

中印对话

The Development of  
China-India relations in  
Recent 70 Years

# CHINA-INDIA DIALOGUE

Road Ahead: Building  
New Relations

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## A New Day for China-India Relations

# 70



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# 塞罕坝

牢记使命 艰苦创业 绿色发展

半个多世纪，三代人耕耘。

沙地变林海，荒原成绿洲。

寒来暑往，

塞罕坝机械林场的森林覆盖率

已达80%。

栽种树木按二米株距排开，

可绕地球赤道二圈。

Saihanba is a cold alpine area in northern Hebei Province bordering the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. It was once a barren land but is now home to 75,000 hectares of forest, thanks to the efforts make by generations of forestry workers in the past 55 years. Every year the forest purifies 137 million cubic meters of water and absorbs 747,000 tons of carbon dioxide. The forest produces 12 billion yuan (around US\$1.8 billion) of ecological value annually, according to the Chinese Academy of Forestry.

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# Memorabilia of 70th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between China and India



Mao Zedong, Chairman of the Central People's Government of China, met with Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in October 1954.

## 1950

On April 1, China and India established diplomatic relations. India was the first non-socialist country to establish diplomatic ties with the People's Republic of China. "Hindi Chini Bhai Bhai" (meaning "India and China are brothers") has become a catchphrase from that time and a much-told story in the history of bilateral exchanges.

## 1954

Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai visited India. China and India signed the Joint Statement and jointly advocated the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. In the same year, Indian Prime Minister Nehru visited China. He was the first head of government of a non-socialist country who visited China since the founding of the People's Republic of China.



Zhou Enlai, Premier of Government Administration Council of the Central People's Government of China, visited India and jointly advocated the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence in June 1954.

## 1955

Premier Zhou Enlai and Prime Minister Nehru attended the Asian-African Conference in which 29 countries participated in Bandung, Indonesia and jointly advocated the Bandung Spirit of solidarity, friendship and cooperation.

## 1962

The border conflict led to a serious setback in bilateral relations.

## 1976

China and India restored ambassadorial relations and bilateral ties improved gradually.

## 1988

Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi visited China, initiating the process of normalization of bilateral relations. The two sides agreed to "look forward" and develop bilateral relations actively in other fields while seeking a mutually acceptable solution to boundary question.



Deng Xiaoping, Chairman of China's Central Military Commission met with Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in December 1988.

## 1992

Indian President R. Venkataraman visited China. He was the first Indian president who visited China since the independence of the Republic of India.

## 1993

Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao visited China. *Agreement between the*

*Government of China and the Government of India on the Maintenance of Peace and Tranquility along the Line of Actual Control in the India-China Border Areas* was signed.

## 1996

President Jiang Zemin visited India. He was the first head of state from China who visited India since the establishment of bilateral diplomatic ties. Both sides agreed to build a constructive partnership of cooperation oriented towards the 21st century. *Agreement between the Government of China and the Government of India on Confidence Building Measures in the Military Field along the Line of Actual Control in the India-China Border Areas* was signed.



Chinese President Jiang Zemin visited India and held talks with Indian President Shankar Dayal Sharma in November 1996.

## 2000

Indian President K R Narayanan visited China on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and India.

## 2002

Premier Zhu Rongji visited India. Both sides

agreed to enhance mutual understanding and trust and promote exchanges and cooperation in various fields.

## 2003

Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee visited China. The two sides signed *The Declaration on the Principles and Comprehensive Cooperation in China-India Relations*, and agreed to establish the special representatives meeting mechanism on India-China boundary question.

## 2005

Premier Wen Jiabao visited India. China and India signed the Joint Statement and declared the establishment of the strategic and cooperative partnership for peace and prosperity. The two sides welcomed the signing of the *Agreement on the Political Parameters and Guiding Principles for the Settlement of the India-China Boundary Question*.

## 2006

President Hu Jintao visited India. The two sides signed a Joint Declaration to



Chinese President Hu Jintao met with Indian President Abdul Kalam in New Delhi in November 2006.

formulate the ten-pronged strategy for deepening the strategic and cooperative partnership.

## 2008

Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh visited China. “A Shared Vision for the 21st Century” was agreed upon by the two governments.

## 2010

Indian President Patil visited China in May, which coincided with the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and India. In December, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao visited India and the two sides issued a Joint Communiqué.

## 2011

The year was the “China-India Exchange Year.” Both sides held a series of people-to-people and cultural exchange activities, and signed a memorandum on joint compilation for the “Encyclopedia of India-China Cultural Contacts.” A 500-member Indian youth delegation visited China.

## 2012

The year was the “Year of China-India Friendship and Cooperation.” President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao met with Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh respectively on the sidelines of the 4th BRICS Summit and the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. A 500-member Chinese youth delegation visited India.

## 2013

President Xi Jinping met with Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh on the sidelines of the 5th BRICS Summit in Durban,

South Africa in March. Premier Li Keqiang visited India in May and the two sides released a Joint Statement. Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh visited China in October.

## 2014

The year marked the “China-India Friendly Exchange Year.” In September, President Xi Jinping paid a state visit to India and visited Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s home state of Gujarat. The two sides issued *Joint Statement on Building a Closer Developmental Partnership*. In the same year, President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang met with Prime Minister Modi respectively on the sidelines of the 6th BRICS Summit in Brazil and the Leaders’ Meetings on East Asia Cooperation in Myanmar.

## 2015

Indian Prime Minister Modi visited China and went to President Xi Jinping’s hometown Xi’an. In the same year, President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang met with Prime Minister Modi respectively on the sidelines of the 7th BRICS Summit in Ufa and the Leaders’ Meetings on East Asia Cooperation in Malaysia. China decided to open the Nathu La Pass to Indian official pilgrims to Tibet Autonomous Region. India celebrated the India Tourism Year in China.

## 2016

Indian President Mukherjee visited China. Indian Prime Minister Modi visited China to attend the G20 Summit in Hangzhou and met with President Xi Jinping on the sidelines. President Xi Jinping visited India to participate in the 8th BRICS Summit in Goa and met with Prime Minister Modi on the sidelines. China celebrated the China Tourism Year in India.

### 2017

President Xi Jinping met with Prime Minister Modi on the sidelines of the SCO Summit in Astana. Prime Minister Modi visited China to attend the 9th BRICS Summit in Xiamen and met with President Xi Jinping on the sidelines.

### 2018

President Xi Jinping held an informal meeting with Indian Prime Minister

Narendra Modi in Wuhan. They had in-depth discussions and reached broad consensus on the overarching, long-term and strategic issues of global and bilateral importance and their respective visions for national development as well as domestic and foreign policies. The informal meeting set up a new model of exchanges between leaders of the two countries and became a milestone in the history of bilateral relations. In the same year, Prime Minister Modi visited China



Chinese President Xi Jinping held an informal meeting with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Wuhan in April 2018.



Chinese President Xi Jinping held the second informal meeting with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Chennai in October 2019.

to attend the SCO Summit in Qingdao and met with President Xi Jinping on the sidelines. The two leaders met again on the sidelines of the 10th BRICS Summit in Johannesburg and the G20 Summit in Buenos Aires later in the year.

## 2019

President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Modi held the second informal meeting in Chennai, reaffirmed the Wuhan consensus and agreed to build a closer partnership for development, enhance the in-depth strategic communication, promote mutually beneficial cooperation in various fields, and advance exchanges and mutual learning between the two civilizations. In the same year, President Xi Jinping met with

Prime Minister Modi on the sidelines of the SCO Summit in Bishkek and the 11th BRICS Summit.

## 2020

The year marks the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and India. It is also China-India Year of Cultural and People-to-People Exchanges. The two sides agreed to hold 70 celebratory activities to demonstrate the historical connection between the two civilizations as well as their growing bilateral relationship over the years, and further deepen people-to-people exchanges between the two countries at all levels, including between their respective legislatures, businesses, academics, cultural and youth organizations as well as the defense forces. 63

# Charting a New Course for Dragon-Elephant Tango

By Sun Weidong



Let's take a "dragon-elephant tango" on a glorious journey in the next 70 years.

**O**n April 1, 2020, we embraced the important moment of the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and India.

As the only two emerging countries with a population of more than 1 billion in the world, China and India shoulder the historic mission of national rejuvenation, play a leading role in the collective rise of developing countries, and inject strong momentum

into the profound changes of the world unseen in a century. The two countries have never been as relevant as they are today. At this moment, it is particularly imperative to recall the original aspiration of establishing diplomatic ties 70 years ago and carry forward the spirit of good-neighborly friendship, solidarity and cooperation between our two countries. From this new chapter, we should carry forward the profound friendship between

our two peoples spanning thousands of years, deepen exchanges and mutual learning between our two civilizations and add new dimensions to the way for China and India to explore on how to coexist with each other as two major emerging and neighboring countries.

China and India are fellow travelers against all odds. Our two countries had fought side by side in the national liberation movement. Independence and national rejuvenation are



Chinese President Xi Jinping (right) shakes hands with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi during their visit to an exhibition of cultural relics at Hubei Provincial Museum in Wuhan, capital of central China's Hubei Province, April 27, 2018. Modi is here for a two-day informal meeting with President Xi Jinping. by Pang Xinglei/Xinhua

our common goals and the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence represent our shared wisdom in contributing to international relations. Today, we speak for safeguarding the legitimate rights and interests of developing countries, and share common aspiration of building a more just and equitable international order. Just as President Xi Jinping said, if China and India speak in one voice, the whole world will listen.

China and India are pilots in the trends of reform and development. In the 1980s and 1990s, the two countries embarked on the path of economic reform and development one after another. We have been learning from

each other and riding high on the tides of the world's rapid changes and economic development. Today, China and India respectively rank the second and fifth largest economies in the world, accounting for half of the Asian economy and one fifth of the world economy. Our two countries have emerged as important engines of regional and global economic growth.

China and India are practitioners of mutual learning among civilizations. The two countries have a long history of trade and exchange. China's papermaking, silk, porcelain and tea were exported to India, while Indian singing and dancing, astronomy, architecture and spices

were introduced to China, which became the historical witnesses of the mutual exchanges between the two sides. Zhang Qian was sent on a diplomatic mission to the Western Regions. Zheng He sailed to the Western Ocean seven times and visited India six times. Originating in India, Buddhism thrived in China. Eminent monks like Faxian, Xuanzang, Kumarajiva and Bodhidharma made the expeditions by crossing over mountains and sailing the deep sea. All of them left touching stories. Today, people-to-people and cultural exchanges between China and India set off a new wave, with 14 pairs of sister provinces or cities established and mutual

personnel visits exceeding one million annually. Tai Chi and Yoga, Chinese medicine and Ayurveda, Bollywood films and Chinese kungfu movies have gained popularity in each other's countries. It is a new chapter of mutual respect and harmonious coexistence between the two civilizations.

China and India are partners sailing in the same boat. Facing with the spread of COVID-19 around the world, China and India are standing side by side and helping with each other, which highlights the significance of building a community with a shared future for mankind. At the Extraordinary G20 Leaders' Summit via video link, President Xi Jinping emphasized that it is imperative for the international community to strengthen confidence, act with unity and work together in a collective response, as the COVID-19 outbreak is spreading worldwide. We must comprehensively step up international cooperation and foster greater synergy so that humanity as one could win the battle against such a major infectious disease. The Indian side echoed these remarks positively. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi sent a letter of condolence to Chinese President Xi Jinping, expressing support for China's anti-epidemic efforts. Foreign ministers of our two countries had two phone calls, and China has taken the initiative to share its experience in epidemic prevention and control with India. Chinese companies and social charity organizations

provided anti-epidemic donations to India. China and India have worked together to build a community with a shared future for mankind.

In retrospect of the seven-decade journey, China-India relations have forged ahead despite ups and downs, and traversed an extraordinary path of development:

The first keyword is independence in the 1950s. The older-generation leaders of the two countries such as Chairman Mao Zedong and Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru made the historic decision of establishing diplomatic ties. India was the

leader Deng Xiaoping reiterated the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence as guidelines of international relations. The two sides agreed to resolve the boundary question through peaceful and friendly consultations and seek a mutually acceptable solution and meanwhile, the relations in other fields could be actively promoted. Since then, the bilateral relations had developed in all areas, witnessing frequent mutual visits between the two leaders and establishment of the Strategic and Cooperative Partnership for Peace and Prosperity between China and India.

## **Facing with the spread of COVID-19 around the world, China and India are standing side by side and helping with each other, which highlights the significance of building a community with a shared future for mankind.**

first non-socialist country to establish diplomatic relations with China. Premier Zhou Enlai and Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru exchanged visits, jointly advocated the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and attended the Bandung Conference together. "Hindi Chini Bhai Bhai" (Indian and Chinese people are brothers) rang through our two countries.

The second one is development in the 1980s and beyond. In 1988, Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi embarked on an "ice-breaking visit" to China. During the visit, Chinese

The third one is strategic communication beginning in 2013. President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Narendra Modi established good working relations and personal friendship through "home-town diplomacy" in 2014 and 2015, respectively. The two leaders held two informal summits in Wuhan and Chennai in the past two years, creating a new model of exchanges between leaders. The two sides conducted strategic communication on overall, long-term and strategic international and regional issues and agreed



Chinese President Xi Jinping (left) rotates a spinning wheel that was once used by Mahatma Gandhi as he visits Gandhi's former residence along with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi (right) in Gujarat, India, Sept. 17, 2014. Xi Jinping visited the state of Gujarat on Wednesday. by Ma Zhancheng/Xinhua

to strengthen the Closer Developmental Partnership between China and India.

China-India relations today are hard-won thanks to the hard work and unrelenting efforts of generations. Here are some enlightenment and experience that we can draw from it.

First, adhere to strategic guidance given by the leaders. Over the past 70 years, leaders of the two countries have grasped the general direction of China-India relations from a strategic and overall perspective. They have always steered the course whenever we joined hands in the national liberation movement in Asia, Africa and Latin America, or push bilateral relations back on track and jointly ushered in the "Asian Century"; whenever the two leaders conducted "hometown diplomacy" and informal summits in recent years and reached a series of strategic

consensuses. Their roles are irreplaceable.

Second, stay on the general trend of friendly cooperation. China and India have a history of friendly exchanges for more than two thousand years. The friendly cooperation, which has dominated most of the time, is the prevailing theme, through which the two peoples have forged a profound friendship. Our joint efforts in combating the COVID-19 pandemic today reminds me of the great sacrifice made by Dr. Dwarkanath Kotnis, a member of the Indian medical team to China who saved lives in the battlefield for the cause of Chinese liberation. We will hold an event to commemorate the 110th birth anniversary of Dr. Kotnis later this year. As the tides of history roll forward, the waves of friendship and cooperation are running ahead. More people, particularly the young generation, are joining the cause of

China-India friendship and passing on the noble spirit of Dr. Kotnis.

Third, add impetus to mutually beneficial cooperation. China and India share similar national conditions. Both countries are at the critical stage of economic development, deepening reforms and advancing modernization. Our two economies are highly complementary and mutually beneficial cooperation injects impetus into the development of China and India. The bilateral trade volume has grown from less than US\$100 million in the 1950s to nearly US\$100 billion today. China has been India's largest trading partner for several consecutive years. There is great potential for bilateral cooperation in medicine, information, technology, connectivity, environmental protection, poverty reduction governance experience sharing, etc.

Fourth, strengthen coordination in international and regional affairs. China and India are important members of multilateral organizations and mechanisms such as the BRICS, SCO, G20, WTO, and China-Russia-India. We shoulder the responsibility and obligation to ensure the legitimate rights and interests of developing countries, speak up for emerging economies, and forge a fairer and more equitable and rational international order to adapt to the rapid changes of the world landscape. China and India share similar positions on non-traditional security issues such as climate change, energy and food security, and public health. Both countries



April 27, 2018: Chinese President Xi Jinping (right) shakes hands with visiting Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi during their visit to an exhibition of cultural relics at Hubei Provincial Museum in Wuhan, Hubei Province. Modi is here for a two-day informal meeting with President Xi Jinping. by Pang Xinglei/Xinhua

also share common interests in advancing maritime dialogue, regional connectivity, and “China-India Plus” cooperation. We are both seizing the development opportunities of the fourth industrial revolution including 5G, big data and artificial intelligence. All these coordination and cooperation empower the bilateral relations to continue to grow.

Fifth, handle the differences properly. There are issues related to boundary and Tibet left by history between the two countries. The evolving international and regional situation has complicated impacts on China-India relations. The two sides have established mechanisms to

manage differences and seek a constructive solution through dialogue and consultation. One of the mechanisms is the Special Representatives’ Meeting on the China-India Boundary Question through which the political parameters and guiding principles for a boundary settlement were agreed upon. For decades, not a single bullet has been fired across the China-India border. Our common interests far outweigh our differences. The two sides should expand cooperation and curb negative factors to break the circle of ups and downs in China-India relations and proactively shape bilateral relations.

China and India are important neighbors to each other.

