

Emerging Dimensions of India-Mongolia Relations

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India became the first country outside the Socialist bloc to establish diplomatic relations with Mongolia on December 24, 1955. 2015 marked the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. Their bilateral relationship received a boost with the first ever visit by an Indian Prime Minister to Ulaanbaatar in May 2015. This visit has not only enhanced India-Mongolia bilateral relationship but also has elevated it from 'comprehensive partnership' to a 'strategic' one.

India and Mongolia are two ancient Asian civilisations whose spiritual and cultural bonds go back to antiquity. The recent visit of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Mongolia, a small but a geo-strategically important country, has changed the spectrum of the existing bilateral relationship. Mongolia has now emerged as a part of India's new Asian outreach, both culturally as well as diplomatically. Question arises whether the Prime Minister's visit was a 'strategic step' to make India's presence felt in East Asia and North East Asia in particular and whether using Buddhism as a cultural and religious linkage would provide the much needed bulwark to realise its strategic vision in future? The answers to these two questions will be discussed in this paper.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Mongolia on 17 May 2015 attracted wide attention, not only in the electronic and print media but also in political and academic circles. This is so because it was the highest level visit to a country that is generally off the radar in normal times. However, it is worth noting that Mongolia today is one of the fastest growing economies in the world, with a double-digit growth since 2011 owing to the sudden boom in the mining sector - especially in uranium, gold, coal and copper. The country is listed among the world's top ten in terms of natural resources. The Mongolian economy is expected to triple by 2020 because of coal extraction and the

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presence of other 'mega-mines'. Some writers even refer to the country as "Minegolia"!¹ It is also relevant to note that mining boom has not resulted in broad-based inclusive growth, which demands sustainable and effective management of the vast natural resources. This is a challenge that Mongolia has been seeking to overcome with external support from countries like India. Modi's visit is a testimony to the fact that India is willing to provide its determined support to Mongolia for the latter's development, both in internal as well as in external affairs. To this end, Modi's visit seems to have been influenced by certain key factors: India's 'Act East' Policy, the China factor, and relevance of Buddhism to promote diplomatic ties. India's position has been elevated as 'third neighbour' by Mongolia as a part of its revised foreign policy perspectives.

India's 'Act East' Policy

For quite some time, there has been a geostrategic dimension to India's engagement with Mongolia. This is more so because Northeast Asia has now become the new regional identity of post-Soviet Mongolia. Earlier, during the Cold War period, Mongolia belonged to the Soviet-led security system that provided it the much needed security assurances. Thus, its identity was linked to that of the Soviet bloc. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, Northeast Asia has become the obvious choice for its new regional identity in order to ensure its political, economic and strategic security. Indeed, the unique positioning of India in the geopolitics of the Asian continent offers a real opportunity to forge mutually advantageous regional cooperation which, in turn, could sustain its eagerness to participate in various regional integration endeavours, including the East Asia Summit.

The 1990s saw the beginning of India's emergence as a major regional power of Asia. In fact, this policy can best be described as a strategic shift in India's vision of the world, and her place in the evolving global economy.² In this sense, it is essentially more than an external economic policy: it is also a manifestation of the belief that "developments in East Asia are of direct consequence to India's security and development."³ It has, thus, started creating bonds of friendship and cooperation with East Asia which have a strong economic foundation and "a cooperative paradigm of positive interconnectedness of security interests."⁴ Their mutual efforts, of course, have born some fruits, including exchanges of high-level visits between India and the East Asian nations, improvement in Sino-Indian ties, confidence building and transparency measures, as well as India's inclusion in regional groupings

such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF).⁵

The rapid growth in trade and investment and multiple links between India and East Asia are the results of India's increasing engagement with the ASEAN following the launch of the Look East Policy. The India-ASEAN engagement has grown from a sectoral dialogue partnership in 1992 to a full dialogue partnership in 1995, and subsequently to a summit level interaction with the first India-ASEAN Summit held in 2002 in Phnom Penh. The increasingly closer relationship has led to strengthening of not only economic but also political ties between India and ASEAN. Over the last few years, collaborative initiatives have been taken between India and the ASEAN in many sectors, and strong institutional mechanisms of cooperation have also been put in place.

