

Amid row with US, China looks to mend fences with India

Warns Against 'Third Parties' Playing Spoiler

New Delhi: China's rising tensions with the US over an intensifying trade war might have created a sweet spot in India-China ties with recent interactions seeing Beijing stress shared goals and warning against 'third parties' playing spoiler.

Faced with an aggressive Trump administration bear-



A file photo of PM Narendra Modi with Chinese President Xi Jinping

ing down on it on trade issues and rumbles against its economic-political programme with Malaysian leader Mahathir Mohamad scrapping OBOR mega projects, China seems inclined to mend fences rather than flex muscles with immediate neighbours.

Though China's plans to

keep India hemmed in by Pakistan and check its strategic space may remain unaltered, the current phase may provide India an opportunity to press its northern neighbour on issues such as entry to the Nuclear Suppliers Group and a ban on Jaish-e-Mohammad leader Masood Azhar.

Recent high level meetings between India and China post the Modi-Xi discussions in Wuhan have seen the Chinese side speak of the close nature of bilateral ties and the need to further strengthen and expand cooperation. The meetings have seen long speeches about how relations are poised for growth.

The suggestion that third

parties could be interlopers is intended to underline that US interests might prove to be shifting and should not distract India from prospects nearer home. India's forthcoming '2+2' engagement with the US is seen as a platform that may further accelerate cooperation in areas like defence.

Limiting US influence with India is an obvious concern for China which has itself sought to expand its footprint in the Indian Ocean region. As India negotiates terms with the US over issues like oil imports from Iran, rough weather in US-China ties can have its benefits even though the larger impact on the global economy could be worrisome.