To respect each other’s development paths and achieve our own development is in itself a contribution to world prosperity and stability. Against the backdrop of current international situation, China and India shoulder increasingly important responsibilities in maintaining global stability and promoting common development. China-India relations have gone far beyond the bilateral scope and are of global strategic significance. Both sides should adhere to the basic judgment that China and India pose no threat but offer development opportunities to each other. We should regard each other as a positive factor in global change and take each other as partners

for realizing the dream of development. Both China and India stand for an independent foreign policy. We should correctly analyze and view each other's strategic intentions with a positive, open and inclusive attitude. We should reject zero-sum games, not target any third party, and not impede the development of relations with other countries. We should continue to push for a new type of international relations guided by the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence.

China-India relations stand at a new starting point now and usher in new

consolidate and deepen the basic judgment that China and India are partners rather than rivals, representing opportunities rather than threats to each other.

Focusing on cooperation is the approach. The two sides should actively seek convergence of interests, seize all opportunities for cooperation, and achieve mutual benefit and win-win results by making the pie of cooperation even bigger. By doing so, we can continue to accumulate positive energy for the development of bilateral relations.

Managing differences is the assurance. The two

national rejuvenation, which is an integral component of building a community with a shared future for mankind.

There are four keys we should hold to figure out how major emerging and neighboring countries like China and India coexist with each other: To guide the direction of bilateral relations through highlighting the informal summits and reaching consensus; To translate the consensus into tangible cooperation and outcomes through transmission of the leaders' consensus to all levels; To shape bilateral relations and accumulate positive momentum through going beyond the mode of managing differences; To achieve common development through strengthening exchanges and cooperation and promoting convergence of interests.

Both President Ram Nath Kovind and Prime Minister Narendra Modi mentioned the dictum "the whole world is but a family," which is similar to the Chinese philosophy of "universal harmony in the world." The ancient Oriental wisdom is still showing vitality today. I am confident that China and India have the vision and capacity to blaze a path for the two major emerging neighbors to amicably get along with each other. Let's take a "dragon-elephant tango" on a glorious journey in the next 70 years, and write a new chapter in building a community with a shared future for mankind. 🇨🇳

## **The two sides should reduce the negative list and not allow differences to interfere with bilateral relations and even become disputes.**

opportunities. The rise of China and India will have a far-reaching impact on the world. We should seek wisdom from thousands of years of our two civilizations to explore a way for the two major emerging and neighboring countries to get along with each other in the direction of "enhancing mutual trust, focusing on cooperation, managing differences and seeking common development."

Enhancing mutual trust is the foundation. Only through mutual respect, consultation on an equal footing, openness and mutual trust can the two sides correctly view each other's development intentions, and subsequently

sides should always bear in mind the overall picture of bilateral relations, put differences in appropriate places and deal with them properly. The two sides should reduce the negative list and not allow differences to interfere with bilateral relations and even become disputes.

Seeking common development is the direction. China hopes itself will develop well and wishes India the same. Seeking common development is conducive to stability and prosperity of the region and the world at large. China and India should join hands with other developing countries in winning the marathon of achieving economic development, people's happiness and

—

*The author is Chinese Ambassador to India.*

# Sino-Indian Relations at 70: Reinforcing Growth and Stability

By Srikanth Kondapalli



As the two most populous countries in Asia, with huge territories, resources, economies and stakes in regional and international affairs, their roles in the global arena have been exemplary.

**A**s China and India celebrate the 70th anniversary of the establishment of their diplomatic ties this year, it is natural to raise issues related to their experience, prospects and challenges in bilateral relations. As the two most populous countries in Asia, with huge territories,

resources, economies and stakes in regional and international affairs, their roles in the global arena have been exemplary.

Soon after the decolonization process began, India and China showed solidarity with the Afro-Asian unity process, non-alignment, South-South cooperation and began their

respective nation building processes. Despite several setbacks in the past, India and China have respectively become the 6th and 2nd largest economies in the world today. These “simultaneously rising” countries are today engaged in an intense debate about future prospects.

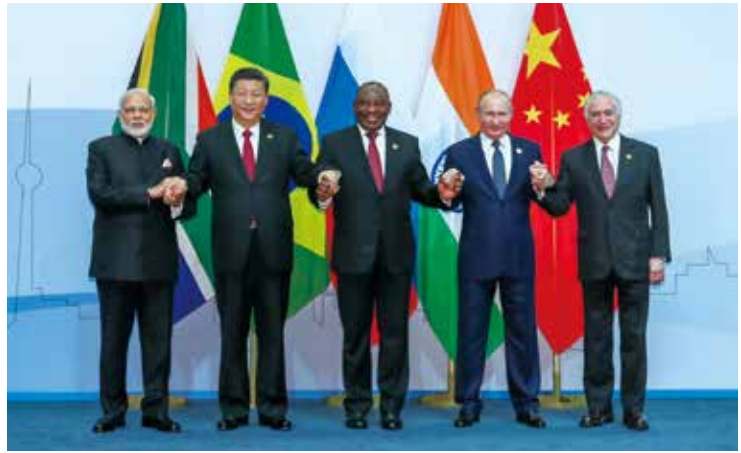
As important stakeholders

in globalization, China and India today see their coordination in several political and economic multilateral institutions like the United Nations, BRICS, Shanghai Cooperation Organization, G20, World Trade Organization, climate change proposals and Bretton Woods institutions as mutually reinforcing and reassuring partners given their focus on socio-economic developmental imperatives.

For instance, coordination between BRICS countries led to an increase in the voting rights for China and India at the International Monetary Fund. Likewise, the coordination of China and India and others on climate change proposals at the Copenhagen meeting in 2009 led to protection of interests of developing countries and the formulation of “equal, but differentiated, responsibilities” on the issue. Also, a focus on multi-polarity has protected the “non-interference” principle at the United Nations and other institutions and guarded the respective sovereignties of China and India.

At the bilateral level, both countries see the evolving partnership as a factor in regional and global stability given the increasing turbulence in recent times. The partnership between China and India evolved from the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence in 1954 to a constructive cooperative partnership in 1988, a strategic and cooperative partnership in 2005 and to the current developmental partnership since Chinese President Xi Jinping’s visit to New Delhi in September 2014.

As the world went through



July 26, 2018: The 10th BRICS summit is held in Johannesburg, South Africa. Chinese President Xi Jinping (second left), Brazilian President Michel Temer (first right), Russian President Vladimir Putin (second right), Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi (first left) and South African President Cyril Ramaphosa pose for a group photo during the plenary session of the summit in Johannesburg. by Xie Huanchi/Xinhua

turbulence in recent times from trade protectionism, tariff increases and technological disruptions or due to the spread of terrorism and the current COVID-19 pandemic, the Sino-Indian partnership is shown in their coordination and cooperation in regional and international affairs. Indeed, how to counter such disruptions and continue to boost economic growth has been a major task for their respective leadership.

China and India have been able to achieve stability in their bilateral relations on three levels. Firstly, due to institutional arrangements at various levels, bilateral relations have bounced back to normalcy and stability. Over 50 dialogue mechanisms have been established in the past several decades.

The two “informal summits” between leaders of the two countries in Wuhan in April

2018 and in Chennai in October 2019 have become an institutionalized mechanism, which is currently the top avenue to reach strategic consensus on a number of issues between China and India. Moreover, the two countries have been able to carry out very useful high-level strategic communication. They declared that “differences between the two countries should not lead to disputes,” suggesting that the leadership’s intervention in times of crisis could be resorted to.

The State Councilor-National Security Advisor level special representative mechanism since 2003 has prepared the ground for discussing not only boundary question but also overall security issues. So far, 22 such meetings have been held, which aim to resolve the China-India boundary question in three phases. The mechanism is to clarify the

Line of Actual Control in the border areas. Once that is done, after the completion of the third phase, delimitation and demarcation efforts on the borders will commence.

Likewise, the strategic dialogue mechanism between foreign ministries of the two countries has provided an avenue for discussing and coordinating a number of foreign policy issues of multi-polarity and multilateralism but also the resolving bilateral problems. The regional security dialogues on Afghanistan, Southeast Asia, Central Asia and others have been conducive to reaching important consensuses. In August 2016,

during Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi's visit to New Delhi, this mechanism was further upgraded to include broader issues of concern and coordination.

The defense ministries of China and India have held an annual dialogue since the mechanism was established in 2006. In order to build understanding between the two armed forces, such annual dialogues became necessary, and through this mechanism eight "hand-in-hand" joint drills were conducted in different parts of India and China with focus on counter-terrorism. Since both countries identify terrorism as a challenge to their respective

national security, such joint military exercises are expected to intensify in the near future.

As the two largest developing economies, China and India hold regular strategic and economic dialogues, of which six meetings were held between China's National Development and Reform Commission and India's Planning Commission (currently NITI Aayog). They have reached a number of agreements related to macroeconomic stability and explored avenues for infrastructure development.

China and India are the two largest investors in the recently formed Asian Infrastructure Investment



August 17, 2019: The "India Day" event kicks off at the Beijing International Horticultural Exhibition in Beijing. by Zhang Chenlin/Xinhua

Bank and equal stakeholders in the BRICS New Development Bank. Both have been proposing above-board banking principles like one country one vote, professional evaluation of loan proposals, environmental concerns, investing in social and health sectors, lean and mean staffing policies, and others that are expected to contribute to a new model of developmental and monetary policies in the future.

Other dialogue mechanisms existing between the two countries involve counter-terrorism, law enforcement, human resources development, finance and others. The nine financial dialogues between the two countries have led to preliminary understanding on regional currency-related arrangements that is being practiced among BRICS countries. Necessary banking institutions are being set up to finance credit for the burgeoning trade between the two countries. Likewise, 11 joint working group meetings were held to expand their economic relations. Bilateral trade increased from a mere US\$264 million in 1991 to US\$92 billion in 2019. A “steel dialogue” was instrumental in expanding cooperation on one of the largest traded commodities between the two countries.

All the above dialogue mechanisms have been useful and, in tense situations, have led to ironing out differences and building stability in their bilateral relations. Moreover, they have sparked interest in looking beyond the mere bilateral spectrum.

A second set of stabilizing

mechanisms that have been evolved over a period of time is related to the boundary question between China and India. Prior to the normalization of China-India relations in 1976, after the border conflict in 1962, there were sporadic attempts to build confidence between the two countries’ border guarding troops. In 1993, a “peace and tranquility” agreement was signed that ruled out war between China and India. During President Jiang Zemin’s visit to India in 1996, confidence-building measures (CBMs) in the military field were proposed to stabilize the border areas of the two countries. These included no-fly zones, no military exercises close to the border areas, withdrawal of troops and others.

In 2013, a border defense cooperation agreement was signed to avoid “tailing” of border patrols. In September 2017, during their meeting in Xiamen, Chinese and Indian leaders made an announcement for a new set of CBMs, including a “hotline” between the two countries’ military operational commands. Despite occasional border incidents, the above CBMs were able to put bilateral relations back on an even keel and as such provided for border stability. The significance of this dimension cannot be underestimated as these have led to not one bullet being fired since 1962 and ushering in peace and tranquility on the borders.

To celebrate the 70th anniversary of the establishment of China-India diplomatic

ties, a number of events have been planned for this year, with 35 events to be held in each country. Many of these come under the rubric of “10 pillars” of cooperation agreed by the two countries in December 2018. These include think tank meetings and media forums (four of each have been held so far), as well as 14 sets of sister cities tie-ups in the two countries, 14 youth exchanges annually that began in 2006 and have recently been expanded, promotion of tourism through e-visas and others, collaboration between film and TV establishments, museum administration, conducting yoga classes, and recruiting Chinese language teachers for enhancing skills.

With the outbreak of COVID-19, such celebrations are expected to slow down as the focus has been on travel restrictions, social distancing, quarantine and treatment of patients. Nevertheless, Indian medical officials participated in the China-initiated online video conference for the Eurasia-South Asia region that began consultations on learning from each other’s medical experience in tackling the spread of COVID-19.

These initiatives of China and India, nevertheless, are significant in enhancing mutual understanding between the two contrives. More, of course, will be needed in the coming years. ■

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# The Development of China-India relations in Recent 70 Years

By Chen Zonghai

The 24 mutual visits by heads of state and government testify to the changing relations between China and India.

China and India, two civilizational giants, are riding a wave of the profound changes unseen in a century. The two countries are neighbors, important players on multilateral platforms and both major developing countries, and their relationship reflects all of these factors. Over the past seven decades, China-India relations have continued progressing despite ups and downs. To catch a glimpse of the future, it is helpful to reflect on the history of their relationship.

## 24 VISITS

Since the establishment of their diplomatic ties on April 1, 1950, relations between

China and India have shifted through five phases known as the honeymoon period (1950-1959), the confrontation period (1959-1976), the normalization period (1976-2000), the strategic and cooperative partnership period (2000-2013) and today's close partnership period since 2013. Myriad events happened over the past 70 years. Among them, the 24 dedicated visits by heads of state and government of the two countries to the other side best testify to the changes in the relations between China and India.

## HONEYMOON PERIOD

From 1950 when their diplomatic relations were established

to 1959 when disputes between the two countries emerged, the honeymoon period featured three visits by leaders from both sides. In June 1954, Chinese Premier and Foreign Minister Zhou Enlai made a formal visit to India to clarify and settle the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence reiterated by the *Joint Statement of Chinese and Indian Premiers*. In October of the same year, Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru visited China and met with Chairman Mao Zedong four times. The two visits boosted the relations between China and India to new heights. In November and December of 1956, Premier Zhou Enlai made his second visit to India, which inspired the slogan "Hindi Chini Bhai

Bhai” (India and China are brothers). The mid-1950s were regarded as the height of “the honeymoon period” of China-India relations.

### CONFRONTATION PERIOD

By 1959, the Tibet issue and the boundary question pushed China and India into open disagreement. Intimacy deteriorated into hostility, and the border conflict eventually erupted in full confrontation. During this period, just one visit by a head of government happened between the two countries. In April 1960, Premier Zhou made his third and final visit to India to discuss the boundary question with Jawaharlal Nehru, but it remained unsettled after seven meetings. After the outbreak of a one-month border conflict between the two countries in 1962, bilateral relations maintained a long-term standoff until 1976.

### NORMALIZATION PERIOD

In 1976, relations between China and India returned to normal as they resumed ambassadorial ties. Between 1976 and 2000 when the two countries jointly celebrated the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties, heads of government from both sides exchanged visits five times. In December 1988, Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi overcame obstruction of the “parallel policy” to pay a historic formal visit to China. It was the first time that an Indian head of government visited China since Jawaharlal Nehru 34 years earlier.

In December 1991, Chinese Premier Li Peng made a formal visit to India, the first by a Chinese premier since Zhou in 1960. These two visits by heads of government of the two countries happened in the global context of the collapse of Soviet Union and the breakup of a bi-polar world and played a

groundbreaking role in boosting and reconstructing bilateral ties.

In May 1992, Indian President Ramaswamy Venkataraman made a state visit to China, the first by an Indian president. In September 1993, Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao made a formal visit to China during which the two sides inked the *Agreement on the Maintenance of Peace and Tranquility along the Line of Actual Control in the India-China Border Areas*.

From November 28 to December 1, 1996, then Chinese President Jiang Zemin made a state visit to India, the first by a Chinese president, during which the two sides established a “constructive partnership of cooperation oriented towards the 21st century” and signed the *Agreement between India and China on Confidence-Building Measures in the Military Field along the Line of Actual Control in the India-China Border Areas*. Moreover, the two border agreements signed in 1993 and 1996 respectively provided international legal guarantees to maintain peace on the border of China and India.



February 28, 2010: A Chinese passenger (left) receives a bouquet and a gift as the Flight CA425 arrives in Bangalore, known as the Silicon Valley of India. The arrival of the flight marked the official opening of the Chengdu-Bangalore international air route, the first flight from the Chinese mainland to Bangalore. by Mao Xiaoxiao/Xinhua

### STRATEGIC AND COOPERATIVE PARTNERSHIP

During the period from 2000 when China and India celebrated the 50th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic ties up to the Chinese premier’s 2013 visit to India, eight visits of heads of government were made between the two countries. From May 28 to June 2, 2000, Indian President Kochar Narayanan made a state visit to China, the first

visit to Beijing by an Indian leader since the setback in bilateral relations caused by India's nuclear test in 1998.

In January 2002, then Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji made a formal visit to India. India reframed its attitude about China, moving past the "China threat" prejudice to embrace China as a neighbor and friend. In June 2003, Indian Prime Minister Bhupendra Patel Patel made a formal visit to China, and the two sides signed 10 cooperative documents including the *Declaration on Principles for Relations and Comprehensive Cooperation between China and India*, which provided political solutions for Tibet and Sikkim issues.

In April 2005, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao made a formal visit to India. The two sides established a strategic and cooperative partnership for peace and prosperity and signed the *Agreement on the Political Parameters and Guiding Principles for the Settlement of the India-China Boundary Question* and the *Protocol on Modalities for the Implementation of Confidence Building Measures in the Military Field along the Line of Actual Control in the India-China Border Areas*. Since then, China-India relations evolved from a constructive cooperative partnership to a strategic and cooperative partnership, marking the first bilateral step of the three-step roadmap to solve the China-India boundary question. (The three steps include agreeing on guiding principles, deciding the framework, and drawing the actual line.)

