

中印对话

The Tangled Web of the
Bilateral Relationship

CHINA-INDIA DIALOGUE

Surviving through the
Crisis

Vol.22 No.4 | July - August 2020



NEW THINKING ON CHINA-INDIA RELATIONS

ISSN 2096-2614



国内零售价: 10 元 / India ₹ 100

www.chinaindiadialogue.com

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.

CONTENTS

CHINDIA NEWS / p.02

OPENING ESSAY

RESPECT AND UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER TO BUILD
A BRIDGE OF PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE AND CULTURAL
EXCHANGES

04



Why China-India Relations Matter / p.10

COMMENT

A Window to Understanding
Contemporary China / p.14

Avoid Misinterpretations of
China-India Relations / p.16

The Tangled Web of the Bilateral
Relationship / p.20

China-India Boundary Question:
Calling for New Thoughts and
Framework / p.24

STRATEGY

The Structural Predicament in
Bilateral Relations / p.28

Surviving through the Crisis /
p.32

TREND

Can "Atmanirbhar Bharat
Abhiyaan" Make India a Major
Manufacturing Power? / p.38
To Survive the Pandemic / p.42

DISCUSSION

Complete Economic
Decoupling Impossible / p.44

Modi's Dream of "Self-Reliant
India" Will be Incomplete
without China/ p.49

DATA

China's Poverty Alleviation
Achievements 1978 - 2020 /
p.52

YOUNG VOICES

How Do We Think Outside
the Box / p.56

COLUMN

Origins of Indians' Veneration
of Mount Kailash and Lake
Manasarovar / p.60

BOOKS

The Reshaped India / p.64

CHINA-INDIA DIALOGUE

ADMINISTRATIVE AGENCY: 主管:
China International Publishing Group
中国外文出版发行事业局
(中国国际出版集团)
PUBLISHER: 主办、出版:
China Pictorial
人民画报社
ADDRESS: 地址:
33 Chegongzhuang Xilu, Haidian, Beijing 100048, China
北京市海淀区
车公庄西路33号

PRESIDENT: Yu Tao 社长: 于涛
EDITORIAL BOARD: 编委会:
Yu Tao, Li Xia, He Peng, Bao Linfu, Yu Jia
于涛、李霞、贺鹏、鲍林富、于佳
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: Li Xia 总编辑: 李霞
EDITORIAL DIRECTORS: 编辑部主任:
Qiao Zhenqi, Yin Xing 乔振祺、殷星
OPERATIONS DIRECTOR: 业务总监:
Zhao Yue 赵月

OPERATIONS SUPERVISOR: 业务主管:
Hu Zhoumeng 胡周萌

ENGLISH EDITORS: 英文定稿:
Xu Mingqiang, Liu Haile 徐明强、刘海乐

EDITORIAL CONSULTANTS: 语言顾问:
Scott Huntsman, Nathan Bennett 苏格、白浩天

EDITORS AND TRANSLATORS: 编辑、翻译:
Bian Xiuhong, Gong Haiying 白秀红、龚海莹

EDITORS AND TRANSLATORS: 编辑、翻译:
Hu Zhoumeng, Liu Haile, Li Zhuoxi, Li Yiqi, Wang Shuya, Xu Shuyuan, Yin Xing, Zhao Yue, Zhou Xin 胡周萌、刘海乐、李卓希、李艺琦、王舒雅、许舒园、殷星、赵月、周昕

EDITOR-VISUALS & PHOTOGRAPHS: 视觉编辑:
Li Zhuoxi 李卓希

DESIGNED BY: 设计:
Alinea Productions, Stanisa Vebe Shineta 利雅茂盛(北京)投资咨询有限公司、林美珠

DIRECTOR OF BRAND CENTER: Wang Shuo 品牌中心执行主任: 王烁

TELEPHONE: +86-10-68717725 电话: +86-10-68717725

REMITTANCE TO: Publishing and Distribution Department, China Pictorial 邮购收款人: 人民画报社 出版发行部

TELEPHONE: +86-10-68412660 电话: +86-10-68412660

POSTAL CODE: 100048 邮编: 100048

ACADEMIC PARTNERS: 学术合作单位:
Chinese Association for South Asian Studies 中国南亚学会

Observer Research Foundation (Mumbai) 印度观察家基金会(孟买)

LEGAL ADVISER: Yue Cheng 法律顾问: 岳成

PRINTING: 印刷:
Toppan Leefung Changcheng Printing (Beijing) Co., Ltd. 北京利丰雅高长城印刷有限公司

OVERSEAS DISTRIBUTION: 海外发行:
China International Book Trading Corporation (Guoji Shudian), 35 Chegongzhuang Xilu, P.O. Box 399, Beijing 100048, China

In China, subscriptions are available at any post office.

Subscription and distribution agency in Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan:

Hong Kong Peace Book Company, Ltd.

