geostrategic and geopolitical importance of the Siliguri Corridor is undoubtedly significant for India. It would also end India's control over the region and lay the foundation for future insurgent and separatist movements. This would completely cut off the region from India and would put India at a disadvantage in the event of any conflict and cut off supply lines and reinforcements reaching the region.

The Siliguri Corridor is vulnerable to external threats, particularly from Bangladesh, China, Nepal and Bhutan. After the partition of Bengal between India and Pakistan in 1947, the security of the corridor arose. To improve connectivity under the National Highway Development Plans, the Indian federal government has proposed to build a four-lane road from Silchar to Silguri in southern Assam.

There is currently no free trade agreement between Bangladesh and India until 2025. The Tetulia Corridor is proposed as an alternative to the Siliguri Corridor in Article VIII of the India-Bangladesh Trade Agreement of 1980, which states, Both governments agree to make mutually beneficial arrangements for trade between their waterways, railways and trade. However, political discussions are ongoing for the opening of the Tetulia Corridor by 2019.

Creating a Walkable City in Siliguri

A sustainable city is built on walkability. The efficacy of walkability is related to environmental, psychological and socio-economic factors. By reducing traffic congestion, pollution, vehicle fuel costs, and road deaths, walkability provides safety, security, and comfort to city dwellers while commuting, as well as cleanliness and transparency in mobility. The current urbanization and motorization of Indian cities has made it more difficult for planners and decision-makers to transform motorcycle cities into walkable cities, leading to reduced mobility and increased risks. The medium-sized city of Siliguri in West Bengal, India has become an important metropolitan center and serves as a gateway to all the northeastern states of the country. Dense urban corridors, slow-moving vehicles, paratransits, private two- and four-wheelers, and busy commercial setups along central roadways all contribute to the near-congested streets of Siliguri. The city's transportation system is under tremendous pressure due to the rapid motorization of the city's population and rising economic status, leading to severe traffic jams and fatalities.

Therefore, it is important to determine the viability of the city by considering various factors as constraints. The goal of this paper is to find ways to make Siliguri a walkable city so that more people use public transport for long journeys instead of walking for short journeys and driving their automated vehicles.

Cross-Border relations

China:

Physiographically India shares about 4,056 km of its international border with China, although Siliguri does not. Siliguri is the entry point for Chinese goods sold throughout India. China has made significant financial investments in the region's nations in recent years.

China is increasing its foothold in international affairs and is playing an important role through its diplomatic influence in South Asia.

Territorial boundary disputes are a constant source of conflict between China and India. In the past, neither nation shared borders with the other for thousands of years (F. Rahmati et al., 2020).

After China became the Republic of China in 1950, it gradually tried to dominate South Asia, but ultimately failed due to India's progressive spirit. Since China and India are two of the largest and

fastest developing countries in the world, they should focus on understanding each other instead of getting involved in petty disputes.

Tensions and animosity between India and China have recently increased due to their competition for regional dominance. As a result, a series of back-and-forth exchanges between the two aspiring powers ensues. Fortunately, this didn't always result in full-scale physical conflict. However, some rematch between the two actors in recent years changed the whole situation. The first conflict started in 2017 and took place on the Doklam plateau.

The construction of a road to extend it southeast, to Doca La Pass, was the main focus of this struggle. Allegations were made about the authenticity and falsity of the international border road. In the end, talks forced both China and India to call it quits, with China blocking development of the road. This eventually forced India to send in troops, triggering a nearly two-month-long standoff between the two countries that lasted from June 16 to August 28, 2017. However, China has continued to build military installations nearby and bolster its hard power presence, so the crisis does not end there.

To consolidate its military presence and strategic locations near the Line of Actual Control (LAC), China has reportedly continued to build at least 13 new military positions, including three air bases, five heliports, and five permanent air defense positions. But there have been other instances in which the two countries have clashed. Since the infamous Doklam stands between these powers, the two have been constantly at odds with each other.

Things have really gone south since May 5, 2020, when China once again objected to India's construction of foot bridges, with clashes between Chinese and Indian troops near the LAC. Stone pelting and physical altercations occurred during the confrontation.

The battle continued for a long time, starting from Pangong Lake, passing through the Mogothang Valley in Sikkim, and ending in the bleeding Galwan Valley. Although neither side used a gun throughout the conflict, there were casualties on both sides. Yet, it can be argued that major countries are determined to outdo each other and dominate the Asian political landscape, even if that means going to great lengths to protect their national interests in the region. In recent years in particular, China and India have experienced their fair share of unrest and violence.