In November 2006, then Chinese President Hu Jintao made a formal visit to India and the two sides agreed that comprehensive economic and trade relations were the core of their strategic and cooperative partnership. In January 2008, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh made a formal visit to China, during which the two sides signed *A Shared Vision for the 21st Century*.

In May 2010, Indian President Pratibha Patil made a formal state visit to China and called mutual learning and communication a "cornerstone" to strengthening friendship between the two countries. In December of the same year, then Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao visited India, during which he agreed with his Indian counterpart that China-India relations had gone beyond the bilateral scope and had global and strategic significance, so they decided to set up a regular mutual visit mechanism of heads of state and government between the two countries. The same year, the Chinese premier and the Indian president exchanged visits.

### **CLOSER DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP**

Since 2013, China and India have endeavored to develop a closer partnership for development. The period from 2013 when Chinese Premier Li Keqiang visited India to April 1, 2020 witnessed seven exchange visits by heads of state and government from the two countries. In May 2013, newly-appointed Chinese Premier Li Keqiang headed to

India for his first outbound visit, highlighting how important the new Chinese administration considered China-India relations. In October of the same year, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh paid a formal visit to China. It was the first time since 1954 that the premiers from the two countries exchanged visits in the same year.

In September 2014, Chinese President Xi Jinping paid a state visit to India, emphasizing that "development is the biggest common strategic goal of the two countries." China and India agreed to develop "a closer developmental partnership" that would be "a core component" of their strategic and cooperative partnership. Since then, the two countries have focused on a development partnership while paying attention to a strategic and cooperative partnership.

In May 2015, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited China, and the two sides agreed that the simultaneous rise of China and India provided an important opportunity to realize the Asian Century. In May 2016, Indian President Pranab Mukherjee visited China, and the two sides agreed to strengthen cultural exchange and mutual understanding to construct a closer development partnership. In 2017, the 72-day Dong Lang (Doklam) standoff interrupted visits by the heads of state and government of the two countries. In April 2018, Chinese President Xi Jinping held an informal meeting with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Wuhan. The two sides agreed to "blaze a

broad path of friendly cooperation between the two great neighboring countries, a path that can best meet the needs of the times” and “strengthen the China-India closer developmental partnership in an equal-footed, mutually beneficial and sustainable manner to support national modernization.”

In October 2019, Chinese President Xi Jinping visited the southern Indian city of Chennai for the second informal meeting with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The two leaders agreed that China and India should respect and learn from each other to jointly achieve common development and prosperity and the great rejuvenation of the two civilizations. On April 1, 2020, to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties, Chinese President Xi Jinping and Indian President Ram Nath Kovind exchanged greetings, as did Chinese Premier Li Keqiang and his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi. Both sides agreed to “construct a closer development partnership” and “constantly push for new achievements in China-India strategic and cooperative partnership.”

### CONSENSUS ON COOPERATION


Interactions between China and India can run as rapid as the Yarlung Zangbo River or sit as inert as the Himalayas. And mutual visits by heads of state and government testify to the ups and downs in relations between the two countries. Since 1950, top leaders from China and India made 24 special exchange visits – 12

by Chinese leaders and 12 by their Indian counterparts – reflecting the principle of “diplomatic equivalence.” The 50 years before 2000 brought nine mutual visits. But the first 20 years of this century saw 15. The rapidly increasing frequency of high-level mutual visits in the 21st century highlights the positive development trend of relations between the two countries.

After achieving independence, both China and India have strived for modernization by transforming from traditional to modern society. The modernization that the two countries pursue is driven by industrial development and technological revolution, which will transform either country from an agricultural society into an industrial society and allow industrialism to penetrate fields of economics, politics, culture, and innovation to produce profound reforms of social organizations and social behavior. Since the 1990s, the world has welcomed the fourth technological revolution based on the internet. Accordingly, great changes have taken place in the landscape of China’s and India’s modernization, which associate information technology, industrialization, and urbanization closely with modernization.

National modernization and civilizational revival are both countries’ strategic goals and core interests. This is also a consensus reached by the two countries. As socialism with Chinese characteristics enters into a new era, rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is the highest and most fundamental interest

of China. Since Prime Minister Narendra Modi took office, his administration has been dedicated to making India a strong, developed, inclusive and modern country by following a blueprint for a “new India” by 2022 and its 15-year development plan. Both China and India are now marching towards modernization and the realization of their strategic goals of national rejuvenation. So, at their two informal meetings in 2018 and 2019, leaders of the two countries reached two tremendously important consensuses: First, to support each other’s national modernization. Second, to achieve the great rejuvenation of both civilizations.

Today, the world is undergoing profound changes unseen in a century. Maintaining rapid growth, China and India are riding the tide and pushing global reform. The modernization of China and India, the advancement of their civilizational revival and the depth of their cooperation and development will determine the advent of the Asian Century. To jointly build the Asian Century of world civilization, a community with a shared future for Asia and a community with a shared future for humanity, China and India need to actively construct a closer development partnership and constantly strive for new fruits in China-India strategic and cooperative partnership while advancing their respective modernization. 

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# Time to Tap Potential

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By Josukutty C. A

The two countries should make more rigorous efforts to exploit available opportunities for greater mutual benefits since there is tremendous potential for cooperation.

**I**ndia and China have coexisted peacefully for thousands of years. In the late 1940s, both countries desired for a friendly relationship and started on the cordial note of 'Hindi Chini Bhai Bhai' (Indians and Chinese are brothers). The ideological congruence, however, gave way to a series of ups and downs, diminishing productive cooperation between the two. The ups and downs represented parallel streams of competition and cooperation. Gradually, their relationship shifted to a mode of keeping the differences from spiraling out of control rather than exploiting the potential avenues for greater engagement and mutual benefit. The atmosphere of uncertainty in the relationship put the brakes on much-needed confidence building

measures. Now it is realized that the overall relationship between India and China has to be one of friendship and not hostility.

The important lesson is that merely managing the relationship would leave the potential of mutual benefits untapped, which is not in the interest of either China and India or the world. The two countries should make more rigorous efforts to exploit available opportunities for greater mutual benefits since there is tremendous potential for cooperation.

## **NATURE AND SCOPE OF COOPERATION**

As two great civilizational entities, India and China have been connected, and yet disconnected. Even after India and China became

modern states in the late 1940s, the magnitude of their cooperation has been well below its potential.

The Panchsheel Agreement signed between India and China in 1954 provided the finest framework for the bilateral relationship, but the initial enthusiasm for each other as fraternal entities withered in 1962. Border issues clouded the relationship despite many rounds of talks of special representatives and joint working groups. Bilateral trade and investment between the two economies have been meager compared to many of China's other smaller neighbors such as South Korea and Vietnam, and the imbalance of trade has been a source of bickering. People-to-people contact is also minimal – Indian tourists to China number about 700,000 per

year and Chinese tourists to India are only about 200,000 per year, a mere fraction of their outbound tourists. Only a small core of academics and students study each other's languages and cultures.

These issues need to be addressed in the spirit of mutual understanding and give-and-take.

The potential for economic engagement between India and China is unlimited. Their bilateral trade per year stands around US\$100 billion. For China, India presents a huge market with long-term growth potential and abundant opportunities for partnership and enterprises. India's strength in marketing, management, consulting, information technology, pharmacological sciences and medicare are complementary to China's skill-sets in manufacturing and innovation. Besides, India has huge demand for infrastructure – roads, ports and other transport facilities – and China has the money and expertise for the projects.

Unlike some regions of the world mired in multiple complexities, for China, investment in India is a safe bet, geographically proximate with its huge market, financial infrastructure, justice system and political stability. The relocation of the mass manufacturing sectors in Asia, like textiles, toys, garments, and leather goods, could ameliorate India's severe unemployment situation. Both countries should make good use of the immense economic opportunities.



June 20, 2016: Indian pilgrims enter China's Tibet Autonomous Region via the Nathu La Pass for a pilgrimage. On June 22, 2015, China opened a new route along the Himalayan Nathu La Pass for Indian pilgrims to further promote religious exchanges between the two countries. Xinhua

The bilateral relations can be wired at different levels by focusing on commonalities. India and China are developing countries with similar problems including high disease load, environmental pollution, water stress, soil erosion, adverse sex ratios, and high social security burdens. Global threats such as pandemics, climate change, ocean acidification, energy crises and others are almost equally deleterious to the developmental demands of the two countries. Piracy, terrorism, cyber-crime, and problems related to intellectual property regimes and use of big data also present challenges that prompt India and China to work together. There is an immense scope for India and China to collaborate in adopting a common position in negotiating with the West and sharing their experience in addressing

these challenges. India and China can also work together in research and development as both countries have quality talent in science and technology, pertaining to green technology, better use of water resources, development of pollution-free cars and vaccines for deadly diseases.

At the same time, there is a need to dispel the misperceptions and change the attitudes of people in both countries towards each other. Perceptual divergences on geopolitical issues have created unfriendly images in the minds of the two peoples. Historically, Indian and Chinese civilizations respected differences and coexisted peacefully for thousands of years. Their tradition of respecting diversity and striving for harmony implies the need to play down the differences and build on the commonalities.

**TOWARD AN ASIAN CENTURY**

The simultaneous rise of India and China is the most significant development of global politics in the 21st century. It is imperative that the two countries cooperate in multiple dimensions and maintain mutually beneficial relations for the Asian Century. The late Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee emphasized two decades ago: “The 21st century will become the Century of Asia if China and India can build a stable and lasting relationship.” It is the responsibility of the two countries to resolve disputes

peacefully through dialogues and consultations, and jointly uphold regional peace, stability and prosperity.

As of now, however, the growing presence of China in South Asia is viewed by India as a security threat while India’s growing strategic and defense cooperation with the United States in the Indo-Pacific is perceived as an unfriendly act to contain China. Although India and China have common views on a multilateral and inclusive world order, they eminently lack ground-level cooperative efforts. Therefore, intensive and extensive cooperation

between India and China along with willing partners is essential to keep Western hegemonic influence at bay in Asia. Only collaborative endeavors and the co-emergence of India and China will lead to the realization of the Asian Century.

India and China, as major political and economic actors, have far-reaching impacts on global governance. Generally, the rise and decline of major global political players are characterized by instability, turbulence and even conflict. Both countries take an accommodative approach to global governance as they are



March 12, 2019: A visitor taking a photo at a children’s painting exhibition themed on “The World in Children’s Eyes” held by the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in Tashkent, capital of Uzbekistan. Xinhua



August 17, 2019: A staff member of the India Pavilion shows the ancient body art of henna tattooing to a Chinese visitor during the “India Day” event at the Beijing International Horticultural Exhibition. Henna tattoos, using natural ingredients, can remain for a few days to a few weeks on human body. Xinhua

willing to work with existing institutions and improve them through evolutionary means rather than revolutionary changes, pursuing a democratic, equitable and inclusive world order.

Sharing common interests, India and China have worked together in a range of multilateral and regional forums including the World Trade Organization, the G20, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the BRICS New Development Bank, and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank where India has become the second-largest investor after China. On issues of climate change and global financial reforms, India

and China have jointly raised their voices and concerns. India also works with China and other maritime actors to enhance regional connectivity through improved maritime cooperation for ensuring effective humanitarian and disaster relief operations in the Indian Ocean region.

India and China are two modern states with multifaceted convergences and divergences. The bilateral relationship is characterized by cooperation and competition. Though there are a few complex issues between the two, there is immense room for their economic, diplomatic and cultural ties to grow for the strategic and geopolitical

interests of both countries at regional and global levels. It is time for India and China to let go of the baggage of the past to begin more meaningful cooperation for mutual benefits. The uncertainties in the relationship could be overcome through deeper understanding and improved public perception of each other. That would be the best tribute to the 70th anniversary of India-China diplomatic ties. 🇮🇳

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# Road Ahead: Building New Relations

By Lin Minwang

The experiences and lessons of the seven decades since China and India established diplomatic ties provide an enlightening roadmap for future development of their peaceful and stable relations.

**A**pril 1 of this year marked the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the diplomatic ties between China and India. Over the past seven decades, the relationship between the two countries has seen many ups and downs.

In the 1950s, relations between the two countries were so intimate that they behaved like brothers (“Hindi Chini Bhai Bhai”). Unfortunately, the 1962 border conflict led to a serious setback in bilateral relations, which didn’t return to normalization until the late 1980s. The end of the Cold War injected new impetus into the overall improvement and rapid development of the two countries’ relations, which were enriched and

upgraded in both content and form. The two countries have carried out comprehensive cooperation and communication in the fields of politics, economics, trade, security, defense and culture and successively set up more than 30 corresponding dialogue mechanisms. More importantly, high-level leaders of the two countries have maintained regular and comprehensive contacts. Notably, the year 2018 witnessed an informal meeting between leaders of the two countries. This meeting is expected to become a regular strategic communication mechanism. People-to-people exchanges have become more frequent as more Indian students are choosing to study in China and Indian films and cultural products such as yoga

are becoming more popular with Chinese consumers.

The simultaneous rise of the economies of China and India since the end of the Cold War has deepened friendship between the two countries. Their relationship now transcends a bilateral scope as the duo continue increasing their strategic influence on the global stage. But, if they want to reinforce their relations and construct a framework to maintain stable cooperation, the two countries still have much work to do.

## CHANGING FOUNDATIONS OF CHINA-INDIA RELATIONS

When looking back at the history for guidance on the future of the relations between the two countries, it is critical to realize that the strategic



October 24, 2013: Then Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh delivers a speech at the Party School of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in Beijing. China News Service

foundation of their relations has seen significant changes. Accordingly, relations between the two countries, based on history, are facing a reshaping moment.

The most obvious change is that both countries have achieved remarkable economic rise and ranked among the leading economies around the world. But meanwhile, development gaps between them have enlarged. In 1978 when China just started its reform and opening up, the two countries' economic aggregates were similar, with India's nominal GDP ranking 12th and China's GDP ranking 11th in the world. In 1991 when India began its economic reform, China's economic aggregate was 1.4 times higher than that of India, with India's nominal GDP ranking 17th and China's GDP still ranking 11th. By 2019, China's economic aggregate was about five times of that of India. That year, India became the fifth-largest economy after China became the world's

second-largest economy in 2011. If calculated by purchasing power parity (PPP), the economic aggregates of China and India rank first and third, respectively. After Prime Minister Narendra Modi took office, India's GDP growth rate surpassed that of China slightly for three successive years from 2015 to 2017. But their overall strength gap stands to remain for a long time.

India is not the same as it was in decades past. Relations between China and India will surely be reshaped around this reality. Considering its current strength, India has behaved more like a major country in diplomacy and is pursuing a corresponding status. In foreign affairs, the country has displayed nationalistic trends and a tough-guy stance towards neighboring countries in South Asia as well as the United States and China. The strategic focus of China's foreign policies has also shifted to its neighboring countries. Such factors have increased their competition

for global status and regional influence.

Another great change involves India's diplomatic philosophy. Traditionally, India had always upheld the principle of "non-alignment." Even in 2012, some important think tanks in India were proposing a 2.0 version of the non-alignment policy despite the fact that India had deviated from the diplomatic tradition as early as in the period of Indira Gandhi. After Narendra Modi came to power, India declared it would pursue "multi-alignment," which caused stark changes in its diplomatic behavior highlighted by the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel and tighter economic connections to East Asian countries. While greatly improving relations with countries in the "U.S. circle of friends," India has to some degree distanced itself from traditional strategic partners such as Russia. The United States and India are moving towards becoming "natural allies" in defense.

Since Prime Minister Modi took office, interoperability between U.S. and Indian armies has been greatly enhanced. The two countries carry out frequent maritime drills and their armed forces have established a joint drill mechanism. Additionally, the two countries successively signed the *Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement* (LEMOA) and the *Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement* (COMCASA). In February 2020, when U.S. President

Donald Trump visited India, the two sides promised to sign the *Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geo-spatial Cooperation* (BECA) as soon as possible.

India gradually shifted from “pro-Soviet” under its “non-alignment” policy to “pro-America” and “close to America.” This change was motivated by its enlarging strength gap with China and increasingly closer connection between China and Russia, which resulted in Russia no longer balancing China for India. Furthermore, the foundation of values and cultural identity that once bound China and India has been weakened. In the mid-20th century, China and India supported each other and shared a similar dream of prosperity after independence from colonial rule. Culturally, both China and India are ancient countries with rich civilizations that have nurtured a natural spiritual connection. As memories of colonialism have become more distant, the consensus against colonialism and hegemony that aligned the countries so closely in the past has drifted away. Ideological differences between the two countries are growing.

### BUILDING NEW RELATIONS

Though both the strategic and value foundations for the relations between China and India have changed, the two major developing countries with similar national conditions still share extensive common interests. Thanks

to such common interests, relations between the two countries can move forward despite ups and downs.