All these developments attest to the fact that India's Look East Policy for over two decades had worked in the right direction, though the focus has been confined mainly to Southeast Asia and Northeast Asia has largely remained untouched, particularly in terms of regional cooperation. However, with the initiation of the Act East Policy in November 2014, a more action-oriented policy towards East Asia - in contrast to India's original Look East Policy - Northeast Asia has come to occupy an important place in India's foreign policy. Since Northeast Asia is becoming a major factor in India's strategic vision in the East Asian region, Modi's Mongolia visit can be seen in that direction as well. During his stay in Mongolia, Modi said: "Today, Mongolia is also an integral part of India's Act East Policy" and that "the destinies of India and Mongolia are closely linked with the future of the Asia Pacific region. We can work together to help advance peace, stability, and prosperity in this region."⁶

The China Factor

In recent years, China has made an effort to enlarge engagement with India's neighbours in the subcontinent as well as in the Indian Ocean. In fact, the 1990s saw China revamping its foreign policy towards its neighbouring countries in the Asia Pacific through what it calls its 'periphery policy' or 'good-neighbourhood policy'.⁷ The main idea behind devising such a policy was aimed at exploring "the common ground with Asian countries in both economic and security arenas by conveying the image of a responsible power willing to contribute to stability and cooperation in the region."⁸ Hence both the non-traditional security paradigm such as economic diplomacy as well as traditional security concerns formed the main guiding principles of China's

periphery policy.⁹ Moreover, establishing or maintaining good relationships with neighbours was intended to provide China “with a more secure environment in its periphery as a leverage to increase its influence in world affairs.”¹⁰

However, several quarters still believe that by pursuing its periphery policy or good neighbourly policy, China has been trying to make its presence felt in its neighbourhood in order to expand its influence, be it in South Asia or in East Asia. Since India too needed to cultivate good relations in China’s backyard, Modi’s visit to Mongolia seems to have been aimed in this direction as well. In this vein, enhancing relationship with China’s neighbouring countries, based on Buddhism, has emerged as an important facet of foreign policy of the Modi Government. This can also complement a major concern of Mongolia’s 2011 revised foreign policy concept in which the need to develop closer relations with third neighbours has been emphasised in order to counterbalance the economic predominance of either China or Russia. But, the fact remains that Mongolia’s trade with China represents more than half of its total external trade. In particular, China receives more than 90 per cent of Mongolia’s exports, and is its largest investor as well as largest trading partner with trade figures reaching as high as US\$ 6 billion, and the two sides have set the goal of raising this figure further to US \$ 10 billion by 2020.¹¹

On the other hand, despite signing a number of bilateral agreements, India’s trade and economic ties with Mongolia have not been impressive. Evidently, the total bilateral trade remained at just US \$ 17.4 million in 2010, which while increasing sharply to reach US \$ 60.2 million in 2012, came down to US \$ 35 million in 2013. In 2014, the trade figure further declined to as low as US \$ 15.7 million, with India’s exports decreasing for the first time in many years.¹² The main reason behind this unimpressive trade figure is the distance between the two countries which points to very high transportation costs as everything will have to pass through China which could impose a lot of restrictions. Even the import of uranium or copper or natural resources is not a driving factor in building ties with Mongolia. Several analysts suggest that India should acquire uranium, from wherever possible as it already has agreements on uranium supplies with many countries from where it is easier to ship uranium than from landlocked Mongolia. One website even carried a story with title “Forget Uranium. Real reason behind PM Modi’s Mongolia visit is China”.¹³ In several ways, Mongolia offers a newer opportunity and strategic leverage for India in dealing with China in more or less the same way Vietnam, Philippines, and Myanmar do. In that sense, Modi’s visit to Mongolia can be termed as “more of a strategic step”.

The Buddhist Factor

India's relations with Mongolia are based on historical-cultural ties which are more than 2500 years old. Buddhism travelled to Mongolia in different periods from India and Tibet to emerge as the dominant religious faith. Not only did Buddhism help the once scattered and nomadic Mongols grow into united and civilised communities but also enabled them to absorb various dimensions of Indian philosophy and applied knowledge such as astrology, poetry, art, medicine, etc. Over the years, Buddhism even served the Mongols as a major source of a common identity and an effective instrument for inciting Mongol nationalism, both in the past and the present. In spite of the oppression of the Stalinist era and dominance by the Soviets, Buddhism as a religion survived. It was only after the Soviet collapse in 1991, that Buddhism saw its revival. The role of Indian Monk-Diplomat Kushok Bakula is praiseworthy in the post-Soviet revival of Buddhism during the period of democratic reforms in the early 1990s. He established monasteries and nunneries, hosted His Holiness the Dalai Lama, invited Lama Zopa Rinpoche several times, and granted ordination to many Mongolians. He was often called "Elchin Bagsha" or the "teacher ambassador" who contributed immensely to strengthen India-Mongolia ties, besides promoting Buddha Dharma in Mongolia.¹⁴