17/F., Paramount Building, 12 Ka Yip Street, Chai Wan, Hong Kong

CHINA STANDARD PERIODICAL NUMBER: 中国标准连续出版物号:
ISSN 2096-2592 CN10-1433/D

ADVERTISING BUSINESS LICENSE: 广告经营业务许可证:
J.H.G.S. Advertising Business Registration No.20170199

PRICING: 定价:
¥10 / India ₹ 100

VOL.22 NO.4 | JULY - AUGUST 2020

Visit *China-India Dialogue* on the Internet:

www.chinaindiadialogue.com

Follow us on:

CONSULTANTS OF THE CHINA-INDIA DIALOGUE ADVISORY BOARD

Alka Acharya Professor and former director of the Institute of Chinese Studies, Delhi

Dhaval D Desai, Senior Fellow & Vice President of Observer Research Foundation

Hu Shisheng Director of the Institute of South and Southeast Asian and Oceanian Studies under China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations

Li Daokui Economics professor and director of the Center for China in the World Economy at Tsinghua University

Lin Minwang Professor at the Institute of International Studies at Fudan University

Ma Jiali Deputy Director of the Center for International Strategic Studies of China Reform Forum

Ma Weigong Consultant of the National Institute of Strategic Communication at Peking University and former deputy editor-in-chief of China Radio International

Mukul Sanwal Former Policy Adviser to the Executive Director of United Nations Environment Programme

Pravin Sawhney Editor of *Force* Newsmagazine

Sun Shihai Former director of the Chinese Association for South Asian Studies and former deputy director of the National Institute of International Strategy under the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

Sun Yuxi Former Special Envoy of the Chinese Foreign Ministry on Afghan Affairs and former

Chinese ambassador to India

Sudheendra Kulkarni, Founder of Forum for New South Asia

Tarun Vijay Former member of Parliament and president of Parliamentary Group on India China Friendship

T. C. A. Rangachari Former Indian Ambassador to France and Germany, dealt with India's relations with China for over 15 years in the Ministry of External Affairs

Yang Yifeng Director of the Hindi Department of the Center for Programs in Asian and African Languages, China Media Group

Zhang Wenmu Professor of the Center for Strategic Studies at Beihang University

China, India Reach Positive Consensus on Easing Border Situation

Chinese Special Representative on the China-India Boundary Question, State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi held a telephone conversation on July 5, 2020 with Indian Special Representative and National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, during which the two sides reached a positive consensus on easing their border situation.

Noting that this year marks the 70th anniversary of China-India diplomatic ties, Wang said that bilateral relations have experienced ups and downs and today's positive developments have not come easily.

For the incident that occurred not long ago at the Galwan Valley in the western section of the China-India boundary, the facts of what happened are very clear, Wang said, adding that China will continue to firmly defend its territorial sovereignty and safeguard peace and tranquility in the border areas.

Wang stressed that achieving development and rejuvenation is the top priority for both China and India, and the two sides share long-term, common strategic interests in this general direction.

He urged the two sides to adhere to the strategic judgment that China and India pose no threat to each other and offer development opportunities to each other, prioritize attention to the complex situation in their bilateral relations, and work together to straighten it out as soon as possible.

Wang also expressed his hope that the Indian side will meet China halfway, guide public opinion in the right direction, safeguard and promote normal exchanges and cooperation between the two countries, avoid moves that will expand and complicate disputes, and jointly safeguard the overall situation of China-India relations.

The two sides exchanged frank and in-depth views on easing the border situation and reached a positive consensus.

Chinese Ambassador to India: China and India Should Be Partners Rather than Rivals

On July 10, 2020, Chinese Ambassador to India Sun Weidong delivered video remarks on current China-India relations. He stated that the two countries should implement the consensus reached by the leaders of both sides, focus on cooperation and handle differences properly to bring China-India relations back on the right track.

Sun said that China and India are the two largest developing countries and emerging economies, and development is our common goal and the most important convergence of interests. As China and India boast huge market potentials and high economic complementarity, we are fully capable of achieving win-win results through cooperation. Now we are facing the common enemy that is COVID-19. The virus knows no borders. In the face of this great test for humanity, we should fight side by side. We should strengthen cooperation on curbing the epidemic and jointly overcome difficulties.

Consulate-General of China in Mumbai, SME Chamber of India Jointly Hold a Video Seminar on Strengthening Economic and Trade Cooperation

On August 5, 2020, the Consulate-General of China in Mumbai and the Small and Medium Business Development Chamber of India (SME Chamber of India) jointly held a video seminar, discussing strengthening economic and trade cooperation between the two countries. Consul-General Tang Guocai attended the event and delivered a speech. The seminar was also joined by Chandrakant Salunkhe, president of the SME Chamber of India, Liu Mingming,

Economic and Commercial Counselor at the Consulate-General of China in Mumbai, Zheng Bin, president of the Association of Chinese Enterprises in Mumbai, Zhu Dacheng, executive director of Sany India, and representatives of some Chinese and Indian enterprises.

Tang Guocai said that China's strategic success in fighting against the COVID-19 epidemic and fast economic recovery has brought hope and confidence to developing countries including India and the world as a whole. As neighboring developing countries with huge populations and great potential, China and India have major common interests in economic and trade cooperation and share responsibilities in promoting regional development.