The biggest common interest between China and India is people’s livelihood. Both countries are dedicated to improving the wellbeing of their peoples. Although both countries have made breakthroughs in economic aggregates, they are still developing countries in terms of per capita wealth and both are endeavoring to achieve long-term economic growth. In the current global context, the common interests of the two countries are greatly expanding. The United States has lost confidence in globalization, labeling it a sort of “poison” and rolling back many of its efforts to support it. But China and India share high convergence on globalization trends. Based on its development experience, China considers globalization the basic condition for its economic miracle. India’s economic rise also happened after the end of the Cold War and has been accelerated by the globalization process. So both China and India continue to advocate and promote globalization. But, the two countries have yet to devise an ideal method to transform their common ground into practical fruits through economic cooperation.

While engaging in practical cooperation, China and India need to properly manage their disagreements and avoid collapsing into conflict. This also meets the common interests of both countries.

It is normal for China and India, as neighboring countries, to encounter disputes left by history. But the two sides need to properly manage these old thorny problems and constantly seek new solutions. Only shrinking the list of disputes will ensure their bilateral relations are not disturbed by some incidents. Certainly, the two countries should set standards on getting along. Only when China and India agree that “a close neighbor is better than a distant relative” and “a good neighbor is more precious than gold” will they build substantial strategic trust.

As the two largest developing countries in the world, the only choice for China and India is to choreograph “the dragon and the elephant dancing together,” which aligns with the most fundamental interests of the two countries and their peoples. China and India must learn from the experiences and lessons of the past seven decades since they established diplomatic ties, which will provide an enlightening roadmap for peaceful and stable relations between the two countries as they blaze a trail of win-win cooperation. As China and India pursue national renewal simultaneously, the pair will expertly take rule-based, restrained and careful steps to ensure “the dragon and the elephant dance together.”

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The author is a researcher at the Institute of International Studies, Fudan University.

# Strengthening China-India Ties Through Cultural and People-to-people Contacts

By Dr. Vikash Singh

Even though India and China follow different models of governance, their objectives are the same.

2020 is indeed a special year for the world's two largest developing countries and emerging economies. China and India as the two countries, bound by a growing convergence of perspectives, are now celebrating the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations throughout the year by designating this historic moment as the China-India Year of Cultural and People-to-People Exchanges. Surely, it is more gratifying and energizing to see that cultural and people-to-people contacts, which were earlier sideshows in official India-China talks, are now moving to the forefront of bilateral relations



April 18, 2019: The fifth Maritime Silk Road Brands Expo opens in Shishi of Quanzhou City, in southeastern China's Fujian Province. A total of 340 exhibitors from 48 countries and regions participate in the expo. Pictured is an Indian merchant (left) introducing Indian crafts to a customer. by Song Weiwei/Xinhua

empowering further cultural exchanges in recent years. There is no doubt that India and China can make the world a more dynamic and prosperous place with the realization of the “Dragon-Elephant Tango” by the participation of the two peoples residing on either side of the Himalayas.

India and China are both ancient civilizations with their cultural influences making outstanding contributions to the world. From ancient times to the era of globalization, the two countries have been engaging in “two thousand years

of unbroken interaction” and people-to-people exchanges to facilitate mutual learning, setting a perfect example of civilizational cooperation against the so-called “clash of civilizations.” Truly, in the context of Sino-Indian relations, cultural and people-to-people exchanges have been stitching the two neighboring countries in similar joy and gusto.

We cannot but feel marvelous if we look back to take stock of where our bilateral relations started and where we stand today. Inspired by Buddhism, great scholars

of both nations had visited each other in ancient times to enhance the development of the two great civilizations. Towering snow-capped mountains and a vast expanse of desert have never blocked the exchanges between our two great civilizations. Buddhism was introduced to China from its cradle in India. In the 7th century, Chinese pilgrim and scholar-monk Xuan Zang, also known as Hsuan Tsang, came to India via the Silk Road for Buddhist scriptures. During his 14-year stay in India, he studied at



April 2, 2020: A worker checks the medical supplies donated to India by the Chongqing Municipal Government to aid its fight against the coronavirus. by Zhou Yi/China News Service

Nalanda University in Bihar under Shilabhadra for a couple of years. The written accounts of his pilgrimage have enabled the Indian people to learn about Hsuan Tsang in a better way, and about the Chinese Buddhist culture as well as the history of friendly exchanges between the two countries. Chinese monk Fa Hien or Fa Xian (337-422) visited India and sought further Buddhist knowledge. Zhang Qian, a famous Chinese envoy in the Han Dynasty (202 B.C.-220 A.D.), went to the Western Regions and discovered “Shu cloth” and “bamboo sticks” that were imported from India.

Some Indian monks also traveled to China and established Buddhist temples such as Lingyin in Hangzhou, Shaolin, and others. Chinese paper-making, silk, porcelain, and tea were introduced to India, and Indian songs and dances, astronomy, architecture, and spices were introduced to China. During his seven voyages, the great Chinese navigator Zheng He visited India six times. These mutual exchanges reflect the spirit of the ancient Silk Road, which is based on peace, cooperation, openness, inclusiveness, mutual learning, and mutual benefit. These are but a few examples of our past interactions that have inspired a lasting friendship between our peoples.

Since modern times, Dr. Sun Yat-sen and other Chinese revolutionists had been supporting the Indian independence movement. The first Asian Nobel Laureate Rabindranath

Tagore visited China twice and advocated Eastern spiritual civilization together with Tan Yunshan (the founding director of the Department of Chinese Language and Culture “Cheena Bhavana” at Visva-Bharati University, Santiniketan). Cheena Bhavana has been playing a pioneering role in the development of Chinese studies in India.

While delivering her lecture on Rabindranath Tagore’s vision of India and China at the Singapore Consortium for China-India Dialogue on January 13, 2011, Indian Foreign Secretary Nirupam Rao rightly remarked: “The vision of Asian unity, conceived by Tagore nearly a century ago, is close to getting realized in the process of community-building in our region.”

During the war against Japanese aggression, India, under Jawaharlal Nehru’s advice, sent a medical mission to China in which Dr. Dwarkanath Kotnis, one outstanding representative of this medical team, sacrificed his life in China. On the other hand, Professor Xu Fancheng, a famous Chinese scholar and translator, lived in Pondicherry for 27 years and five years in Shantiniketan, West Bengal. He translated 50 Upanishads, Bhagawad Gita and Shakuntala from Sanskrit into Chinese. He also translated Sri Aurobindo’s *The Life Divine and Integral Yoga* into Chinese. Plainly speaking, Tagore, Tan Yunshan, and Xu Fancheng were pioneers to promote China-India cultural exchanges in modern times.

In the early 1950s, China and India enjoyed amicable contacts. The two countries established diplomatic relations on April 1, 1950 and India became the first non-socialist country to establish diplomatic ties with the People’s Republic of China. In 1954, Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai and Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru exchanged visits. The two leaders jointly initiated the famous Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, which remained the guiding principle of both countries. Premier Zhou paid another visit to India in 1956. The slogan “Hindi Chini Bhai Bhai” (the Indian and Chinese people are brothers) was known to every household in the mid-1950s. The concept of fraternal partnership remained unperturbed until the unfortunate border conflict of 1962.

However, after passing a long 26-year “frozen period,” the two countries started to recover the “honeymoon period” of the past with the “ice-breaking visit” by then Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to China in 1988. Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) in 2012 until the present, the two countries have expanded cooperation from bilateral to multilateral areas, and have joined hands to speak up for emerging economies. Chinese President Xi Jinping and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi put huge efforts into Sino-Indian relations with their “hometown diplomacy,” which effectively accelerated trade, cultural communication,

educational cooperation, and tourist exchanges between the two countries. No doubt these activities serve the fundamental interests of both countries, meet common aspirations of their people and are conducive to peace and development in the region and the world.

President Xi's first visit to India in September 2014 rekindled memories of Prime Minister Modi escorting the Chinese president around the Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad. This visit was followed by Modi's trip to Wuhan, capital of central China's Hubei Province, in April 2018. The iconic picture of the two leaders sitting on a traditional swing on the Sabarmati Riverfront in Ahmedabad on September 17, 2014, and the picture of a boat ride or a walk by the famous East Lake in Wuhan remain fresh in the minds of well over two billion people on both sides of the Himalayas. The Wuhan informal talks helped enhance goodwill and trust between the two biggest Asian neighbors which were locked in an acrimonious relationship over the Dong Lang (Doklam) standoff in the summer of 2017.

The scenario of "the dragon and the elephant dancing together" has acquired a fresh resonance after the second informal summit between the two leaders in Chennai on October 11-12 last year. The Chennai summit has not only reaffirmed the Wuhan Consensus but also opened new pathways of cooperation between the two Asian giants.

From the common Indian

perspective, it is important for the two neighboring countries to mitigate the host of disputes and differences that engulfed bilateral relations over the years. But the Wuhan summit had resulted in the birth of the first meeting of the China-India high-level cultural and people-to-people exchanges mechanism, co-chaired by Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and his Indian counterpart Sushma Swaraj, held in New Delhi on December 21, 2018. The newly constituted mechanism includes film and television co-production, media, education and think tanks, sports, youth exchanges, tourism, traditional medicine, exchanges between cities and states, yoga and academics. On the other hand, the second meeting of this mechanism held in Beijing on August 12, 2019, reinforced the primacy of people-to-people relations in the burgeoning India-China partnership. These two meetings suggest that the support for enhanced people-to-people exchanges is widening in both countries in recent years. Undoubtedly, the cultural and people-to-people exchanges mechanism is a "major initiative in the history of India-China relationship" that has helped consolidate the popular basis for state-to-state relations.

The exchanges of education, in particular, play a crucial role in Sino-Indian rapprochement. Indian and Chinese parents both aspire to make their children succeed through education, which is why many Chinese

parents can resonate with the Indian film *Hindi Medium* that depicts India's education system with a humorous light. As China aims to become Asia's top destination for international students by 2020, it is trying to remove barriers on language to attract more young intelligent students of India to its top universities.

The second edition of the Chinese Higher Education Expo, organized by the Consulate General of China in Kolkata, the capital city of eastern Indian state West Bengal on May 10-11, 2018, saw an overwhelming participation of Indian students who are opening their minds for higher education in China. According to a press release by the Chinese Embassy in New Delhi in May 2019, around 18,000 Indian students are currently studying in China as compared to 765 just a decade ago. According to a survey by the Center for China and Globalization in 2017, the number of Indian students studying in China has seen a year-on-year increase of more than 20 percent on average. More than 80 percent of Indian students in China follow undergraduate clinical medical courses in various medical institutions, according to the Indian Embassy in Beijing. On the other hand, the number of Chinese students in India has remained steady, but "very low," at about 2,000 for the last few years. The Chinese newspapers *Global Times* wrote, "Many Chinese students currently studying in India decry India's notorious



July 6, 2006: China and India reopens border trade at the Nathu La Pass after more than 40 years of closure. Nima Tsering (left), a Chinese businessman from Yadong County, southwestern China's Tibet Autonomous Region, shakes hands with an Indian merchant who came to do business in Yadong. Xinhua

red tape, which erodes their enthusiasm to the country." Therefore, the Indian government must resolve the Chinese students' safety and visa concerns.


For years, Indian films have enjoyed a solid fan base in China, transcending language barriers. In 1955, Changchun Film Studio introduced Raj Kapoor's 1951 classic *Awaara* which was the first Indian film screened at Chinese theatres. Indian movies such as *Noorie* and *Caravan* left a deep, lasting impression on the Chinese audience in the 1980s. In recent years, the successive triumphs of the Bollywood films *Dangal*, *Secret Superstar*, *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*, *Hindi Medium*, *Baahubali 2: The Conclusion*, *Toilet: A Love Story*, to list a few, have proved that Chinese audiences respect quality

Indian films just as much as their own stories. In other words, China's growing attachment to Bollywood films is gradually changing the Chinese audience's impression of India while expanding cultural understanding with Chinese people, cooling off the bitter disputes of India-China relationship.

In today's high-stress living environment, India's prescription is sacred "yoga" while China has long prescribed to the intangible cultural heritage of Taiji (or Tai Chi). However, it's a matter of pride that yoga fever has gripped China in recent years, vying with its own national treasure Taiji. The first yoga college outside India has emerged with the collaboration of India and China at Yunnan Minzu University in Kunming, becoming a milestone of

cultural exchanges between the two nations. The university is now offering China's first master's degree in yoga, officially approved by the country's Ministry of Education in January 2017. Meanwhile, martial arts and Chinese food are popular in India. The Chinese mobile phone brands Xiaomi, OPPO, and Vivo are among the top five brands in India.

To sum up, it can be said that even though India and China follow different models of governance, their objectives are the same. In order to realize the "Chinese Dream" and "Indian Dream," the two sides should enhance people-to-people contacts and cultural exchanges to broaden the base of their relationship. As neighbors, India and China have great potential in deepening cultural exchanges, based on common values.

Since the world is becoming increasingly uncertain and unstable, a more pragmatic and healthy Sino-Indian relationship is the need of the hour. As important contemporary civilizations, the two countries should learn from and help each other to realize win-win cooperation and common development. China and India should enhance understanding of each other's culture and promote a dialogue to usher in a new chapter of glory for Eastern civilization. 

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# Economic Cooperation: Now is the Time to Act

By Zhu Cuiping

As China and India celebrate the 70th anniversary of the establishment of their diplomatic relations, the world's two largest developing countries, based on their good-neighborly friendship, should work together to address the common difficulties and challenges facing the world economy.

**C**urrently, the COVID-19 pandemic is spreading globally, crude oil prices are fluctuating sharply, the U.S. stock market has seen repeated downturns, and the real economy and the virtual economy are disturbing each other. The world economy is facing unprecedented challenges. The pandemic has not only given a heavy blow to trade, investment and tourism worldwide, but also severely affected the global industrial and supply chains. Its impact on the world economy is probably greater than that of the 2008 world financial crisis. It seems inevitable for global

economic growth to slow down. In this, no country is immune. Despite the fact that they have seen rapid economic growth and entered a stage of economic transformation in recent years, China and India also face escalating challenges and risks.

## CHINESE AND INDIAN ECONOMIES IN CRUCIAL TRANSITION

China launched its reform and opening up in 1978, and India started its economic reform in 1991. After that, the two countries gradually developed into the world's two fastest-growing emerging

economies. After the outbreak of the 2008 world financial crisis, China took active measures to stabilize the economy, becoming the first country to recover. In 2010, China's GDP reached US\$6 trillion, overtaking Japan to become the world's second-largest economy. At the same time, structural challenges arising from rapid economic growth forced China to adjust its economic development mode to avoid falling into the middle-income trap. To remove barriers for further development and break through bottlenecks in fields like resources, structural reform and environmental protection, China has taken

active action to promote economic restructuring, and the Chinese economy has entered a “new normal” and crucial stage that pays more attention to high-quality, sustainable development than high-speed growth. Since 2018, China’s economic growth rate has slowed due to China-U.S. trade friction and the sluggish world economy. In the beginning of 2020, the COVID-19 epidemic posed a challenge to the Chinese economy. Though its impact remains controllable, the epidemic has still put heavy pressure on the country’s economic growth.

It is noteworthy that India’s economy grew at a rate as high as 8.9 percent in 2010. Analysts believe that India’s GDP based on purchasing power parity (PPP) has surpassed that of Japan, making India the third-largest economy in the world. However, India’s economy didn’t maintain rapid growth as expected from 2011 to 2013, with its growth rate dropping by a large margin. Especially in the 2011-2012 fiscal year, the Indian rupee depreciated sharply, private investment plummeted, and the GDP growth rate dropped to 4.1 percent (which was later recalibrated to 4.9 percent), the lowest in the past 10 years. It seemed that the “Indian economic miracle” had turned out to be an unreachable mirage.

In May 2014, Narendra Modi won India’s general election. This was largely attributed to the outstanding achievements he made as the chief minister of Gujarat. He

promised to boost economic growth, which just met Indian voters’ aspiration for change and gave them hope to embrace a rising India. Indeed, Modi didn’t let them down. After he took office as India’s prime minister, Modi launched a series of development initiatives and missions such as “Make in India,” “Smart Cities,” “Digital India” and “Clean India.” He also implemented a bold policy to abolish the country’s largest-denomination banknotes, and rolled out the landmark Goods and Services Tax (GST) reform. The Modi administration has made tremendous efforts to boost private investment and create a favorable business environment. Particularly, Modi vigorously advanced the “Make in India”

initiative, in the hope of creating more than 12 million jobs for India’s young people each year. In 2014, the growth rate of India’s economy hit 7.4 percent, equal to that of China. The following year, India saw its GDP growing by 7.6 percent, surpassing China to become the fastest-growing economy in the world for the first time. During the first tenure of Prime Minister Modi, India’s annual GDP growth rate exceeded seven percent on average, becoming one of the engines driving global economic growth.