After decades of apathy, democratic reforms in the 1990s gave way to religious freedom in Mongolia, resulting in a large number of Mongols, both from the city and the countryside, flocking to Buddhist monasteries in the capital Ulaanbaatar to receive blessings, to venerate various Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, and to ask admittance for their sons and daughters.¹⁵ Such developments indicate that Buddhism still dominates Mongol ethnic and religious identities. Buddhism is considered to be of prime importance in the Constitution,¹⁶ and in recent years, politicians have increasingly used religion to attract public support by regularly taking part in religious rituals, such as organising mantra recitals by Buddhist monks. The beginning of state-led revival of religious practices based on Buddhist rituals and ceremonies initially aimed at building a "national brand of public culture" that could make its contribution to identity formation. The cult of Chinggis Khan today has its association with Buddhism because "Chinggis Khan was recognised by the Mongolian Buddhists as the reincarnation of the *Bodhisattva Vajrapani*."¹⁷ This is evident from the fact that, after the expansion of this cult, Chinggis Khan began to be worshipped as a Chakravartin, the universal ruler in the Buddhist tradition. In addition to Chakravartin, Chinggis Khan's titles also contain the words Devaditya and Arya which are mentioned in some of the colophons of Kanjur volumes.¹⁸

As a religion and matter of faith, Buddhism certainly has been successful in getting a place in the political space of Mongolia in very many ways. Directly or indirectly, it also points to the role of Buddhism in diplomacy in contemporary international relations. Today, Buddhism as a part of cultural diplomacy or as a soft power tool is playing a critical role in foreign policy. India is venerated in Mongolia not only as the homeland of Buddha but also as a country with the highest attainments in wisdom and learning.¹⁹ That is to say, India is seen as a divine place wherein emphasis is given to Buddhist principles denouncing anger and hatred, violence and rancour, apart from promoting universal peace and harmony through individual attainment of compassion and serenity.²⁰ That is why India and Mongolia have often been referred to as “spiritual neighbours”.

Thus the spiritual linkages between India and Mongolia make it imperative for the two sides to cooperate with each other not only for mutual benefits but also for regional integration. At the centre of his regional engagement, Modi’s visit to Mongolia was part of this shared religious heritage with neighbours. Indeed, Mongolia, offers many possibilities for cultural (Buddhist) diplomacy. To a great extent today, Buddhism remains at the very forefront of India’s new Asian outreach, both culturally as well as diplomatically.

India’s Elevation as Mongolia’s ‘Third Neighbour’

India has come to occupy an important place in Mongolia’s foreign policy. In its revised foreign policy perspective of 2010, for the first time, India figured as one of Mongolia’s ‘third neighbours’. The ‘third neighbour’ policy is driven by Mongolia’s geopolitical, geo-economic, and geostrategic concerns which have made this less populated country an important entity both within and outside.²¹ It came into being as a policy of balancing Mongolia’s two geographic neighbours China and Russia by developing bilateral and multilateral cooperation with developed democracies in the areas of politics, economy, culture and human security. This policy, however, is derived from both the close historical-cultural ties as well as friendliness with other countries “which are often based on shared values, common interests or even simply societal sympathy”²². Mongolia is very clear that its identified third neighbours, particularly USA, Germany, Japan, India, Republic of Korea, Turkey, Canada and Australia, are geographically distant, and hence do not present the same risks that its geographic neighbours do in terms of dominance.