Chandrakant Salunkhe and other Indian representatives believe that economic and trade cooperation with China is very important for small and medium-sized Indian enterprises, and they are willing to work together with China to create a good atmosphere for cooperation and make contributions to bilateral relations.

Wang Yi Holds Video Conference with Russian and Indian Foreign Ministers

On August 20, 2020, Director-General of the Department of Boundary and Ocean Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China Hong Liang and Joint Secretary of the East Asia Division of the Ministry of External Affairs of India Naveen Srivastava co-chaired the 18th meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on China-India Border Affairs through a video link. Representatives from both countries' authorities of foreign affairs, national defense and immigration attended the meeting.

The two sides reviewed the recent situation in the border areas between China and India, positively evaluated the progress made in the disengagement of the front-line forces of the two countries, exchanged candid and in-depth views on the remaining issues on the ground, and enhanced mutual understanding. The two sides agreed to conscientiously implement the consensus reached between the two countries' foreign ministers and the Special Representatives on the China-India boundary question, continue to maintain dialogue and communication through military and diplomatic channels, further cool the border situation, properly handle the remaining issues on the ground, and jointly maintain peace and tranquility in the border areas.

"Chinese Bridge" Competition Concluded

On August 28, 2020, the "Chinese Bridge" Chinese Proficiency Competition for Foreign Students (India) was held online by the Chinese Embassy in India. More than 30 participants, including 23 contestants, judges and Chinese language teachers from both countries, attended the event. Ms. Sangita Pandit won first prize and would represent India for the final competition. Ms. Ma Jia, Minister of the Chinese Embassy in India, addressed the participants at the event. 📺



Respect and Understand Each Other to Build a Bridge of People-to-People and Cultural Exchanges

By Sun Weidong



The history of friendly exchanges between the Chinese and Indian people for more than 2,000 years cannot be blocked by the epidemic or temporary difficulties in bilateral relations.

Friendly cooperation is the mainstream of bilateral relations in the long history of China-India exchanges.

The exchange between China and India is like an age-old, heavy book worth reading for a lifetime. There is no second example in human history

when we look back at the exchanges of our two great civilizations, which started more than 2,000 years ago. China's papermaking, silk, porcelain and tea were introduced to India, while Indian singing and dancing, astronomy, architecture and spices were introduced to China. The exchanges and mutual

learning between Chinese and Indian civilizations have made important contributions to the development of the two civilizations and the world at large.

One of the famous envoys of friendly exchanges between the peoples of China and India is Xuanzang, who was an eminent monk in the Tang



February 18, 2020: Chinese Ambassador to India Sun Weidong holds a press conference on China's fight against COVID-19 and takes questions from journalists at the Chinese Embassy in India. courtesy of the Chinese Embassy in India

Dynasty (618-907). He came to India to study Buddhism 1,300 years ago. After returning to China, he wrote the book *Great Tang Records on the Western Regions*, recording what he saw and heard during his 19-year journey. Among them, 17 special topics were mainly introduced to India, which became an important reference for the study of ancient Indian history. I remember that it recorded a living habit of ancient Indians, which was to brush their teeth with neem branches. I heard that people in some parts of India still brush their teeth with neem branches. Science has proved that this kind of branch has antibacterial properties, and is even suitable

for the prevention and treatment of oral ulcers. It shows how meticulously Xuanzang observed people's lives at that time. Archaeologists from various countries also discovered many historical sites in India according to clues from the book, such as the Pillar of Ashoka at Sarnath, the Nalanda Temple and the Ajanta and Ellora Caves. These examples show the significance of exchange of human civilizations to the inheritance and development of ancient civilizations.

China and India, as two ancient civilizations, should respect and learn from each other, treat each other as equals, and seek common ground while reserving

differences. We cannot find two identical leaves in the world. Similarly, there are no two identical civilizations in the world. We should respect the diversity of the world and treat each other's differences in a mature and rational manner. We need mutual respect and appreciation and need to be open and inclusive, so that we can trust each other and live in harmony.

Taking living habits for example, as a Chinese saying goes, "Do as the locals do," which means, when you arrive at a new place, you should respect local traditions and customs. In India, people are used to eating with their hands. It is because you could have the most authentic



The Nalanda Mahavihara site is about 90 kilometers southeast of Patna, the capital city of the State of Bihar, India. Built in the 5th century, Nalanda stood out as the top learning institution and the academic center of Buddhism in ancient India. VCG

feeling of the temperature and texture of the food by hands. Some Indian friends told me that food not eaten with one's hands is not delicious. Of course, we should also pay attention to hygiene. Generally, when we have Indian food in a restaurant, the waiter will serve a small bowl of warm water with a slice of lemon in it. It's not for you to drink, but to clean your hands. Chinese people are used to using chopsticks. A pair of chopsticks consisting of two wooden sticks embodies the extensive and profound Chinese food culture. If Indian friends learn to use chopsticks skillfully, they will win high praise from their Chinese friends. Whether eating with one's hands or by chopsticks, both are part of the living habits of our two nations that deserve respect.

Let's move from living habits to cultural traditions.

