

# Indo-China Relations in the 21st Century: Challenges and Opportunities

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**Abstract:** *Indo-China relations in the 21st century are defined by a complex combination of historical conflicts, economic interdependence, geopolitical competitiveness, and diplomatic engagements. As two of the greatest economies and major global powers, India and China share both potential for collaboration and severe difficulties that hamper their bilateral ties. Key areas of conflict include unresolved border disputes, commercial disparities, maritime security concerns, and ideological differences. Border tensions, especially in Aksai Chin and Arunachal Pradesh, have resulted in several military standoffs, including the Doklam (2017) and Galwan Valley (2020) incidents, exacerbating diplomatic relations. Notwithstanding these challenges, economic cooperation offers a significant opportunity for engagement. China continues to be India's foremost commercial partner, and fortifying trade accords while mitigating trade deficits could bolster economic relations. Moreover, international institutions such as BRICS, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), and the G-20 provide opportunities for discourse and cooperation on global challenges including climate change, counter-terrorism, and economic development. Maritime rivalry in the Indo-Pacific is significant, as India endeavours to counterbalance China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) through strategic alliances. The trajectory of Indo-China relations will hinge on diplomatic negotiations, confidence-building initiatives, and reciprocal trust. An equitable strategy emphasising both competition and collaboration will be crucial in establishing a stable and constructive Indo-China relationship in the 21st century.*

**Keywords:** Border Disputes, Economic Cooperation, Strategic Rivalry, Multilateral, Diplomacy