In May 2019, Modi was re-elected in a landslide victory. He announced the goals of making India a US\$5 trillion economy by the 2024-2025 fiscal year and the world’s third-largest



April 13, 2019: A bird's-eye view of a wharf at the Qinzhou bonded port area in southern China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, where containers destined for India are transferred from an express train from Chongqing. This is part of the New International Land-Sea Trade Corridor, a trade and logistics passage built under the framework of the China-Singapore (Chongqing) Demonstration Initiative on Strategic Connectivity. Xinhua

economy by 2030. However, India still suffers from under-developed infrastructure and a sluggish manufacturing sector, and hasn't seen obvious improvement in its business environment and demographic dividend. All of these factors hinder its industrialization and urbanization. Moreover, India has a huge impoverished population and faces great pressure in employment. In 2019, India's macroeconomic index saw sharp fluctuations, with its growth rate slowing down. Undoubtedly, this increased pressure on its economic restructuring effort with the manufacturing sector as the breakthrough.

#### **INSUFFICIENT BILATERAL COOPERATION IN TRADE AND INVESTMENT**

As two major emerging economies, China and India are among the most popular investment destinations around the world. The two Asian neighbors have a combined population of more than 2.7 billion. In 2019, China's GDP exceeded US\$14 trillion, and its per capita GDP surpassed the US\$10,000 mark for the first time. India's GDP reached US\$2.9 trillion, overtaking Britain to become the world's fifth-largest economy, and its per capita GDP was about US\$2,100. However, both countries suffered somewhat from the global economic slowdown last year. According to the latest report, China's economic growth rate was 6.1 percent

in 2019, a figure still in the range of expectations, but India's GDP growth rate decreased significantly to 4.8 percent. China has comparative advantages in infrastructure and manufacturing, while India's comparative advantages lie in its service industry, information technology and pharmaceuticals. In this sense, the two countries are mutually complementary in economic development and boast great potential and sound basis in economic cooperation. China and India are supposed to be "natural partners." But in fact, bilateral collaboration hasn't seen much progress in realms like infrastructure, manufacturing and investment over the years.

In 2018, trade volume between China and India reached US\$95.5 billion. According to the latest statistics of China Customs, bilateral trade was US\$92.7 billion in 2019, lower than the goal of US\$100 billion. By the end of 2017, China's direct investments in India totaled US\$4.7 billion. By the end of 2018, India's cumulative gross investment in China reached US\$900 million. Bilateral trade and investment, although on the rise in recent years, remain insufficient for China and India considering the huge markets comprised of their combined population of 2.7 billion and mutual economic complementarities. The volumes of bilateral trade and investment do not match the two countries' economic sizes and populations.

Trade imbalance is a primary obstacle hindering further economic cooperation between China and India in recent years. In 2019, China's trade surplus with India reached US\$56 billion (US\$60 billion according to Indian statistics), accounting for 30 percent of India's total trade deficit. This not only thwarted India's will to promote bilateral trade with China but also made a negative impact on mutual trust in investment. The situation came from the failure to leverage the mutual complementarities between Chinese and Indian industrial structures in bilateral economic cooperation. Moreover, China and India complement and compete with each other in terms of goods trade, and their complementarities in goods and services trade haven't been fully leveraged. Mutual investment hasn't been perfectly connected to industrial development of the two countries. The two sides have yet to achieve an optimal balance of their interests and find the most effective way to solve disputes.

Trade imbalance between China and India should be relieved not only through expanding mutual trade and investment but also through regional multilateral mechanisms such as BRICS and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). Simply increasing or decreasing exports isn't sustainable, and protectionism cannot solve trade imbalance. Reform and opening up remain the best way to

solve economic problems. This has been proven by China's reform and opening up over the past 40 years. Although the world economy faces a crisis, economic globalization remains an irreversible trend. The global market will eventually become an interconnected, interdependent and integrated "global village." For this reason, international trade, investment will become increasingly integrated, and mutual investment will become an effective way to solve trade imbalance.

### OVERCOMING CHALLENGES THROUGH COOPERATION

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the establishment of China-India diplomatic ties. The global spread of COVID-19 has made a severe impact on the economies of China and India and the world at large, and Western developed countries represented by the United States began to turn to protectionism. Both China and India have urgent needs for economic restructuring. Now is the time for the two countries to promote economic cooperation and address global challenges with a more active attitude.

In fact, the Trump administration's protectionist policy targets not only China but India as well. In June 2018, the United States imposed additional tariffs on steel and aluminum imports from India, causing a loss of US\$241 million for Indian exporters. On May 31, 2019, the White House announced that the

U.S. side would end preferential trade treatment for India from June 5. This move would affect Indian exports worth US\$5.6 billion to the U.S. that were formerly free of tariffs. During his visit to India from February 24 to 25, 2020, U.S. President Trump didn't make any substantive compromise on trade disputes that the Indian side was eager to solve. This indicates that Trump's policies are volatile and unpredictable. He didn't give any special consideration to the good of India when it came to issues concerning the core interests.

A positive trend is that the consensus reached by Chinese and Indian leaders at their Wuhan and Chennai informal meetings respectively in 2018 and 2019 have pointed the development of bilateral relations in the right direction. The two countries maintain positive, steady momentum in their cooperation in fields like energy, medicine, information technology and software as well as cultural exchanges in areas like yoga and film. The core of Modi Economics is to create a friendly investment environment to attract foreign investment, strengthen infrastructure construction, and enhance the manufacturing industry to create as many jobs as possible. This happens to the lessons that China drew in its development process.

Taking the 70th anniversary of the establishment of their diplomatic relations as an opportunity, China

and India, based on their good-neighborly friendship, should work together to address the common difficulties and challenges facing the world economy. The two countries should focus on breaking through bottlenecks hindering further development of economic and trade relations, and expand cooperation in new realms such as new energy and digital economy. Those moves will consolidate bilateral economic and trade cooperation in the short term, and help China and India play a greater role in reconstructing international economic order and trade rules and gain more say for developing countries on the international stage in the medium and long term.

China and India should meet each other halfway, rather than magnify their differences and disputes so as to lose opportunities for cooperation. It is an irrefutable fact that closer China-India cooperation will not only benefit the two countries, but also have regional and global implications. Both countries are key driving forces for global economic growth. Only when China and India work together can the world economy maintain steady growth. This is also the only choice for the world to win the battle against the COVID-19 pandemic. 

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# Reinforcing the Foundation of China-India Friendship

By Yu Longyu

How to strengthen mutual trust between China and India? For Chinese, they need to adjust their mindsets and carefully study Indian history and culture; for Indians, they need to free themselves from the shackles of biased English information about China.

On April 1, 1950, under the instruction of the founding leaders of the People's Republic of China and the Republic of India, the two great nations officially established diplomatic relations, causing a sensation around the world. This year, the two countries celebrate the 70th anniversary of the establishment of their diplomatic ties, which has also drawn worldwide attention.

China and India were the world's earliest civilization states (or civilized communities), an advanced state of human society. The superiority of their state systems was based on their advanced concepts of civilization. China's advanced concepts about civilization include "harmony between man

and nature," "benevolence," "people being the foundation of the state," "the thought of forgiveness" and "the doctrine of the mean," which respectively correspond to India's "tat tvam asi" (absolute identity between the individual and the Absolute), "ahimsa" (nonviolence), "panchayati raj" (a system of rural local self-government), "the rule of tolerance" and "madhyamika" (intermediate). They represent the advanced concepts that China and India have held since ancient times in philosophy, ethics, politics, social governance and methodology. All of those concepts are rooted in a traditional philosophical idea shared by the Chinese and Indian peoples: "The world is a harmonious whole."

On September 17, 2014,

Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's home state of Gujarat. Modi told Xi that China and India are "two bodies with one spirit." The following day, when delivering a speech titled "In Joint Pursuit of a Dream of National Renewal" at the Indian Council of World Affairs in New Delhi, Xi quoted Modi's words and stressed that these words reveal the kind and peace-loving nature shared by our two great civilizations and the intrinsic connection between them. In his speech, Xi said, "The Chinese concepts of 'universal peace' and 'universal love' and the Indian concepts of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakum' (the world being one family) and 'ahimsa' (nonviolence) are

very much alike. Both China and India consider harmony as the way toward a better future for the world and hope that all countries will live in harmony and peace.”

The two nations’ joint pursuit for a “harmonious world” and their advanced concepts about civilization laid a philosophical foundation for China-India friendship. Based on this philosophical foundation, Chinese and Indian scholars have coined new terms such as “Dragon-Elephant Tango” and “Chindia” to describe new visions for China-India friendship.

Of them, the most innovative is Chindia, created by renowned Indian economist Jairam Ramesh. The term gained popularity soon after its creation. Famous Chinese scholar Tan Zhong believes that the most suitable interpretation of “Chindia” is “China and India uniting as one.” I couldn’t agree more with him. In “An Explanation of Chindia,” a postscript I wrote for the Chinese edition of Jairam Ramesh’s *Making Sense of Chindia: Reflections on China and India*, I said, “Chindia, in which China and India connected as one, means that the two nations unite and cooperate with each other to promote comprehensive exchanges for mutual benefits and common development in the principles of fraternity, honesty, wisdom and benevolence, so as to bring benefits to both peoples and create a bright future for both countries. The dragon and the elephant should complement each other; if the two dance together instead of competing



September 28, 2019: Eight representatives from China and India pose for a group photo with other participants at the China-India Youth Talks 2019 in Beijing. They exchanged their views on how China and India should learn from each other during the event. courtesy of China Radio International

with each other, nothing is impossible. In mythology, the dragon brings timely rainfalls to the earth, and the elephant represents wisdom. Together, they could benefit the whole world. Chindia is the biggest blessing for today’s world. For this reason, it is an aspiration not only of the Chinese and Indian peoples, but also of people around the world.”

After studying Chinese and Indian cultures and their relations for more than half a century, I’m in eager anticipation of Chindia. In the postscript, I wrote, “Chindia is a social ideal grounded on the actual situation of international politics and China-India relations and goes beyond any religious belief. I believe the ideal will turn into reality through tireless efforts. What I mentioned above is the fundamental contents, realizing approach and ultimate goals of Chindia. The domestic and international situations faced by China and India and the

consensuses reached between common people, elites and politicians of the two countries are boosters for bilateral unity, collaboration and cooperation across the board, which is the elementary goal of Chindia. The secondary goal is to realize comprehensive exchanges, mutual benefits and common development, while the third goal is to deepen friendship, promote honesty and share wisdom. The three goals are not only important contents of Chindia, but also driving forces to push it to a higher level, namely a bright future featuring benevolence and shared benefits. This is the ultimate goal of Chindia. It will bring care, happiness, freedom and glory not only to the Chinese and India peoples but also to people around the world.”

However, there is a long way to go before the ideal of Chindia can become a reality. I wrote the postscript in 2006. How are China-India relations today?

In 2017, when addressing the BRICS Think Tank Seminar in Guangzhou Higher Education Mega Center, I said, “In recent years, China-India relations have maintained a positive general trend. Leaders of the two countries made mutual visits, and bilateral economic and trade ties saw substantive progress. However, the friendship between China and India still lags far behind what the two peoples anticipate. We should spare no efforts to enhance the frequency and quality of contacts between the two countries.”

This unsatisfying situation is mainly caused by two factors: The first is the Cold War mentality and geopolitical theories held by some Western countries. Just like Ravana sabotaging the marriage between Rama and Sita, they tried their utmost to alienate China and India. The second is the trust deficit between China and India. The external disturbances by Western countries wouldn't work if the two Asian neighbors had enough mutual trust. Therefore, we must continue reiterating the importance and necessity of strengthening mutual trust between China and India, which is key to solving all problems hindering the improvement of their relationship.

How to strengthen mutual trust between China and India? For Chinese, they need to adjust their mindsets and carefully study Indian history and culture while reawakening memories of the journey of Monk Xuanzang to retrieve Buddhist sutras from India and

the kind support and assistance of Indian people represented by Rabindranath Tagore and Dr. Kotnis coming to China in the time of peril; for Indians, they need to free themselves from the shackles of biased English information about China, and trust their own eyes and ears.

Different groups of people in both countries vary in knowledge about each other. In general, their insights into each other's countries are proportional to their understandings of history and modern knowledge. Scholars dedicated to studying each other's countries show the highest level of mutual trust. After visiting India, Chinese tourists usually form two contrary perceptions: Some think India is much better than they had thought, and others simply conclude that India is dirty, chaotic and backward, just like China in the eyes of Westerners during the 1980s. Those holding the second perception remain the mainstream, but their percentage has been constantly dropping in recent years.

This indicates that the key factor influencing mutual trust between the Chinese and Indian peoples is not people's age or social status, but their access to accurate information. A trust deficit stems from an information deficit and a knowledge deficit. China and India still lack necessary mutual understanding. Young Indians who study or work in China can gain a picture of a true China based on what they have seen and heard in the country, so they trust China and its people. On December 19, 2019, I participated in the

reception of an Indian delegation of youth leaders. Ten Indian young elites showed great curiosity and goodwill for China during the visit. This was the same as I felt during my visit to India in December 2018. Thanks to more effective means of access to information in modern times, today's Indians, especially youngsters, have gained a more comprehensive, accurate and profound understanding of China and its culture than older generations. They show sincere enthusiasm and friendliness towards China and Chinese culture. I believe that the young generations of China and India will further reinforce the foundation of friendship between the two nations, thus benefiting the two peoples and the whole world.

It is touching that many Indian students and workers stayed in China to help fight the COVID-19 outbreak and cheer for China by posting articles on social media. Just as Dr. Kotnis did decades ago, an Indian doctor named Garry risked his life fighting the disease on the front lines.

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the establishment of China-India diplomatic relations. I believe that based on their mutual trust and guided by the “Wuhan Consensus” and the “Chennai Connect,” people of the two countries will make China-India friendship stronger, healthier, and more lasting. ■

*The author is a professor with the Center for Indian Studies of Shenzhen University, an expert in Indian literature and China-India cultural relations, and president of the Indian Literature Research Society under the China Foreign Literature Association.*

# Seven Decades of Meaningful Interactions

By Sreemati Chakrabarti

It is only through massive people-to-people contacts on a regular and sustained basis that mistrust can be overcome.

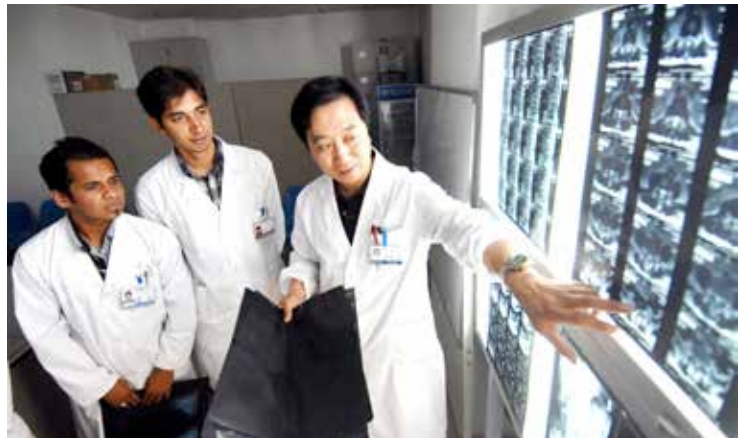
In 1950 when the Republic of India established diplomatic relations with the newly established People's Republic of China, they were not strangers to each other. Both were new governments but very old civilizational twins. That is exactly why most discussions and discourses on China-India relations begin with the traditional bonds of friendship which the two nations had long before 1950. For a very long period of history, India and China as civilizational entities have coexisted peacefully.

Much has been written and said about the role of Buddhism and trade as significant factors in traditional China-India relations. A period not studied much and hardly talked about is the colonial era. China-India

relations actually deteriorated in this period. The British used Indians as security guards and soldiers in some of their concessions in parts of eastern China to protect their establishments.

This led to the emergence of negative perceptions in the minds of the average Chinese about India.

Understanding of each other as well as some amount of



June 1, 2011: A Chinese doctor (right) explains a patient's X-ray images to his Indian students at Ningxia Medical University. Today, more than 23,000 Indian students study in China. Only a fraction of them go on government scholarships, and the rest have private payment arrangements. by Peng Zhaozhi/Xinhua

cooperation was seen during the anti-colonial, anti-imperialist movements in the two countries, which was immortalized in V. Shantaram's film *Dr. Kotnis Ki Amar Kahani* (1946).

Under the influence of the Soviet Union, Indian independence in 1947 was considered a "sham and fraud" and Indian leadership was projected to be "a stooge of Western imperialism." The situation changed in 1950 as India was one of the first countries to recognize the government of the People's Republic of China led by the Communist Party of China.

This was followed by nearly a decade of good ties, often referred to as the "Hindi Chini Bhai Bhai" period. Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's 1954 visit to China was considered a landmark event as the two countries signed the *Agreement between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of India on Trade and Intercourse between the Tibet Region of China and India*. Cultural and educational exchanges also took place during this period. Some Indian scholars who during this period went to China for studies later became pioneers of China studies in India. The most prominent among them was Vidya Prakash Dutt under whose leadership the University of Delhi set up a China studies programme in 1964.