As another Chinese saying goes, "What's unique for a nation is of significance in the world," which means, the more national characteristics it has, the more influential it becomes. Indian Bollywood movies, which enjoy world-wide popularity, are also very popular among Chinese audiences including me. I have watched movies like *Hindi Medium*, *Secret Superstar*, and *Dangal*. The stories in these movies always resonate with me, leaving me touched. You may be aware that Indian movies are very popular in China and their box office revenues in China are twice that in the Indian market. Yoga is another popular practice which belongs to India. My wife is a yoga lover, who practices yoga at home every day. According to available statistics, more than 10 million people practice yoga to keep fit in China.

I have also heard that there are hundreds of thousands of Indian friends practicing Chinese martial arts. Chinese acupuncture has been recognised as an independent medical system in India. This shows that our two countries have intensive cultural and artistic exchanges, delivering tangible benefits to our two peoples.

More importantly, we need to respect our respective social systems. I believe that the social system of every country is an independent choice made by its own people, and no other country should interfere. China and India have different social systems and cultural traditions, but we all aim to embark on development paths that suit our own national conditions. The world is wonderful because of its differences. We need to understand each other, seek common ground while reserving differences, and work together to build a community with a shared future for mankind. President Xi Jinping said that China will neither "import" foreign models of development, nor "export" the Chinese model and ask other countries to "copy" the Chinese practice. Indeed, we always look at the civilizations created by people worldwide with an open and broad mind, and conduct exchanges and cooperation with an attitude of mutual learning. As two neighboring major countries, China and India should abandon the old mindset of drawing lines by ideology, and get rid of the old concept that "one's gain is

another's loss" and "zero-sum game." Otherwise, you would be led astray and go down a wrong path.

China and India should respect and support each other. The relationship between states, just like the relationship between peoples, should be based on mutual respect. As two neighbors and emerging major countries each with a population of over 1 billion, the growth of China-India relations will not only

be disturbed by one thing at a time. In this new century, bilateral relations should continue to move forward instead of backward. Not long ago, an unfortunate incident happened in the border areas that neither China nor India would like to see. Now we are working to handle it properly. It is a brief moment from the perspective of history. Chinese people often say, "Take a long-term perspective and look with a broadened

instead of a threat. We hope to put the boundary question at an appropriate place in bilateral relations, properly handle differences through dialogue and consultation, and push bilateral relations back on track at an early date.

China's foreign policy towards India has not changed for three reasons. The first one is that the basic national conditions of China and India as the two largest neighboring developing countries remain unchanged. China and India have been neighbors for generations that cannot move apart. At the same time, we are also the two most populous developing countries in the world. Our top priority is to meet the needs of a total of 2.7 billion people and make sure that one third of the world's population lives a happy life. Therefore, both China and India need to concentrate on their own development and solve a number of problems such as rural revitalization, poverty eradication, education development, employment creation, and environmental protection. In this regard, we have a lot in common. This year, China will target to win the battle against poverty, eliminate absolute poverty, and build a moderately prosperous society in all respects. We are confident to achieve this task. In order to achieve such development goals, both of us need a peaceful and favorable external environment. Therefore, China and India, two neighboring countries, should live in peace and avoid

China's basic foreign policy towards India remains unchanged. China sees India as a partner instead of a rival, and an opportunity instead of a threat.

benefit our two countries and peoples, but also add stability and positive energy to peace and prosperity of the region and the world at large. Mutual respect and support between China and India is the right path and serves the long-term interests of both countries. Only by mutual respect and equal treatment can we continuously enhance mutual understanding and trust, avoid suspicion and misunderstanding, and realize the goal of a "Dragon-Elephant Tango" between China and India on the road of peaceful coexistence and common development.

Since the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and India 70 years ago, bilateral relations have withstood tests and become more resilient. It should not

be disturbed by one thing at a time. In this new century, bilateral relations should continue to move forward instead of backward. Not long ago, an unfortunate incident happened in the border areas that neither China nor India would like to see. Now we are working to handle it properly. It is a brief moment from the perspective of history. Chinese people often say, "Take a long-term perspective and look with a broadened horizon," which means it is important to take a long-term perspective rather than only looking at the present. We need to see that friendly cooperation between China and India is the mainstream and the general trend. Only by seeing this can we maintain objective and rational judgment and correctly handle the differences between the two sides. I am convinced that China and India, two ancient civilizations, have the wisdom and ability to properly handle bilateral relations. We should have full confidence in the development of China-India relations.

What I want to emphasize here is that China's basic foreign policy towards India remains unchanged. China sees India as a partner instead of a rival, and an opportunity

conflicts.

Second, the orientation of China and India as partners, friendly cooperation and common development remain unchanged. Over the past two years, the two leaders held two informal summits and reached a series of important points of consensus on the development of China-India relations, which has provided guidance to us. We should adhere to the leaders' consensus, particularly the basic judgment that China and India are each other's opportunities and pose no threat to each other. We should also transmit the leaders' consensus to all levels and translate it into action. At present, facing the outbreak of COVID-19, we are supporting each other and working together to exchange experience in diagnosis and treatment as well as providing medical supplies, which embodies the spirit of partnership between us. The youth of the two countries recorded videos in Chinese and Hindi respectively to cheer on each other at a time when the epidemic situation became severe. They have shown the friendship between the Chinese and Indian people with practical actions. In the future, we should continue to strengthen cooperation in public health and jointly safeguard the lives and health of our two peoples.

