

Arunachal is dear to the nation: Prez

President of India Pratibha Devisingh Patil along with state Governor (Retd) JJ Singh Thursday visited Tawang, the snowcapped district headquarters located 10,200 feet above the sea level along the Sino-India border where she visited the 400-year-old Tawang Monastery - the second largest in Asia - and the war memorial.

Also known as Galden Namgyal Lhatse, the monastery was founded by Merak Lama Lodre Gyatso in 1680-81. The monastery, which houses colossal richly gilded statue of Lord Buddha and offers a commanding and picturesque view of the Tawang-Chu valley, is the fountainhead of the spiritual life of the people of this region.

Categorized as a spiritual wonder of India, the monastery was voted among the seven wonders of the country by the 'Incredible India' campaign whose results were announced Monday last.

The visit of the president notwithstanding, the claim of China over Arunachal territory is a louder and clear message that Arunachal Pradesh is an integral part of India.

That was why she had categorically said in her address at NERIST Wednesday, "The people of Arunachal Pradesh every morning experience the warmth of the first rays of the morning sun touching India.



President offering her prayer at Tawang Monastery Thursday- PIB

Arunachal Pradesh, The Land of the Rising Sun, may be our eastern most state, but it has never been far from the centre of the consciousness of the nation."

Though Arunachal graduated to a democratic form of government in 1975 and has its own elected government and assembly,

it graduated to parliamentary democracy in 1977. The present Chief Minister, Dorjee Khandu, is from Tawang while Lok Sabha MP Kiren Rijiju, who represents West parliamentary constituency, is also from the area.

Interestingly, China had objected to the visit of Prime

Minister Manmohan Singh to Arunachal on January 31 last year. Singh had said, "...like the sun, Arunachal Pradesh will rise from the east as a new star and become one of the best regions of our country", before announcing the biggest post-independence financial package for the state. External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee had rejected the Chinese objection, saying Arunachal is an indivisible part of India.

Reacting to media report that Chinese representative W Jang, executive director of the ADB's board of directors, objecting to the loan for two infrastructure-related projects in Arunachal, saying it could not do so for a territory which was "a part of China", Mukherjee recently asserted that development work in Arunachal would be carried out regardless of the ADB's stand as Arunachal is an inseparable part of India, and that China's stand on the North Eastern state was unacceptable.

According to experts, China's new posture to claim a small area in Sikkim may be a desperate attempt to put counter-pressure on India because the Dalai Lama's influence over world leaders have been gaining strength day by day. China nourishes a grudge against India as it is providing asylum to the Tibetan spiritual leader since he fled Tibet in 1959 through

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Beyond the Horizon
By Pradeep Kumar