Ever since India's elevation as Mongolia's third neighbour was declared, the two sides began to work towards giving a new impetus to their bilateral ties which, in 2009, was converted into a comprehensive partnership when the two sides entered into a civil nuclear agreement. India's revised position in Mongolia's diplomacy today is that it is being perceived as its third neighbour in both regional and international contexts, particularly in the context of India's role in promoting a multi-polar security structure in Asia.²³ This is in sharp contrast to the ordinary viewpoint that India-Mongolia relations are merely based on age-old cultural linkages, particularly Buddhist traditions.²⁴ However, there are also limits to Indian power play in Mongolia. Ulaanbaatar has no interest in provoking either Russia or China by undertaking activities hostile to them. Like all small states with large neighbours, Mongolia wants a measure of "strategic autonomy" from dominant neighbours. However, the country carefully calibrates its partnerships with other major powers. By linking its security to a roster of states other than Russia and China, "Mongolia has made its intention clear to act internationally with as much freedom as it can muster from the constraints that Moscow or Beijing might wish to impose".²⁵

Since the declaration of India as a third neighbour by Mongolia, PM Modi's visit is the first high level visit undertaken from either side. The comprehensive partnership developed between the two countries reflects the ways in which the two sides have redefined their geostrategic interests, leading to declaring a strategic partnership during the visit. This declaration has been an important step towards regional cooperation given that India's traditional South Asia centric security policies are being stretched out into East Asia and the Pacific as well as in a northward movement to Central Asia. As its third neighbour, India would like to support Mongolia in many ways. One significant example is PM Modi's announcement of extending a US \$1 billion Line of Credit to Mongolia for its infrastructure projects, which was projected in the media with much hype as it was for the first time that India gave such a huge amount. Mongolia's infrastructure development has faced crisis by a slowing Chinese coal market, and the Indian loan may be used primarily to fund an unfinished rail link from its coal mines in the Gobi desert to overcome bottlenecks in deliveries.

Emerging Dimensions of Bilateral Ties

If one looks at the nature of the entire bilateral relationship in the last few years, since 2009 it has been developing in the framework of a comprehensive

partnership based on deep civilisational, historical, spiritual, and cultural linkages, common democratic traditions, and a shared desire for regional as well as international peace and stability. In this context, PM Modi's visit was also aimed at consolidating the bilateral comprehensive partnership further, particularly by agreeing to elevate the level further to a Strategic Partnership conducive to the interests of both countries. This strategic partnership is similar to the one which China and Mongolia signed in 2013.

On May 17, 2015, in a joint statement issued in Ulaanbaatar, the Prime Ministers of the two countries confirmed that developing a strategic partnership, based on principles of sovereign equality of states, principles of the UN Charter, collective interests of the two peoples, and the fundamental ideals of the 1994 Treaty of Friendly Relations and Cooperation, would be their common yet new objective of their respective foreign policies.²⁶ The two sides also agreed to deepen defence cooperation, besides exploring the potential for tie-ups in areas like the civil nuclear sector. The lack of technical knowhow for the exploitation of Mongolia's vast uranium reserves is a major concern for Ulaanbaatar, and that is where India could be an important partner in view of its experience with nuclear energy.²⁷

In order to develop a strategic partnership, the two sides also put forward frameworks for future cooperation and signed several bilateral documents including energy, air services, Cyber Security Training Centre in the Ministry of Defence of Mongolia, cooperation between the National Security Council of India and National Security Council of Mongolia, cooperation between Ministry of External Affairs of India and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia and Memorandum of Understanding between Ministry of Home Affairs of India and Ministry of Justice of Mongolia for enhancing cooperation in Border Guarding, Policing and Surveillance.²⁸

While these agreements and MoUs will help build confidence for a closer relationship, the two countries can examine various areas to expand their economic and trade ties as well. India has made commitments to continue supporting Mongolia's endeavour to create a business friendly, foreign investment regime. Mongolia's rich mineral deposits, including Uranium, could help power India's low-carbon growth, while India could help Mongolia in developing indigenous capabilities and economic opportunities in the mining sector.²⁹ Given the huge potential to collaborate in the agriculture sector, the two sides can foster deeper and closer cooperation in animal husbandry, the production of dairy products, the sharing of specific area expertise and know-how, technology transfer, as well as other forms of cooperation in an effort towards developing their strategic partnership. Using Buddhism as a tool of cultural diplomacy will

provide the much needed bulwark to bilateral relations. As PM Modi himself said on the occasion of Buddha Purnima: “without Buddha, the 21st century would not be the Asian Century”. Also, for Mongolia, India is more than a third neighbour; it is also a “spiritual neighbour”, and history is a witness that the two sides have never shown animosity towards each other.