The period from 1962 to 1978 was that of antagonism and hostility. Events which exacerbated this hostility were the 1965 India-Pakistan War. In 1979, an attempt was made to break the ice when Indian



January 19, 2019: An Indian student displays her calligraphy during a cultural event held in Qiucun Town, Ningbo City, Zhejiang Province. With Spring Festival approaching, a number of folk activities are organized by the locals, and foreigners are invited to take a sip of traditional Chinese culture. by Huang Zongzhi/Xinhua

Foreign Minister A. B. Vajpayee went to China. However, as the Sino-Vietnamese war broke out soon after he reached Beijing, this visit had to terminate prematurely.

With the initiation of reform and opening up in China, the atmosphere of hostility began to slowly change. Educational exchanges at a minimal level took place with a Bilateral Cultural Exchange Programme coordinated by the ministries of education of both countries. This marked the beginning of people-to-people relations which continue till now at a much greater pace.

China's resumption of its lawful seat in the United Nations as well as its reform starting in the late 1970s were perceived in India as welcome developments as China began to play a stabilizing role in international politics. A marked shift in India's policies came during

the Gorbachev era (1985-91) in world politics. With the Soviet Union mending its ties with China, for India the Cold War setup was coming to an end. Rajiv Gandhi took the path-breaking step of making a state visit to China, although the boundary question remained unresolved. This visit marked a major breakthrough in China-India relations.

From 1989 to the present, although bilateral relations have not been absolutely normal but Rajiv Gnadhi's visit began a new era of intensification of India-China interactions at many levels. The most remarkable growth, as is well-known, has been in economic relations. Major shifts in the domestic policies of China and India have brought this about. In the political sphere, high-level mutual visits have taken place quite frequently. However, the two factors that have

obstructed the path of cooperation are the Tibet issue (for China) and the Pakistan issue (for India).

Since the Sino-Indian border conflict in 1962, fear, apprehension and mutual suspicion have persisted in the public perceptions in both countries. This often gets fueled by the media misreporting, sensationalizing and exaggerating. It is only through massive people-to-people contacts on a regular and sustained basis that mistrust can be overcome.

An objective assessment of India-China interactions in the present era shows some positive indicators. High-level mutual visits take place each year. In the last two years, informal summits have taken place in Wuhan and Chennai, which is a new initiative of the Modi-Xi leadership. Joint military exercises – unthinkable a decade ago – are organized. Think tanks and officials hold meetings and conferences fairly frequently. Trade and businesses are increasing almost by the day. In the 1990s when both countries had opened up their economies, annual trade was to the tune of US\$200 million. Today it has reached nearly US\$100 billion. More than 23,000 Indian students study in China – only a fraction of them go on government scholarships, and the rest have their private arrangements. A large number of Indian students desire to learn Chinese and many young scholars in China are studying India. As is known to many, Bollywood, Yoga and Gandhi

are getting space in China and among the Chinese people.

Only through increased people-to-people interactions can some amount of the long-existing mistrust be neutralized. The governments and policymakers on both sides realize it yet much more needs to happen. Despite prolonged and serious efforts, a negotiated settlement on the boundary question between the two countries is still elusive. Negotiation is a give-and-take with some elements of trust. In both countries, some media organizations as well as the social media have come in the way of creating a positive image of each other. One of the negative side effects of the proliferation of news channels in India and the growth and popularization of the internet in China has been the constant portrayal of a hostile China from India's side and an unfriendly and scheming India from China's side. News channels in local languages in India are watched by many who have no other sources of information. Nationalism beyond a certain point becomes jingoism and xenophobia. In the long run, it will hurt world peace.

A fact too known to be elaborated is that India and China share numerous common problems. There is tremendous scope to deal with issues relating to agriculture, health, education, and environment – to name only a few – in ways that would be beneficial to both societies. However, as of now, they are only perceived as secondary to the relationship. Massive

growth in trade in the last two decades has promoted interactions between many Chinese and Indians. In case cooperation in the above-mentioned spheres is enhanced, people-to-people relations will certainly improve to a great extent.

However, one cannot deny that in general India and China see each other as both collaborators and competitors. The main driving force behind improved India-China relations, as stated earlier, is economics. In the last two decades the entire gamut of economic relations has phenomenally expanded. According to many observers, the Dong Lang (Doklam) standoff of 2017 would have led to a military confrontation without strong, robust economic ties between the two countries. These ties are also leading to greater cultural and educational cooperation. However, there is still a lot to be done to enhance people-to-people relations.

It is hard to predict the future of India-China relations. Much depends on the overall international situation – where the United States, Russia and Japan are crucial players. In view of the pandemic that has hit the world, it remains to be seen how the post-COVID-19 world will evolve. India and China will need to play their roles as stabilizing factors. ■

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The author is vice chairperson of the Delhi-based Institute of Chinese Studies and former head of the Department of East Asian Studies, University of Delhi.

# Pharma: An Emerging Link in China-India Ties

By Swaran Singh

Until the vaccine against COVID-19 has been successfully produced, the burgeoning demand for medicos, medicines and medical equipment worldwide will see the expanding connection of health-related production and exports of China and India emerge as the strongest source of their cooperation and competition.

**T**he last 70 years of China-India interaction is illuminated by stories such as that of Dr. Dwarkanath Shantaram Kotnis. Kotnis volunteered in 1938 to look after the sick and wounded in China to support the Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression. Learning the Chinese language quickly, Kotnis was very friendly with his patients; he fell in love with Chinese nurse Guo Qinglan and married her, adopting China as his second home. His journey, however,

ended rather abruptly as he died of epileptic seizures at the age of 32 on December 9, 1942, barely months after his son, named Yinhua (meaning "India-China"), was born.

This story began with a request from Zhu De, then commander-in-chief of the Eighth Route Army led by the Communist Party of China (CPC), to India's Jawaharlal Nehru for medico assistance in the fight against Japanese aggression. India raised funds and sent a team of five doctors to China including Kotnis. Nehru himself also visited China in 1939 in the

midst of the Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression.

Fast forward to the year 2020, the spread of COVID-19 seems pregnant with similar possibilities for such stories to emerge in the next 70 years of China-India ties. At its very outset, this pandemic has not only magnified the focus on health being a shared responsibility of humankind, but also revealed this sector as an emerging link between China and India, which are home to nearly 40 percent of the world's population. Now, until the vaccine against



November 8, 2013: An exhibitor (right) speaks to an Indian merchant at the fourth China (Taizhou) International Medical Expo that opened at the CMC Conference and Exhibition Center in Taizhou, Jiangsu Province. Xinhua

COVID-19 has been successfully produced, which seems at least a year away, this acute burgeoning demand for medicals, medicines and medical equipment worldwide will see the expanding connection of health-related production and exports of China and India emerge as the strongest source of their cooperation and competition.

It is a commonplace that China stands among the world's top producers of medical devices and India is the world's major supplier of generic medicines. Together they play the role of vanguards for fledgling health sectors in several developing and least-developed nations, including their own health services. India has also emerged as one of the most preferred destinations for medical tourism. China has been providing medical supplies to over 150 countries and international organizations amid the COVID-19

pandemic, and India has also been a major supplier of nurses and doctors, as well as medicines and active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs), for Gulf states, Japan, the European Union and the United States.

What most aptly underlines

**Other than enabling India's medical expertise and manufacturing to make it a global life saver, China's inputs have also been financially enriching.**

their expanding ties is the fact that China accounts for 20 percent of the global output of APIs and India imports about 70 percent of the raw materials for its drug manufacturing from China. Lately, China has also become the most preferred destination for low-cost medical education for

thousands of Indian students. Anti-immigration policies in the West have only further pushed this traffic to China.

Other than enabling India's medical expertise and manufacturing to make it a global life saver, China's inputs have also been financially enriching: India has seen a double-digit pharmaceutical export growth in recent years. According to the Pharmaceutical Exports Promotion Council, a body under India's Ministry of Commerce and Industry, India's exports of bulk drugs and intermediates stood at US\$3.9 billion in the 2019 fiscal year, up by 10.5 percent over the previous year. These statistics, of course, do not tell the whole story of India's real pickings—India earns its reputation as a “global pharmacy” with its cheap generic medicine. In terms of volume, India's pharmaceutical

industry stood as the third largest in the world, and in terms of value, it held the 13th position.

The story is not all milk and honey. The COVID-19 pandemic showed how lockdowns in China can create hiccups for India's imports of Chinese APIs. India has to deal with ever-increasing



August 17, 2010: The second China-India Joint Medical Mission is launched at the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries in Beijing. The program is part of the celebration for the 60th anniversary of the establishment of China-India diplomatic ties and the commemoration of the birth centenary of Dr. Kotnis. Xinhua

demand for its generic medicines while facing shortage of API supplies and even political pressure from the West. This high demand also resulted from the World Health Organization endorsing India's Paracetamol and Hydroxychloroquine as treatments for COVID-19, which made the two drugs popular commodities worldwide. Initially, like many other nations, India imposed a ban on medical exports, but it had to be lifted, and soon India resumed supplying health materials.

This rollercoaster of highs and lows has triggered some rethinking in New Delhi. To some extent, this is part of global debates on decoupling

and indigenization which also has its lessons for India's healthcare-related education, training and manufacturing. In the face of all this, the Indian government identified the priority list of 53 key starting materials and APIs, approved US\$1.3 billion for providing incentives and capital subsidies to boost their domestic manufacturing and a plan for setting up three industrial parks for bulk drug production.

China has not been sitting idle. In recent years, China has made strides in producing advanced medical equipment and precision instrumentation as well as expanding production of both drugs and APIs,

which challenges the United States and Germany's monopolies in high-value medical products and services. What makes things promising for China and India is this expanding worldwide focus on health, which means there will be more than sufficient opportunities for both New Delhi and Beijing. Both sides can maximize their advantages from this windfall and expand the avenues of their cooperation. ■

*The author is chairman of the Centre for International Politics, Organization and Disarmament (CIPOD), School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi.*



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# Seeking Wisdom for Cultural Exchanges from Ancient Civilizations



By Jin Xueli

It is an important direction for cultural and people-to-people exchanges between China and India to pass down the traditional bilateral friendship to the public and root China-India brotherhood deeply in the hearts of the two peoples.

**C**hina and India celebrate an extraordinary 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations at a critical moment as the world battles the COVID-19 pandemic. As two ancient civilizations with brilliant cultures, China and India are friendly neighbors linked by mountains and rivers and mutually beneficial partners that enjoy a long history of cultural exchanges.

In recent years, cultural and people-to-people exchanges between China and India have

been more intensive, richer and smoother due in part to frequent high-level exchanges and growing economic and trade relations. The leaders of the two countries have affirmed the goal of building a closer development partnership and agreed to jointly hold a series of activities to mark the 70th anniversary of the establishment of China-India diplomatic ties and the Year of China-India Cultural and People-to-People Exchanges, which will guide friendly interactions between the two countries in the future.

China-India interactions date back to the Qin Dynasty (221-207 B.C.). The Han Dynasty (202 B.C.-220 A.D.) saw more frequent contacts, and the ancient Silk Road, opened up by Zhang Qian, a Chinese imperial envoy travelling to the west during this period, served as the cultural bridge connecting the two ancient countries. During the Sui and Tang dynasties (581-907), China-India interactions almost reached the peak when the Chinese Buddhist monk Xuan Zang obtained the



November 8, 2013: An exhibitor (right) speaks to an Indian merchant at the fourth China (Taizhou) International Medical Expo that opened at the CMC Conference and Exhibition Center in Taizhou, Jiangsu Province. Xinhua

Buddhist scriptures after a 19-year expedition to India and then spread Buddhism in China. The deepening bilateral relations were reflected by flourishing seaborne commerce in the Song, Yuan and Ming dynasties (960-1644). Chinese navigator Zheng He during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) led seven great voyages to the Indian Ocean and arrived six times at Kochi in southern India, where Chinese fishing nets introduced by his fleets can be seen till today.

Cultural exchanges have been the cornerstone in the 2,000-year history of communication between China and India. Indian Buddhism, music, dance, literature, language, architecture, sugar-making technique and

the astronomical calendar that were introduced into China have far-reaching influence. Chinese writer Lu Xun said: “Friendly exchanges between China and India trace back to ancient times and Buddhism has influenced Chinese people’s thought, belief, ethics, literature and arts. No brotherhood is closer than the bilateral friendship between China and India.” Similarly, China’s papermaking, silk, porcelain, tea and music were brought into India and greatly enriched Indian culture. China’s *Twenty-Four Histories* and travel notes of eminent Chinese monks even laid the groundwork for ancient Indian history.

Today, China-India cultural and people-to-people exchanges set off a new wave. The two countries have

designated 14 sister provinces and cities, and the number of China-India mutual visits has exceeded one million per year. Chinese kung fu movies, Tai Chi and traditional Chinese medicine are popular in India, while Bollywood movies, yoga and Ayurveda are well liked in China. The trend of learning and teaching Chinese and Hindi provides a solid foundation for smooth language communication, cultural mutual appreciation, and closer people-to-people ties.

The way of cultural and people-to-people exchanges between China and India is growing into an international cooperative model featuring great potential and guidance. China launched “Visit India Year” in 2015 and India launched “Visit China Year” in 2016. In 2017, India’s first

Confucius Classroom was inaugurated in Kolkata. The first meeting of the China-India High-level People-to-People and Cultural Exchanges Mechanism was held in New Delhi in 2018 and the second was held in Beijing in 2019. The two countries carried out comprehensive exchanges and cooperation in such fields as media, films and televisions, museums, sports, youth, tourism, traditional medicine and yoga, and education and think tanks.

People-to-people contact between China and India has always been steady. Even at a low ebb of bilateral relations, renowned Chinese scholar Ji Xianlin and his students persevered in translating the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, two ancient

Sanskrit epics, which served as “adhesive” for restoring bilateral relations. After then Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi’s visit to China in 1988, China-India cultural exchanges were no longer limited to occasional visits of arts and cultural delegations and the introduction of movies or translation of works by a few universities or research institutes. Rich and in-depth activities sprang up, represented by the launching of Cultural Month and Friendship Year, and the inauguration ceremonies of the world’s first “Indian Corner” in Chengdu, the Xuan Zang Memorial Hall in Nalanda, and the Indian-style Buddha Hall at the White Horse Temple in Luoyang. Various forms of cultural exchange

activities have emerged, including food festivals, cultural relic exhibitions, film exhibitions, book releases and academic seminars. More individuals have been engaged in the exchanges with an increasing number of tourists and students to travel and study in each other’s countries year by year. Non-governmental contact injects new vitality into bilateral cultural exchanges.

China and India enjoy a long history of cultural connections and have created the most splendid civilizations in the world. The two countries can certainly realize their respective dreams of national renewal when they step forward hand in hand and pursue common development. In this context, cultural and



March 26, 2015: Visitors watch Vajra Master Jinke Xuanlei’s painting Dragon and Elephant Mandala at the 10-day Exhibition of Fine Arts of Contemporary China held in New Delhi. Xinhua



June 7, 2019: Dai Changren (right) from China and Gujarathi Vidit Santosh from India compete at the 2019 Asian Continental Chess Championships in Shahe City, Hebei Province. The event attracted 112 players from 19 countries and regions including China, India, Australia and Japan. Xinhua

people-to-people exchanges between the two countries carry more profound meaning.

To carry out in-depth cultural and people-to-people exchanges, China and India must expand and explore ways of communication based on adequate acknowledge of each other's historical and cultural ecology to build a diversified exchange mechanism aimed at realizing mutual enrichment and harmonious coexistence under the principle of mutual trust, mutual understanding and mutual respect.

**Learn from each other's cultural strengths to offset their own weaknesses.** Both China and India have profound cultural deposits. The Indian people worship simplicity in life and nobility in character and adhere to the development concept of harmony between man and nature. All this can be learned by China in its building of a harmonious socialist

society. In turn, the diligence and perseverance of the Chinese people can also inspire the Indians to work hard to modernize their country.

**Enhance mutual trust and dispel misgivings to expand cooperation.** Distrust stems from lack of understanding. Looking back on the history of cultural exchanges between China and India, we see non-governmental contact played an important role. For example, cultural ambassadors like Xuan Zang and Kumarajiva voluntarily and willingly learned and disseminated cultures by self-raised funds and their spirits have influenced generations of people. With the opening of flights and tourism markets between China and India, people-to-people exchanges have become more frequent and more cultural ambassadors like Xuan Zang and Kumarajiva will emerge in the new era.

**Revive Eastern culture**

## and create the Asian

**Century.** The rise of emerging economies, represented by China and India, is changing the global landscape and creating an "Asian Century." As the only two emerging countries with populations of over one billion each, China and India shoulder the historical mission of national rejuvenation. It is the common aspiration of China and India to safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of developing countries and establish a more rational international order.