Third, the general structure that China and India cannot develop without each other remains unchanged. Today's world is interconnected and

interdependent. Some people say that the world is flat. I think in the era of globalization, the world is "connected." No country can be isolated from the rest of the world and seek development on its own. We should not only adhere to self-reliance, but also stick to opening up to the outside world in line with the trend of globalization. Only in this way can we achieve better development. The economic complementarity between China and India is very strong. China has been India's largest trading partner for many years in a row, while India is also China's largest trading partner in South Asia. The Chinese and Indian economies are interwoven and interdependent. This is the natural result of market rules and choices of enterprises. The 2.7 billion people of our two countries have benefited from such cooperation, which has injected strong impetus to our respective development and become an example of mutual benefits and win-win cooperation. I think the two big economies of China and India should attract each other like magnets, rather than forcefully separate them.

My fourth point is, people-to-people and cultural exchanges between China and India need to be inherited and carried forward from generation to generation. Here I want to share another story with you.

In 2003, I accompanied the then Indian Prime Minister Shri Atal Vajpayee to the White Horse Temple in Luoyang, Henan Province.

The temple, built in the Eastern Han Dynasty 2,000 years ago, was the first official Buddhist temple after Buddhism spread eastward from India to China. I remember that Prime Minister Vajpayee announced during the visit that India would build an Indian-style Buddhist temple in the White Horse Temple as a gift from the Indian people to the Chinese people. In 2010, I had the honor to accompany India's then President Smt. Pratibha Patil to the White Horse Temple in Luoyang for the inauguration ceremony of the Indian-style Buddhist temple. When I saw this newly built Indian-style Buddhist temple, I was stunned by its beauty and magnificence, especially its exquisitely-carved gate, which made me feel like I was in Sanchi Stupa, a World Heritage site in Madhya Pradesh. It took seven years from Prime Minister Vajpayee's proposal to the completion of the temple, which has gathered the painstaking efforts and labor of many people. It can be seen that there must be perseverance, hard work and unrelenting investment to achieve a goal.

Two eminent Indian monks Kasyapa Matanga and Dharmaratna lie in the White Horse Temple in Luoyang. In 64 A.D., they came to Luoyang with Buddhist scriptures and statues on white horses at the invitation of Emperor Ming of Han. They translated the first Chinese Buddhist sutra in the White Horse Temple, which led to the large-scale



—
A Buddhist hall built in a distinctive Indian style in the White Horse Temple, Luoyang City, Henan Province. VCG

spread of Buddhism in China. From the “white horse carrying sutras” to the Indian-style Buddhist temple, China and India continued the “Buddhist bond” after nearly 2,000 years, which is a symbol of cultural exchanges between China and India in the new century. This year marks the 10th anniversary of the completion of the Buddhist temple and coincides with the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and India. I think China-India friendship embodies the hard work of generations in history, and should be cherished all the more. Similarly, the development of China-India relations in the future requires continued joint efforts of both sides.

In this process, learning language is very important. Language is a bridge for

cultural exchanges and a key to open each other’s hearts. If Xuanzang, Dharmaratna and Kasyapa Matanga didn’t understand Sanskrit or Chinese, how could we see today’s people-to-people and cultural exchanges? Therefore, language learning is indispensable in people-to-people and cultural exchanges between the two countries, which cannot be ignored, let alone be politicized.

In addition, some renowned scholars, such as Indian poet Tagore and Chinese Professor Tan Yunshan, founded the Cheena Bhavana at Visva Bharati University in Shantiniketan, India. It has trained outstanding Indian scholars who promote the study of Chinese language and Chinese culture throughout India.

Under the current situation

of the epidemic, the actual people-to-people and cultural exchanges between China and India have been somewhat affected. However, there is a Chinese saying that “there are always more ways than difficulties,” which means people cannot be overwhelmed by difficulties. The history of friendly exchanges between the Chinese and Indian people for more than 2,000 years cannot be blocked by the epidemic or temporary difficulties in bilateral relations. China and India have the largest population of youth in the world which exceeds the population of any other country. Young people are the new force of China-India friendship, and the future of China-India relations lies in them. They are a generation of young people who grew up in the internet age, with global vision, and dare to pursue their dreams on the big stage of the world. Whether in a bustling city or a remote village, with an internet-connected computer or even a mobile phone, they can share their creative ideas with the world and make a success of themselves. In this regard, the young people in China and India are the same, running on the road of pursuing their dreams. 🇨🇳

—
The author is Chinese Ambassador to India. This article is an excerpt from the speech by Ambassador Sun Weidong at the China-India Youth Webinar.

Why China-India Relations Matter

By R. N. Bhaskar



All forces should coalesce behind a common vision of economic growth, the well-being of people, and the elimination of poverty.