In future, further strengthening the Strategic Partnership would be the “common yet new objective” of their respective foreign policies. The agreements signed during the visit include various fields: political, security, defence, economy, health, culture, and education. These only point to the fact that both countries are interested in deepening their age-old relationship. “The two Prime Ministers agreed to offer up to five scholarships each year to the students upon the request of the other Party for learning Mongolian and Hindi languages, and Mongolian and Indian culture in their academic institutions”. These also need to be extended to include higher education and research – not only for Mongolian scholars to visit Indian institutions, but also for Indian scholars to study in Mongolia. Indian scholars working on Mongolian politics, security, energy, etc. should also be encouraged and supported to visit Mongolia.

Conclusion

PM Modi’s visit has given a much needed boost to Indo-Mongolian relations. Unfortunately, a feeling of neglect had persisted with the Mongolians for some time, despite their regard for India. The visit, in that context, appears to have dispelled that impression. What is important now is careful planning and proper implementation according to a strict timeline of the agreements and MoUs signed during Prime Minister’s visit. The China factor will be more relevant in India-Mongolia bilateral relations with passing time, as Mongolia seeks to diversify its trade and investment relations. Besides, defence and security ties would continue to grow through training, joint exercises, as well as through participation in the multinational peace keeping exercises known as “Khan Quest”. On the economic front, Indian companies have a lot to do in Mongolia by exploring opportunities in Mongolia’s mining sector through joint ventures and investment. The mining boom that Mongolia is experiencing, is the key reason behind the high growth rates in the country. Several analysts believe that Mongolia’s economic growth further depends on the exploration of 170 billion tons of coal, 205 million tons of petroleum, and 68 thousand tons of uranium reserves; an area where India’s involvement and contribution will be very crucial.

In terms of regional dimensions, the North East Asian identity of Mongolia, together with socio-economic and political ties with other countries (particularly in Asia) generate much scope for further expansion and concretisation of India-Mongolian cooperation in various sectors. Herein, the political role of Buddhism takes precedence in guiding engagements with foreign partners and institutions. Therefore, Buddhism - both as a religion and as a soft power foreign policy tool - must be seen in the context of achieving the goals of peaceful co-existence, ensuring friendship from generation to generation, and furthering mutual development through cooperation in terms of foreign policy objectives. Buddhism in Mongolia's foreign policy perspectives may prove to be beneficial not only in the smooth execution of relations with countries like India but also with Russia as well as other countries of East Asia, including both Southeast and Northeast Asia where Buddhist communities exist in large numbers. The convergence of political, economic and social interests may get a definite push in Mongolia's bilateral and multilateral relations if its Buddhist diplomacy succeeds, especially in the Asian context. In this vein, PM Modi's Mongolia visit can be described as a "strategic step" in order to make India's strong presence felt in East Asia in general, and Northeast Asia, including Mongolia, in particular.

Notes :

- ¹ Jonathan Watts, "Gobi mega-mine puts Mongolia on brink of world's greatest resource boom", *The Guardian*, 7 November 2011, <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2011/nov/07/gobi-mega-mine-mongolia>, accessed 25 September 2015.
- ² M. V. Bratersky and S. I. Lunyov, "India at the End of the Century: Transformation in to an Asian Regional Power," *Asian Survey*, vol. 30, no.10, October 1990, p. 941.
- ³ K. Natwar Singh, "Inaugural Address", in N.S. Sisodia and G.V.C.Naidu (eds.), *Changing Security Dynamic in Eastern Asia: Focus on Japan*, New Delhi: IDSA and Promilla & Co., 2005, p.3.
- ⁴ Ibid
- ⁵ Satu P. Limaye, "India-East Asia Relations: India's Latest Asian Incarnation", *Occasional Analysis*, Pacific Forum, CSIS (3rd quarter 2000).
- ⁶ "Mongolia gets \$1-bn credit gift", *The Hindu*, 19 May 2015, <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/mongolia-integral-part-of-indias-act-east-policy-modi/article7216207.ece>, accessed 21 August 2015.
- ⁷ J. You and Q. Jia (1998), "China's Re-emergence and Its Foreign Policy Strategy", in J. Y. S. Cheng, (ed.), *China Review*, Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, p. 128.
- ⁸ S. Zhao, "The Making of China's Periphery Policy", in S. Zhao, (ed.), *Chinese Foreign Policy: Pragmatism and Strategic Behavior*, Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 2004, p. 258.