What is more is the fact that these disputes, clashes and stand-offs despite agreements such as the 1993 Border Peace and Tranquility Agreement (BPTA), the establishment of a working mechanism for consultation and coordination on India-China border issues, and the 2013 Border Defense Cooperation Agreement. But in the Galwan Valley and Doklam conflicts, it is particularly important to focus on the ongoing militancy and rising tensions in the area around Doklam. China has long threatened the Siliguri Corridor, which it claims covers an area of 90,000 square kilometers in northeastern India. China claims the predominantly Buddhist Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh as part of Tibet, which China invaded in 1951, and the two countries share a 3,488 km border. Another contested region is the Chombi Valley, located between Bhutan and Sikkim in India.

The Indian defense establishment is undoubtedly alarmed by the Chinese presence in Arunachal Pradesh. The Siliguri Corridor connects India with its neighbours, Nepal, Bangladesh and Bhutan, and is sandwiched between China in the north and Bangladesh in the south and west. The distance to the Siliguri Corridor is so short that it is essentially within striking range of Chinese artillery, which is present in China's Chombe Valley and northern Doklam.

The Chinese army could cut off Bhutan, West Bengal, and the northeastern states with an advance of only 130 km. In Northeast India, about 50 million people will be cut off from the nation.

Bangladesh:

India and Bangladesh have the world's fifth largest physiographic boundary, spanning a distance of 4176 km. Many problems and disputes arise between the two countries.

As most of the drugs and illegal activities are found in the northern border of West Bengal, crime and people-trafficking are other major problems in Bangladesh. According to the Narcotics Control Bureau of India, 100 to 250 kilos of hashish and other drugs are found around Siliguri in West Bengal every day.

Maoist rebels from Bangladesh and Nepal are using the region as a safe haven.

Additionally, Siliguri acts as a buffer zone between Bangladesh and India for stolen goods (Chorbazar), because of the majority of stolen cars. Therefore, if India takes strict measures and regulations in the region, security concerns can be suppressed. Otherwise, they will

Be a great threat to the nation.

Nepal:

India and Nepal have had significant religious and cultural ties throughout history.

The longest border between Nepal and India is 1,751 km. Nepal has been completely dependent on trade and business since ancient times. However, there are several geopolitical disputes between India and Nepal, such as Nepal's claims to Kalpani in Uttarakhand. It all started on May 20, 2020, when the Nepalese government published a political map declaring Kalani as its territory. However, the truth is that China is increasingly influencing Nepal's anti-Indian policies. India should therefore redefine its foreign policy in keeping with its long-term national interest, ensuring positive relations with Nepal and reducing China's influence.

Bhutan:

The international border between Bhutan and India is 699 km. Bhutan has always been a devoted and good country. A friend of India, as Indian citizens can enter Bhutan without a visa till 2020. Due to unethical and disciplinary problems caused by Indian citizens, it later imposed INR 1200 on visas.

As per the 2007 agreement between the two countries, India protected Bhutan from Chinese troops in Doklam, respecting and taking into account its sovereignty. India should also maintain the same practices as Bhutan has consistently provided political, cultural and economic support.

Conclusion

The Siliguri Corridor's geographic narrowness and proximity to China increased the risks associated with an enhancing Chinese military presence in the Doklam Plateau and Chombe Valley. The 2017 Doklam standoff highlighted India's concern that any military intervention could cut off its access to its northeastern states, disrupt military assets and put regional stability at stake. These vulnerabilities are further accelerated by cross-border threats from Bangladesh, including, human trafficking, drug trafficking, and illegal migration, which have pushed India to adopt strict border management measures. Similarly, map disputes with Nepal and growing Chinese influence – further India's challenges in maintaining the corridor's stability.

The significance of the corridor, however, is not restricted to national security. It is also an important geo-economic route that promotes trade, migration and connectivity between India, Bhutan, Nepal and Bangladesh.

Overall, the Corridor poses a complex junction of history, security, geography, diplomacy, and urbanization. Its vulnerability stems from both external geopolitical threats and internal developmental issues. The research deciphers that corridor security requires not just military preparations, but long-term survival and stability of the Northeastern India depends on the ability to protect, diversify and strengthen this important geostrategic lifeline.

Recommendations

- Develop alternative corridors for connectivity: In order to reduce the over-dependence on the corridor initiatives like Nepal Transit routes, India-Bangladesh railway projects, BBN Motor Vehicle Agreements are crucial
- Strengthen multifaceted security architecture: increase border surveillance through intelligence sharing with neighboring countries to prevent illegal migration and smuggling without disrupting cross-border exchanges.
- Enhance India's strategic presence near Doklam: develop border infrastructure and military logistics while enhancing security cooperation with Khatmandu to counter Chinese militancy
- Implement integrated urban planning for Siliguri: Establish a metropolitan-level planning authority to manage land use, manage urban sprawl and ensure development of climate-friendly infrastructure.
- Increase walkability and mobility: develop pedestrian infrastructure, reduce reliance on private vehicles to enhance mobility and emergency actions and expand public transit systems
- Improve regional diplomacy with Bhutan and Nepal: resolve territorial disputes with Nepal through negotiations and strengthen India-Bhutan military coordination to ensure stability in the corridor.

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