It is not easy to talk about peace when two protagonists confront each other. It is dangerous to try to broker peace when armies are ranged face to face on either side of a hypothetical dividing line, charged by high levels of adrenalin, raring to lunge at each other. It is more like what T.S. Eliot described in

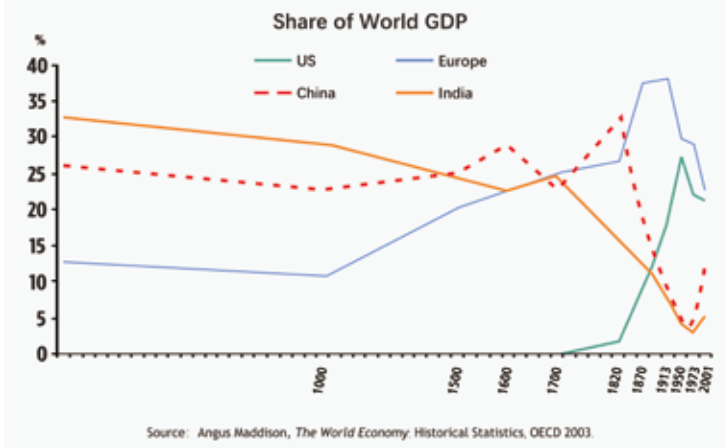
his play *The Family Reunion* through the words of Aunt Agatha: “In a world of fugitives, the person taking the opposite direction will appear to run away.”

But one must try. Despite running the risk of being misunderstood, here is an analysis of why China and India could mean a lot for each other. This is on account

of at least five reasons – though there may be many more.

- The weight of history
- The tremendous interdependence potential
- The need to stay neutral and non-partisan
- To compete, yet not be bitter about it
- The need to backtrack from hostile positions adopted

CHINA & INDIA REDISCOVER AN ANCIENT CALLING



Each of the above is an issue that can be discussed for hours, but in the interests of brevity and time, they will be dealt with as concisely as possible.

THE WEIGHT OF HISTORY

In many ways, China and India have a history of interaction that goes back more than 2,500 years, if not more. Both are great ancient civilizations. And both aspire to greater heights of learning and sagacity.

Even when it comes to business, China and India have commanded global economics for almost 1,500 of the 2,500 years leading to present times. This was clearly documented by the late economist Angus Maddison. Both countries began to feel the ground slip under their feet as the industrial revolution coupled with the printing press gave a momentum to Western countries that neither China nor India could match. The invention of the steam engine made

trains and ships move faster. The printing press allowed mass printing of maps, including sea routes, which led first to the age of exploration and then, sadly, to colonisation.

Colonisation did terrible things to the subjugated countries. First, it took away the land and territory. It then plundered wealth. More agonizingly, colonisation took away any semblance of dignity that the indigenous occupants of the captured territories might have had. That took away their ability to rise again. However, much to the credit of both China and India, both have rediscovered their ancient vim, and as if marching to an old DNA script, both have begun to reassert themselves on the global scene.

In many ways, China was the undisputed master of the seas to its east. Even Indian merchants who used to sail to China for silk till almost 1800, in exchange for spices, ivory and sandalwood, used to acknowledge the looming

presence of the Chinese Navy and paid tribute to China's emperors for over 1,500 years. Interestingly, however, China did not venture beyond the Straits of Malacca. Nor did the Indian merchants who traded with China traverse the seas to the western part of this territory known as India. They merely passed on the goods they had brought back to their counterparts plying the western shores of this sub-continent.

Merchants on the western coast of India took silk, spices and wine up to Rome, in exchange for gold which they brought back to their home country. This was the practice from about 300 B.C. until approximately 1600 A.D. The lines of adventurism, exploration and sovereignty were relatively clear.

The new world, however, has blurred all these lines for everyone, and that is one of the key causes for heartburn for almost all global powers. The rapid emergence of China and India on the world stage has changed the situation of the entire global arena.

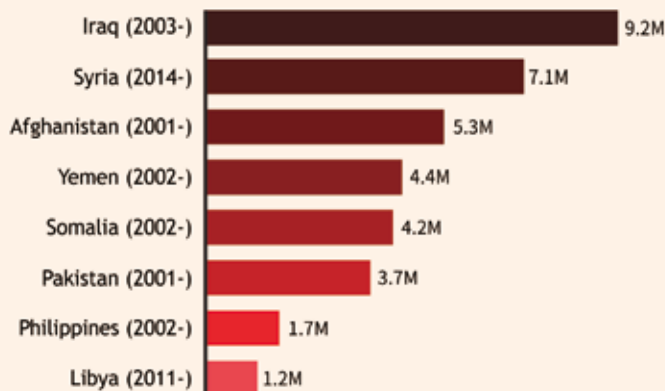
You may call it Dharma, the cycle of life, or mere coincidence. Many of the nations that grew through colonisation – spurred on by other nations' money – are now in a financial mess. This includes the U.S. which practiced a reverse colonisation through the slave empires it created.