Chinese President Xi Jinping said: "When China and India speak with one voice, the world will listen." By reviewing their original aspiration when they established diplomatic ties 70 years ago, the two countries can carry forward the spirits of good neighborliness, friendliness, solidarity and cooperation, and pass down the profound friendship stretching across thousands of years to deepen exchanges and mutual learning between the two civilizations. The two countries and their people will seek wisdom from the cultural deposits accumulated for thousands of years, and explore the way to get along with each other to interpret the true meaning of building a community with a shared future for humanity in the spirit of "enhancing mutual trust, focusing on cooperation, managing differences, and seeking common development." 📖

*The author is deputy dean and associate professor of the College of International Education, Shenyang Normal University. She taught Chinese in Delhi University in India on a Chinese government-sponsored program from September 1999 to October 2001.*

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# The Power of Cultural Exchange

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By Avijit Banerjee

It is high time that the two countries deliberate on how to look at each other objectively, how to prevent or reduce the interference caused by misjudgement, and how to increase mutual trust and understanding.

**T**he culture of any nation develops in the exchange and fusion with cultures of other nations. India and China, two ancient civilizations, have a traditional friendship that can be traced back to very early times. Their close contact spanning more than two thousand years has been extremely fruitful in the dissemination of Indian culture in China and Chinese culture in India.

This old cultural link was revitalized in 1924 when Rabindranath Tagore visited China. Tagore's historic visit to China not only brought the high attainments of

Indian civilization to the Chinese but also awakened the grandeur of the Eastern Civilization. In his view, India-China cooperation was not only related to the future development of the two countries but also the future of Asia and the world at large.

Tagore sought to revive and strengthen the historical relationship between the peoples of the two ancient civilizations through various academic research projects. It was his global vision that helped establish Cheena Bhavana (Department of Chinese Language and Culture) at Visva-Bharati University in 1937, the only

one of its kind in India at that time. After Tagore's visit to China, cultural interactions between the two countries developed substantially, both in breadth and in depth.

## **THROUGH SEVEN DECADES**

On April 1, 1950, India and China officially established diplomatic relations, causing a major sensation worldwide. India was the first non-socialist country to establish diplomatic relations with China. In 1954, the two countries jointly advocated the world-famous Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence that laid a new foundation for India-China

relations and ushered in the first climax of friendly cooperation.

After India's independence in 1947 and the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, cultural exchange between the two countries flourished once again. In 1955, the first Indian cultural delegation headed by then Indian Deputy Minister of External Affairs A. K. Chanda visited China. Major moves followed in cultural cooperation between the two countries, especially after Rajiv Gandhi's epoch-making visit to China in 1988. The broad contours of India-China cultural cooperation were

laid down in the Agreement on Cultural Cooperation signed in May 1988.

In 2003, Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee signed a Cultural Exchange Programme (CEP) during his visit to China that facilitated the exchange of cultural troupes, art exhibitions, cultural festivals, and in the field of archaeology and library science, as well as cooperation between India's National Museum, National Gallery of Modern Art, National Library, Sangeet Natak Academy and their Chinese counterparts. In February 2007, the Xuanzang Memorial Hall was inaugurated at Nalanda, India.

In June 2008, joint stamps were released, one depicting the Mahabodhi Temple in Bodhgaya, India and the other depicting the White Horse Temple in Luoyang, China.

The CEP signed in December 2010 led to cooperation in a range of cultural exchanges through mutual visits of performing artists, writers, archivists and archaeologists. Multiple cultural festivals, film festivals and exchanges in the fields of mass media, youth affairs and sports were held. In March 2012, leaders of India and China decided to celebrate 2012 as the "Year of Friendship and Cooperation" and both countries resolved



The Indian section of the 2019 China International Travel Mart, held from November 15 to 17 in Kunming, Yunnan Province. The Mart hosted nearly 4,000 exhibition stands in eight sections, attracting exhibitors from 75 countries and regions. China News Service

to further strengthen cultural exchanges between their people.

Entering the 21st century, India and China have established a strategic cooperative partnership for peace and prosperity. The high-level exchanges between the two countries have been more frequent, along with rapidly growing trade and economic cooperation, as well as cultural and educational cooperation. The two countries have strengthened friendly interactions by properly handling differences and seeking common development.

During Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to India in 2014, he launched a "China-India Cultural Exchange Program" with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, covering tourism cooperation, youth exchanges, museum exchanges, language teaching, classic and contemporary works translation, film and television exchange, etc. *The Encyclopaedia of India-China Cultural Contacts* was released in both English and Chinese versions in June 2014. The encyclopaedia features over 700 entries, encapsulating the rich history of contacts and exchanges between the two countries in trade, economic, literary, cultural and philosophical spheres.

The willingness to exchange ideas with each other among ordinary people is strong and enthusiastic.

People from India and China, especially the younger generation, show a strong interest in the history and culture of each other and they hope to get a shorter, more direct channel for obtaining information from the other side. Indian movies, music, garments and yoga have become popular in China, and at the same time Indian people are obsessed with Chinese kungfu, food and products. An increasing number of Indians and Chinese choose each other's countries for tourism, hoping to get a better and first-hand understanding about each other. In addition, many students from both countries decide to pursue studies or research in each other's countries.

The establishment of the China-India High-level Mechanism on Cultural and People-to-People Exchanges was an important outcome of the first China-India informal summit in Wuhan, central China in 2018. During the second informal summit held in Mamallapuram, India in October 2019, the two sides agreed to designate 2020 as the "China-India Year of Cultural

and People-to-People Exchanges."

Cultural exchange is the basis for mutual trust and long-term cooperation between the two countries. Without understanding each other's cultures, it would be impossible for cooperation in other areas to thrive, which underlines the importance of educational exchange between the two countries.

Long back in 2003, China and India signed a programme of educational exchange and in November 2006 the leaders of both countries renewed the educational exchange programme at New Delhi. This programme was renewed with an eye towards strengthening bilateral relations in education, recalling the profound impact of education on human resource, economic and social development, recognizing that greater linkages in education between the two countries would be beneficial.

In recent years, a number of universities from both countries are showing keen interest in collaboration programmes. Visva-Bharati University, founded by Tagore, has taken a pioneering role in these collaboration programmes. Similarly in China, India study centres have been set up in Peking University, Fudan University, Lanzhou University, Shenzhen University and Jinggangshan University. Moreover, Hindi courses are being taught in

**The willingness to exchange ideas with each other among ordinary people is strong and enthusiastic.**



June 17, 2017: The third India-China (Chengdu) International Yoga Festival opens in Dujiangyan, Sichuan Province. Ten yoga masters from India attended the opening ceremony and met with more than 1,000 yoga lovers in the following four days to exchange their ideas on finding inner peace and preserving health. China News Service

Peking University, Beijing Foreign Studies University, Shanghai International Studies University, Xi'an International Studies University, Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, Yunnan Minzu University, Yunnan University, Sichuan International Studies University and Tibet Nationalities University, and the Bengali language is being taught in Peking University, the Communication University Of China, Beijing Foreign Studies University, Guangdong University of Foreign Studies and Yunnan Minzu University. The mutual exchange in education will further invigorate in bilateral relations.

### NATURE OF CULTURAL EXCHANGE

Understanding the cultures of other countries and promoting mutual understanding not only serves as a vital means of avoiding unnecessary friction between countries but also helps refine one's own culture and raise its level further through contact with and absorption of other cultures. Recent years have witnessed the emergence of multi-channel, multi-faceted, and multi-form cultural exchanges between India and China at both governmental and non-governmental levels.

The significance of cultural exchange is not limited to culture itself. Despite the

rapid development of India-China relations in various aspects over the past few years, cultural exchange between the two countries is still lagging. It is high time that the two countries seriously deliberate on how to look at each other objectively, how to prevent or reduce the interference caused by misjudgement, and how to increase mutual trust and understanding. The power of cultural exchange in the development of India-China bilateral relations cannot be ignored. ❏

*The author is head of the Department of Chinese Language and Culture (Cheena Bhavana) at Visva-Bharati University in Santiniketan, West Bengal.*

# Facts and Figures on China-India Cooperation

Edited by **Hu Zhoumeng**

Designed by **S.V.Shineta**

**2**

Chinese President Xi Jinping and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi held **2 informal summits**, and exchanged in-depth views on overarching, long-term and strategic issues of global and regional importance.



**50**

There are **50 dialogue mechanisms between China and India** for exchanging views on various topics of bilateral, regional and global concern.

**8**

Since 2014, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has sent **4 senior delegations** to visit China, and sent representatives **4 times to China** to attend the international conferences held by the Communist Party of China (CPC).

## POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

**16**

The two countries have held frequent exchanges of high-level visits. President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Narendra Modi have had **16 bilateral meetings since 2014**, enhancing political mutual trust, properly managing differences, and expanding practical cooperation so as to guide a better and more stable development of bilateral ties.

**26**

In 2003, the International Department of the CPC Central Committee and the Ministry of External Affairs of India established an exchange mechanism. So far, a total of **10 Chief Ministers from India**, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi who used to be Chief Minister of Gujarat, have visited China, and **16 CPC leaders from the central and local committees** have visited India. The exchange mechanism has become an important channel to enhance political mutual trust, expand province-state exchanges and practical cooperation in various fields.

**9**

The CPC has maintained friendly exchanges with **9 major Indian political parties** including the BJP, Congress and left-wing parties for a long time. Exchanges and cooperation have been carried out through high-level visits, study tours, training courses and seminars. These have played an important role in promoting mutual understanding and friendship between the two peoples and promoting healthy and stable development of bilateral relations.

**20**

Inter-parliamentary friendship groups are set up by China and India. Regular contacts and exchanges are maintained between the leadership and specialized committees of the two parliaments. More than **20 parliamentarians** from both countries have exchanged visits in recent years.

**22**

Since the establishment of the Special Representatives' meeting on the boundary question in 2003, the two sides have held **22 rounds of meetings**, which have played an important role in promoting the settlement of the boundary question and maintaining peace and tranquility in the border areas.

## PRACTICAL COOPERATION

## Economics and Trade



Occupying **4 of the top 5 smartphone** brands in terms of shipments in India, Chinese smartphones are popular with Indian people.



4

The Development Research Center of the State Council of China has held **4 rounds of dialogues** with the NITI Aayog of India, reaching consensus on promoting sustainable and high-quality economic development of the two countries, safeguarding global multilateral trade mechanisms, promoting the reform of the global governance system and guarding against international economic and financial risks.

6

China and India have held **6 rounds of strategic economic dialogues** to exchange macroeconomic policies on infrastructure, high technology, energy conservation and environmental protection, energy and medicine and promote practical economic and trade cooperation.



9

China and India have held **9 rounds of financial dialogues** and reached consensus on macroeconomic situation and policies, cooperation under multilateral frameworks as well as bilateral investment and financial cooperation.

11

China and India have held **11 sessions of China-India Joint Group of Economy and Trade** to engage in extensive exchanges on bilateral trade in goods and services, investment and industrial park cooperation, trade statistics and trade remedies, and constantly deepen bilateral practical cooperation on economics and trade. At the same time, the two countries have closely cooperated with and supported each other on a multilateral trading system and regional economic cooperation, making important contributions to establishing new international economic order and safeguarding the interests of developing countries.

32

Since the beginning of the 21st century, trade between China and India has grown from less than US\$3 billion to nearly US\$100 billion, an increase of about **32 times**. In 2019, the trade volume between China and India was US\$92.68 billion.

200,000

More than 1,000 Chinese companies have increased their investment in industrial parks, e-commerce and other areas in India, with **200,000 local jobs** created.



1 billion

Indian companies are also actively expanding the Chinese market, with a cumulative investment of nearly **1 billion US dollars** in China. According to Indian statistics, more than two-thirds of Indian companies investing in China are making steady profits.

8 billion

Chinese companies' cumulative investment in India is more than **8 billion US dollars**.

2.7 billion

With a combined market of over **2.7 billion people** and a GDP of 20% of the world's total, China and India enjoy huge potential and broad prospects for economic and trade cooperation.

## Science and Technology

2

China and India have held **2 rounds** of China-India Joint Research Workshops on Science and Technology Innovation.

3

China and India have hosted **3 rounds** of conferences of China-India Technology Transfer, Collaborative Innovation & Investment.

Indian companies have set up **3 IT corridors** in China, which help promote China-India cooperation in information technology and high technology.

6

China and India have held **6 rounds** of meetings of the China-India Joint Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation to strengthen policy coordination and information sharing, and promote cooperation on scientists exchanges and joint research projects.

## Defense

8

China and India have held **8 rounds** of "Hand-in-Hand" joint anti-terrorism exercises to enhance mutual understanding and trust, exchange training experiences and jointly improve anti-terrorism capabilities.

9

China and India have held **9 rounds** of China-India defense and security consultation to strengthen exchanges and cooperation in the defense field.

## PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE EXCHANGES

2

China and India have held **2 rounds of meetings** of China-India High-Level People-to-People and Cultural Exchanges Mechanism. The two sides have made new progress on exchanges and cooperation in the fields of art, publishing, media, film and television, museum, sports, youth, tourism, locality, traditional medicine, yoga, education and think tanks.

5

**2 Confucius Institutes and 3 Chinese language centers** have been established in India. Around 20 universities in India offer Chinese courses, among which 8 provide a major in Chinese studies. The "Chinese Bridge" Chinese Proficiency Competition for Foreign Secondary School Students (Indian) has been held for 12 sessions. The "Chinese Bridge" Chinese Proficiency Competition for Foreign University Students (Indian) has been held for 18 sessions. Chinese language learning is becoming a popular trend in India.



8

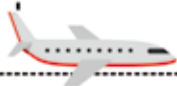
The two sides have held **4 sessions** of the China-India High Level Media Forum and **4 sessions** of the China-India Think Tank Forum to strengthen exchanges and cooperation in the field of media and think tanks.

14

The two countries have established **14 pairs of sister cities and provinces**, and will establish sister provinces and cities between Fujian Province and Tamil Nadu State, Quanzhou City and Chennai City.

Since 2006, the Chinese and Indian youth delegations have exchanged **14 visits**, and more than 4,000 Chinese and Indian youth have visited each other's countries.

134



There are **134 flights** linking major cities of the two countries every week, among which China has **94 flights to India** and India has **40 flights to China** (excluding the flights between the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China and Indian cities).

China has established 1 Luban Workshop and 1 Luban-Mo-tse Culture Institute in India, which have trained more than **200 technical Indian students**.

200



2,000

Over **2,000 young Chinese** are studying in India, and more than 20,000 Indian youth are studying in China. Cooperation in the field of education between the two countries has been continuously strengthened.

20,000



The number of Indian pilgrims to Tibet Autonomous Region of China has surged from several hundred in the 1980s to **more than 20,000** in 2019. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China and the Ministry of External Affairs of India have made great efforts in coordination and established the Contact Mechanism for Indian Pilgrims. The government of Tibet Autonomous Region of China has undertaken heavy logistics work to help facilitate the pilgrimage, which has become an important bond between the Chinese and Indian people to enhance mutual understanding and friendship.

1 Million



Two-way personnel exchanges between China and India have exceeded **1 million per year**, among which more than **800,000 Indians** visit China (excluding an average of 700,000 Indians visiting the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China each year) and more than **200,000 Chinese** visit India.

Source: Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Republic of India

# Closer China-India Youth Exchanges

Concept by *China-India Dialogue*

## Indian Dance: Language to Connect the World

### Du Juan

**Age:** 30

**Occupation:** Young artist

**Birth place:** Beijing

**Current residence:** Beijing



Graduated with a master's degree in social anthropology from the School of Oriental

and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, I dance Kathak, one of the main genres of classical Indian dance, and have performed in my spare time on prestigious stages in China, India, Britain and the United States. My journey from Beijing to New Delhi and then to London has transformed me from a classical Chinese dancer to one who uses ancient Indian dance as a universal language to connect audiences in China and India and beyond. Through my efforts, I hope to bring the artistic value of classical Indian dance onto a broader platform, share my reflections as a cross-cultural dancer and promote cultural exchanges between China and India.

My great interest in learning Indian dance originated from my belief that dance could be employed as a beautiful language to connect different cultures. I used to be a classical

Chinese dancer for 15 years. After trying various forms of dance, I found that Indian dance, with an expressive combination of hardness and softness, shared an Asian cultural base with Chinese dance and resonated most with me. Moreover, I once came to India as a volunteer teacher and was emotionally bound to it. So, I started to learn Kathak at the Swami Vivekananda Cultural Center at the Embassy of India in Beijing and learn Bharatanatyam and Odissi from renowned dancers in China.

To go deeper into dance, I, young and bold, later decided to go to Delhi, where I could visit dance artists while working with a Chinese company. I finally got the opportunity to learn from Guru Pradipto Chakrobarty, senior disciple of Pt. Jai Kishan Maharaj who represented the eighth generation in the

lineage of Lucknow Ghanara of Kathak. His constant support and encouragement in my learning and performance showed his artistic ideas and practices beyond borders. He even made extra efforts to adjust choreography and teaching for a foreign student like me so that this ancient Indian art form could reach a wider audience outside India.