- ⁹ Economic diplomacy was clearly identified by Chinese scholars as a key element of Beijing's 'periphery diplomacy'; see Yang F., Qin, Y. and Heng X., *Contemporary China and its Foreign Policy*, Beijing: World Affairs Press, 2002, p.195.
- ¹⁰ Zhao, 'The Making of China's Periphery Policy', p. 259.
- ¹¹ See, "Open up New Horizons for China-Mongolia Relations Through Mutual Assistance", Speech by Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China at the State Great Khural of Mongolia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 22 August 2014, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/zyjh_665391/t1185681.shtml, accessed 15 September 2015.
- ¹² See "India-Mongolia Relations", June 2015, http://www.mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/Mongolia_2015_07_02.pdf, accessed 15 September 2015.
- ¹³ Rajeev Sharma, "Forget Uranium. Real reason behind PM Modi's Mongolia visit is China", 9 May 2015, <http://www.firstpost.com/world/forget-uranium-real-reason-behind-pm-modis-mongolia-visit-china-2236286.html>, accessed 18 September 2015.
- ¹⁴ Amitava Dutta, "The Venerable Kushok Bakula", *Bharat Rakshak Monitor*, vol. 6(3), November-December 2003.
- ¹⁵ Agata Bareja-Starzynska and Hanna Havnevik, "A Preliminary Study of Buddhism in Present-Day Mongolia", in Ole Brunn and Li Narangoa (eds.), *Mongols from Country to City: Boundaries, Pastoralism and City Life in the Mongol Lands*, Copenhagen: NIAS, 2006, p.212.
- ¹⁶ Tsedendambyn Batbayar and Sharad K. Soni, *Modern Mongolia: A Concise History*, New Delhi: Pentagon Press, 2007, p.139.
- ¹⁷ Bareja-Starzynska and Havnevik, op. cit. p. 225.
- ¹⁸ Raghu Vira, "Imprints on Mongolia", in Chaman Lal (ed.), *India Cradle of Culture*, New Delhi: Oxford, 1978, p.183.
- ¹⁹ Vasanta Iyer, "Cultural Perspectives in Modern Mongolia," in K. Warikoo and Dawa Norbu (eds.), *Ethnicity and Politics in Central Asia*, New Delhi: South Asian Publishers, 1992, p.268.
- ²⁰ *Ibid*, p. 267.
- ²¹ Sharad K. Soni, "The 'Third Neighbour' Approach of Mongolia's Diplomacy of External Relations: Effects on Relations between India and Mongolia", *India Quarterly*, vol. 71 (1), January-March 2015, p.41.
- ²² Munkh-Ochir Dorjjugder, "Mongolia's 'Third Neighbor' doctrine and North Korea", 28 January 2011, http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2011/0128_mongolia_dorjjugder.aspx, accessed on 3 November 2015.
- ²³ Sharad K. Soni, "The 'Third Neighbour' Approach of Mongolia's Diplomacy of External Relations", p. 44.
- ²⁴ *Ibid*.

- ²⁵ See “Mongolia: Growth, Democracy, and Two Wary Neighbors: An Interview with Alan Wachman”, Interview taken by Allen Wagner, The National Bureau of Asian Research, 3 May 2012, <http://www.nbr.org/research/activity.aspx?id=245#.Uic9tzbI1K0>, accessed 5 November 2015.
- ²⁶ “Joint Statement for India-Mongolia Strategic Partnership (May 17, 2015)”, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 17 May 2015, <http://mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/25253/Joint+Statement+for+IndiaMongolia+Strategic+Partnership+May+17+2015>, accessed 22 July 2015.
- ²⁷ Sharad K. Soni, “The ‘Third Neighbour’ Approach of Mongolia’s Diplomacy of External Relations”, p.47.
- ²⁸ See “Joint Statement for India-Mongolia Strategic Partnership”, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, May 17, 2015
- ²⁹ “PM Narendra Modi asks Mongolia to partner in India’s economic transformation” *The Economic Times*, 17 May 2015, http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2015-05-17/news/62276881_1_chimed-saikhanbileg-ulan-bator-mongolian, accessed 22 July 2015.