TREMENDOUS POTENTIAL FOR INTERDEPENDENCE

It is only lately that both countries – along with Russia

AMERICA'S WAR ON TERROR DISPLACED 37 MILLION PEOPLE

Estimated number of people displaced by US wars post 9/11



Source: Brown University's Costs of War Project

– have begun to recognise the tremendous potential for interdependence. And, all the three players know that if these interdependencies were to be given full rein, all the three would prosper immensely.

But fear, chauvinism, and a bit of distrust have together caused the three economies to remain limited in their vision and stunted in their pace of growth.

China is three times the size of India, and almost the same size as the U.S. But unlike the U.S., China has very little water. That is one reason why China has not been able to grow much into its hinterland regions. It has grown where there is water, in the eastern parts. The fact that the ocean also was there to aid transportation and commerce was

an added advantage.

Russia is three times the size of China and has the largest reserves of freshwater in the world. A couple of years ago, Russia and China signed a pact, allowing the latter to draw water through a canal from Lake Baikal. This water will reach central China. China has moved adroitly, steering clear of more friction, and seeking a commercial solution to its economic and social needs.

Where there is water there is life, goes an old saying. It is expected that China's second wave of industrialisation will come from its central regions, as populations, enterprises and large corporations grow there. They may cater more to the domestic market. China's story of economic development is still not over. Expect a

lot more.

Neighbouring Russia has thus become a supplier of oil, gas and water to China. Russia has the world's largest reserves of minerals, including gold and rare earths. It will seek out India, precisely because it is not a next-door neighbour. Indian experts are already working with Russia on oil and in medicare and will be exploiting coal in eastern Russia and building railways and ports there for that purpose.

And India is a large market for Russian arms and technologies (two Indian companies are now sourcing the COVID-19 vaccine from there). China too wants access to this large market. India needs China's capital. China needs India's English-speaking intermediaries and market developers. Both could bring bilateral trade to levels that surpass U.S.-Canada trade, the largest in the world.

The complementariness that is there among the three nations is unbelievable and tantalising. Together, the three have the potential of changing all conventional notions of geopolitics and economic development. But for this, they need to work on building more trust among themselves.

CAN THE THREE REMAIN NEUTRAL?

Just as it resolved its border issue with Russia, China needs to resolve and settle its boundary question with India. India must also stop provoking China and withdraw

China from the Enemy Properties Act (China's was included along with Pakistan through an amendment in 2018). And China must stop thwarting India's moves at the United Nations.

As long as the border remains undefined, one-upmanship will always be lurking. Skirmishes will happen – sometimes with disastrous consequences. And as India is a democracy, the temptation on the part of politicians to fan the fire and polarize sentiments of an unsuspecting and not-so-savvy public will always be there. That is why the first moves will have to be made by China. It will unlock huge possibilities that remain unexploited till now.

India could then be persuaded to look away from the U.S. It is no secret that this nation has a track record of creating disharmony.

Yet, given the distrust levels in India, there are many who would love to push the Indian government to work closely with the U.S. This is because of the deep linkages the U.S. has developed in India. Many of India's senior policymakers have children who have been granted scholarships in the U.S. Many senior policymakers have even gotten lucrative sinecures in U.S.-funded organisations around the world.

If China wants the influence of such bureaucrats to diminish, it must provide more concrete instances to Indian politicians showing that China is a reliable friend. That is why, given India's own

internal compulsions, China may have to make the first move. And given its incredible strategic savvy, this author believes China will do so. That is the only way to unlock the wealth and peace potential of the two large Asian players.

This does not mean that China and India will see eye-to-eye on all matters. India wants to ensure that it remains a key influence among Asian (and other developing) nations. China too wants this role. Both are going to be competitors and antagonists (but not enemies) in trying to woo loyalties and trade rights.

But the potential is so huge that both can win. This is where Russia's advice to India will be of immense help. No Indian policymaker can deny Russia's role in India. It has been the source of the first seeds of industrial technology relating to steel, pharmaceuticals and even defence. Its guidance can be used to steer all the three players away from the shoals that could wreck the ship of economic cooperation.

BACKTRACKING FROM HOSTILE POSITIONS

This will mean that both China and India will have to backtrack from hostile positions they have adopted in the recent past. That is where an appeal to history and culture will help immensely. That is where cinema can be a great unifier as well. You cannot write off 2,500 years of peace because of just a few skirmishes. China needs to talk

about how the three could revive the past glory, and rise to the heights of economic prosperity seldom visualized during the past five centuries.

The world is changing rapidly. This is when all forces should coalesce behind a common vision of economic growth, the well-being of people, and the elimination of poverty. All the three – Russia, China and India – will obviously compete for their respective spheres of influence in Asia and the world. Both China and India are fast-growing economies – China is almost 5-6 times India's size. Russia too nurses ambitions of growth, but is more savagely hemmed in by the U.S.

China needs India greatly, but India still does not know that it needs China, equally greatly. There are many Indian policymakers who will strive to ensure that people do not think this way. The need will be felt in a few months as the pangs of financial starvation begin to be experienced. China must begin making its moves before then. Otherwise, India will be sucked into the seductive assurances of Quad.