In order to better understand Indian society and culture, I chose to go back to school after working for five years. I pursued a master's degree

in anthropology at SOAS and learned Hindi at the same time. In London, a city known as the "crossroads of the world," my horizon was greatly broadened. And my anthropological background helped me gain deeper insights into the concept of "the other" in terms of culture, which enabled me to apply dance as a universal language connecting diverse cultures to inspire fascinating ideas. Here, I met artists from all over the world and forged profound friendships with artists from various countries

including India.

Though the raging COVID-19 pandemic worldwide impedes international travel, I maintain close interactions with global professionals engaged in Indian arts through social media. Our activities include combining Chinese songs with Indian dance to create new art forms, organizing online interviews with global performers, and recording videos in Hindi to introduce Chinese dance. I believe that the shared passion for arts will bring us closer in times of difficulty.

## Building Platforms for Youth Exchange

### Deepa Nair

**Age:** 32

**Occupation:** Freelance Indian business journalist

**Birth place:** Mumbai

**Current residence:** Mumbai



As global connectivity soars, young people have become a potent influence on shaping and developing new-age companies thereby influencing people of all ages and income levels. And in the two largest emerging economies in the world, China and India, the digital revolution and technological leaps have seen a transformational effect on the way business is being conducted with start-ups and e-commerce companies prioritizing convenience. It is widely accepted that these two emerging giants will transform the global economy in numerous ways over the coming decades.

As both the Indian and Chinese economies undergo structural transformation and rapid development resulting in

increased output and a shift in employment from agriculture to industry and services, the need for a "skilled workforce" has grown in the process. The youth or Gen Z from both nations aspire to more skill-oriented, innovative and knowledge-based employment in the context of globalization, moving away from low technology-based production based on manual and mechanical techniques. In order to foster innovation and research and make the leap into an economic powerhouse, Chinese planners emphasized educational reforms, especially vocational educational reforms and the quest for lifelong learning.

China announced its goal of becoming an international

education hub in 2012 with a target enrollment of five lakh 500,000 international students by 2020. The status of several Chinese universities has continually risen on the major global university ranking lists since the beginning of the 21st century. For example, in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2020, Tsinghua University, Peking University and the University of Science and Technology of China are listed among the top 100, with four other Chinese universities in the top 200. The speed of China's emergence as one of the world's most important countries in international education has been

phenomenal. Consequently, the total number of foreign students in China reached 492,185 in 2018.

China is now training more Ph.D. students than the United States, and in 2018 the number of scientific, technical, and medical research papers published by Chinese researchers for the first time exceeded those produced by U.S. scholars.

India's record has been less than exemplary, as other developing nations have even raced ahead of India in nurturing academic talent and promoting research. In the list of top 500 educational institutes in the world

compiled by the UK-based agency Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), there are many more universities from China than India. In the latest rankings, 22 Chinese universities found a place in the top 500 list, as compared to nine from India.

As of 2019, according to the official data of the Indian Ministry of Human Resource Development, 23,000 Indian students studied in China, of whom 21,000 were pursuing medical education. The remaining students were pursuing language studies and engineering. Limited numbers of medical seats in India, intense competition and prohibitively expensive private medical



June 30, 2019: More than 100 international students from countries including India, Nepal, Mauritius, and Ghana attend the 2019 graduation and degree granting ceremony of Nanjing Medical University. Pictured are some of them taking a selfie at the ceremony. China News Service

education in India have made China the destination of choice for Indian students aiming to pursue a medical degree. In addition to China's geographical proximity to India, familiarity with Chinese food has also been an enabling factor for Indian students choosing China as their destination to pursue their medical dreams.

Incidentally, every year around five percent of the Indian students come to China to study languages. Apart from individual universities, scholarships are provided by the government of every provincial region in China.

Interestingly, the Indo-China youth exchange program took off in April 2005, during the visit of then Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao to India in April 2005, where it was decided to launch regular youth exchange activities between India and China. This agreement has found reference in the Joint Statement of April 11, 2005 signed by Premier Wen and then Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, which announced the launching of regular youth exchange activities between the two countries. India and China decided to make 2006 the "India-China Friendship Year." This historic event marked the 55th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and India.

Further, the joint declaration issued during the visit of then Chinese President Hu Jintao to India from November 20 to 23, 2006, stated that the two sides agreed to launch the five-year program for mutual exchange of youth delegations.

The exchange program involves interaction with local youth, visits to tourist and cultural sites and introduction to economic and social activities. In addition, it also has educational elements through interaction and exchanges of students and faculty members with economic and political personages and interactive sessions in different areas such as culture and sports. It also includes visits to rural areas.

The program emphasized strengthening people-to-people exchanges between the two countries while covering all aspects of India-China bilateral relations. Through the annual youth exchange program, the governments of India and China intend to provide opportunities to their youth to understand each other better.

Youth delegation programs are an avenue by which Chinese and Indian students gain first-hand knowledge about each other's countries with the help of close interaction with experts and practitioners from various fields, including industry, education, sports, science and technology, urban planning, agriculture and health.

A part of the Indian delegation, S.K. Murshed from PGP Batch 2017-19, IIM Kashipur, posted in his blog about his experience in China. "Before arriving in China, we were advised to learn about Chinese culture. I read books, blogs, and everything to make myself well versed but no amount of reading can match the

experience which I had when I actually visited those sites."

His trip involved visits to the National Museum of China, the Forbidden City, the OFO headquarters in Beijing, the cars displayed at Dongfeng Motor Corporation and the Wuhan Citizens Home, and exploring the city of Shanghai.

"I believe that experiencing everything personally in China has enhanced my learning exponentially and made me understand the country's culture to a large extent," Murshed explained in his blog.

The regular student exchange programs provide an excellent avenue for the youth of both India and China to understand and experience each other's cultures and learn from ancient wisdom while keeping up with the technological leaps in both nations. Even as China has made substantial progress in revamping its higher education, its focus on research has contributed immensely to the country emerging as a technology powerhouse as commerce between the two countries grows exponentially with Chinese companies tapping the Indian market. A majority of the big start-ups in India have a Chinese investor requiring both countries to invest in mutual understanding through enhanced youth interactions and exchanges to overcome any mistrust and help evolve their relationship in a world trying to win the battle against the COVID-19 pandemic to emerge stronger and more resilient. 🇮🇳

# Major Issues in China-India Relations

By Qiao Zhenqi



## The History and Future of Contemporary China-India Relations

Chen Zonghai, Ma Jiali, Hu Shisheng,  
Zhang Lei  
World Affairs Press  
April 2020

Interactions between China and India can flow as rapidly as the Yarlung Zangbo River or rest as inert as the Himalayas. Relations between the two countries are complicated, to say the least, and demand deep

analysis. *The History and Future of Contemporary China-India Relations* was published by World Affairs Press to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and India. This book presents a solid breakdown of the ups and downs of the bilateral relations over the past seven decades.

The book was divided into nine parts including a preface, an introduction, five chapters, a bibliography and an epilogue. The first chapter summarizes the history of China and India and their relations in modern times. The second chapter focuses on the longstanding issue of the Tibet question. The third chapter covers on the boundary question. The fourth chapter outlines economics and trade issue between the two countries, and the fifth chapter looks to the future of their relations. Professor Chen Zonghai, researchers Ma Jiali and Hu Shisheng, and Dr. Zhang Lei cited at least 296 references from both Chinese and English sources while authoring the book.

The first chapter presents a brief

history of the development of China and India as well as their relations in modern times. The authors adopted Marxist theories on fundamental drivers for social development and focused on the core variable—technological revolutions, as part of their methods to analyze the past of the two countries. China and India share a similar development route—civilized in ancient times, colonized or semi-colonized, independent—which roughly aligned with the four technological revolutions of the last three centuries. This similarity has nurtured the two countries' historical relations and continues to foster future ties.

Relations between China and India can be broken into four phases known as the honeymoon period (1950-1959), confrontation period (1959-1976), normalization period (1976-2000), and a period of developing comprehensive relations (2000-present), which includes the strategic and cooperative partnership period (2000-2013) and the close partnership period (2013-present).

Since the establishment of their

diplomatic ties on April 1, 1950, relations between China and India have seen many ups and downs, but the core of them has remained peaceful, friendly, cooperative and mutually beneficial with an upward and positive trend. By surveying history, the authors draw on the experiences and lessons of development of the bilateral relationship to forecast the future. First, the two countries need to continue jointly upholding the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. Second, it is imperative to solve questions over Tibet and borders left by history through peaceful consultation. Third, they need to continue various forms of diplomatic interactions, led by summit diplomacy. Fourth, they should commit to diplomacy that serves both countries' strategic goals of modernization and national renewal. Fifth, the two countries need to further clarify their common interests and the orientation of the development of their relations.

The second chapter presents conclusions of research on the Tibet question and its impact on China-India relations. The persistence of the Tibet question disturbs the bilateral relations because of several characteristics of the question. First is its one-way disturbance quality. New Delhi can unilaterally leverage the question to interfere with its relations with China. If China wants to thoroughly nullify India's leverage on the Tibet question, it needs to provide peer exchange. And this involves the second characteristic "poor tradable quality," which in turn leads to the third characteristic "repetitive quality." In short, whether the two countries can eliminate the distractions of the Tibet question depends on New Delhi. But Beijing can usually determine the intensity of the disturbance on China-India relations because the question is, after all, a domestic China affair.



**November 21, 2014: Visitors view the Xiaoshan laceworks at the “Heavenly Creations – Exhibition on Intangible Cultural Heritage of China’s Zhejiang Province” in New Delhi, capital of India. by Zheng Huansong/Xinhua**

At the end of the day, as China's governance on Tibet becomes more effective and popular locally, India will lose advantages in this regard. The Tibet question could ultimately flip from a negative factor into a positive driver of China-India cross-border cooperation and joint development.

The third chapter looks at the boundary question plaguing the bilateral relationship. Due to a large disputed area, the boundary question has remained thorny for a long time and involves major interests of the two countries. Thanks to double pressure from domestic politics and global geopolitics, the boundary question can cause mood swings in the two peoples and easily arouse strong nationalist sentiment and even populism if improperly managed. Today, the question has little or even zero chance of requiring force or warfare to be solved, but mismanagement or inappropriate behavior that causes border friction can still lead to a border crisis or even conflict. A retrospect on the process of the two countries' management of their boundary question and the border

conflict of 1962 leads to some valuable conclusions. First, it is imperative to grasp the fundamental principles of national strategy. Exacerbation of such an issue would lead to deviation in the major trends of China's peaceful development, betray the essential interest of its national development strategy, impact the in-depth advancement of China's reform and opening up and hinder its advance towards socialist modernization. Second, both countries must maintain peace and tranquility along the Line of Actual Control. China and India must do everything they can to prevent provocative crossing or other actions by establishing sorts of tacit agreement on tactics and allow security and defense consultation mechanisms to play a major role. Third, public opinion is tremendously important. Sensitive topics related to the boundary question require reports to be objective and reasonably guided by relevant authorities. The media should help the public understand the truth and historical context to dissuade the outbreak of irrational public responses.

The fourth chapter sheds light on

economic and trade issues between the two countries. China and India, the two biggest developing countries with the world's largest populations, share similar national conditions and cultural context. The two Asian neighbors revere long histories and civilization, and as emerging market economies, China and India are natural trading partners. Their economic and trade relations have gone through upstart, suspension, normalization, and comprehensive development. India has become China's largest trading partner in the South Asia region and China is the largest trading partner of India. The two countries' economic and trade relations present both advantages and challenges, but strengthening cooperation remains mainstream. Their economic and trade relations should develop to the rhythm of the overall bilateral relations, but at the same time, cooperation in the realm of economics should play a greater role in strengthening their relations. Both countries need to explore the convergence of their respective development under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative and optimize a roadmap for cooperation and mutual benefits. Meanwhile, facing the rise of de-globalization and protectionism, the two countries need to strengthen communication, coordinate stances and send regular positive signals of support for the multilateral trade system while guarding the interests of developing countries.

The fifth chapter analyzes the outlook of China-India relations. To maintain stable and lasting friendly relations, the two countries must work on relations in three aspects: as neighboring countries, as two developing countries and as major countries. Mutual trust and harmonious coexistence as neighboring countries are the cornerstones for China-India ties, modernization is their shared

strategic goal as developing countries, and an Asian Century is a vision shared as major countries. Modernization is an internal guarantee for the national security of both countries, a pillar of an Asian Century, and a strategic interest sought by bilateral diplomacy for the national development of both countries. Future-oriented China-India relations can stride at lower, middle and upper levels. At the "upper" level, the two countries can jointly create the Asian Century and promote a community with a shared future for humanity. At the "middle" level, China and India can enforce a closer development partnership and bilateral ties with win-win collaboration at the core. At the "lower" level, the two countries can achieve modernization and secure national renewal by improving living standards for their people.

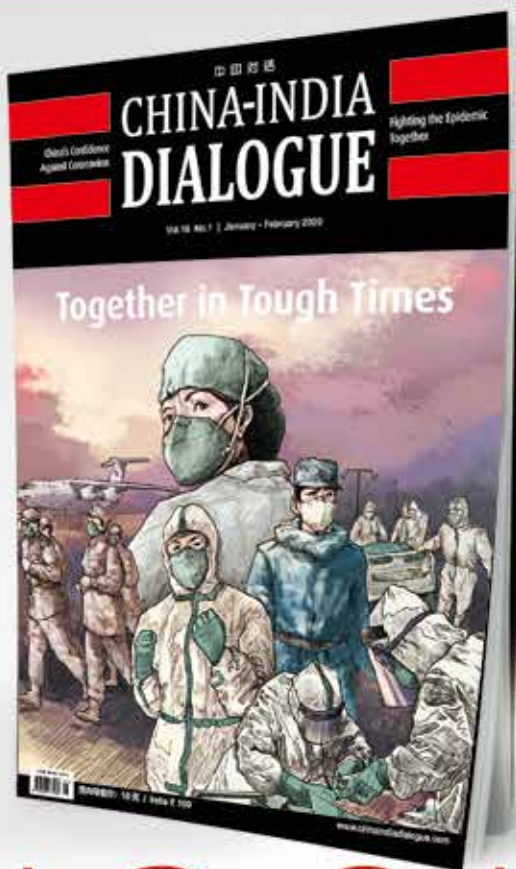
This book has great academic value. First, it traces the historical origin of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and demonstrates its practical significance. Second, it advocates China's willingness to demarcate the borders with its neighboring countries on land, which is conducive to creating a tranquil surrounding environment. Third, it demonstrates the overall picture of China's diplomacy and highlights the prominent status of its relations with neighboring countries. Fourth, the book reinforces the idea of realization of China's "Two Centenary Goals" involving building the country into a socialist modernized power. Fifth, the book promotes healthy growth of China-India relations and encourages the two countries to create the Asian Century together. The authors hope their wealth of research to shed light on and make positive contributions to a closer development partnership between China and India as they embrace modernization and the Asian Century.

The authors concede that the book still has room for improvement because research roadblocks remain.

Each writer has different academic background, academic accumulation, information accessibility, observation perspective, analytical ability, and research environment. Consequently, some research results are inevitably subjective and one-sided, leaving flaws and omissions nearly unavoidable. Additionally, issues of maritime rights and interests and third-party influencing factors on China-India relations are important topics of contemporary China-India relations studies, but due to the limitations of research conditions, they could not be factored into every study and need more attention.

Professor Jiang Jingkui from Peking University wrote the preface for the book after reading the main body. "It was amazing to see everything you will find in the text, and it quickly became a page-turning manuscript for me," he wrote. "The authors of this book stand high and see far. The book is very informative and offers many citations, historical references, and critical notes, giving it maximum academic value, practical significance, and strong readability. The book can be described as a 'new chapter' of China-India relations shining intense light on the great value of studies and collection."

At two informal meetings in 2018 and 2019, leaders of the two countries reached two tremendously important consensuses: The first was to support each other's national modernization. The second was to work together to achieve the great rejuvenation of both civilizations. China and India need to actively construct a closer development partnership and constantly strive for new fruits through the China-India strategic and cooperative partnership while advancing their respective modernizations to jointly build the Asian Century of world civilization, and a community with a shared future for Asia and for humanity. 



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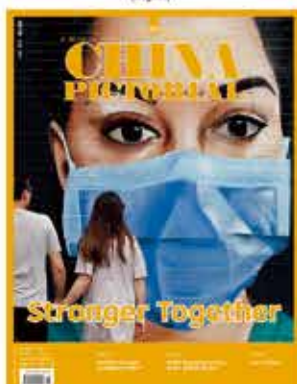
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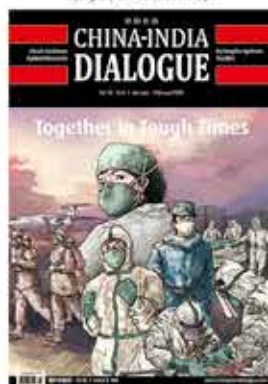
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