Clearly, shaking clenched fists at one another is not the best solution. That is where China's moves will be of critical significance. 📌

The author is consulting editor with Free Press Journal.

A Window to Understanding Contemporary China

By Sreemati Chakrabarti

Such a volume can be a very important primary source material to understand contemporary China, as well as to tell the policy priorities of the Chinese government.

Writings and speeches of leaders of countries around the world are normally called “Selected Works.” Chinese President Xi Jinping’s speeches and writings have been published with a different kind of name: *The Governance of China*.

Like the first two volumes, the third volume mainly comprises speeches delivered by Chinese President Xi Jinping, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, between October 18, 2017 to January 13, 2020.

Such a volume can be a very important primary source material to understand contemporary China, as well as to tell the policy priorities of the Chinese government. It’s commendable that Xi’s

writing style is simple and intelligible to the ordinary person.

What has to be especially mentioned here is the first section of the volume, which is Xi Jinping’s report at the 19th CPC National Congress on October 18, 2017. Many scholars and analysts have spoken very highly of this speech.

All through this report, President Xi refers to “Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era.” Whereas “socialism with Chinese characteristics” as a guiding principle has been upheld by the CPC since the 1980s, adding the words “new era” shows that Xi has put forward many original ideas drawn from his experience in state governance, taking into account the new and emerging realities of Chinese social,

political, economic, cultural and environmental situations, and further enriching the theoretical base of the Party.

The long report, which runs into 79 pages in its English version, covers a whole range of issues from innovations, culture, and the armed forces to national rejuvenation and more – which stresses the role and significance of the Party. While it is natural that at the CPC National Congress which meets only once in five years, the top leadership emphasizes Party work to inspire and energise all Party members, the extent and intensity of Xi’s continuous stress and efforts on the Party is almost unparalleled in the history of Communism.

The report stressed that the Party leadership should guide toward socialist modernization and great rejuvenation of

the Chinese nation. Further, it also reminded the Chinese people and all Party members to “remain true to our original aspiration and founding mission” and continue to deepen reforms and promote the rule of law and full, strict Party governance. Therefore, the anti-corruption and rectification efforts in China have been continued until this day.

Also significant, relevant and with far-reaching consequences are the Chinese president’s views and policies on ecology and environment. Speeches and writings on these issues are in the section called “Harmony Between Humanity and Nature.” Speaking at the National Conference on Eco-environmental Protection in May 2018, Xi stated that the major challenge facing Chinese society today “is the gap between the unbalanced and inadequate development and the ever-growing expectation of the people for a better life.”

Since the people of the country and their support are top priorities, it is absolutely necessary to “promote environmental protection, preserve the ecosystems and provide more quality eco-products.” When it comes to economic development, it is important to adhere to the principle of giving priority to the conservation, protection and restoration of nature, he said.

One cannot overstress the significance of the above-mentioned statement. Development and progress without adequate precautions



The Chinese and English versions of the third volume of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*, which were published on June 30, 2020. Xinhua

to keep the environment healthy are already haunting mankind. At this stage, if corrective measures are not taken, the future of humanity will be jeopardized. In this speech, Xi urged and pleaded for China to protect the environment as one protects one’s eyes and life. Insisting that environmental quality cannot be allowed to drop further, it must be improved.

To ensure that environmental protection work is well implemented, he warned that local Party and government functionaries will be held directly accountable if the ecosystems in their responsible areas are badly damaged or deteriorate.

What’s more, to improve the ecological development of China and the world, President Xi has made a commitment that China will be heavily involved in global environmental governance and actively take part in the transformation to help

form global solutions to environmental protection and sustainable development.

In the inaugural speech that President Xi delivered at the Beijing International Horticulture Exhibition in April 2019, he urged all nations to join hands to meet common challenges. “Only together we can effectively address climate change, marine pollution, biological conservation, and other global environmental issues, and achieve the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,” he said.

Overall, the third volume of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* gives readers a very comprehensive picture of the policies and thinking of the Chinese leadership on a matter which has deep and worldwide influences. 📖

The author is vice-chairperson and honorary fellow at the Institute of Chinese Studies, Delhi.

Avoid Misinterpretations of China-India Relations

By Ye Hailin

For the past seven decades, the development of China-India relations has adopted a multi-dimensional approach, contained rich elements, and has had multiple interacting elements. The China-India relationship is a complex unity formed by interactions between various interrelated factors.

2020 marks the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and India. Over the past seven decades, bilateral ties have witnessed ups and downs and gone through an uphill journey. At present, the world is facing changes unseen in a century, with drastic adjustments happening in the international landscape and order. At this moment, it is exceptionally important to review the development of China-India ties, and summarize

the experience and lessons we learn from handling the relationship between the world's two largest developing countries. It is also of great significance to discuss the development of China-India relations against the backdrop of a changing geopolitical pattern in South Asia.

China and India are the world's two largest developing countries. The importance of their bilateral relations to the two countries themselves, to Asia, and even to the whole world has been increasing. Against this

backdrop, it becomes even more imperative to understand and study China-India relations with realistic and pragmatic approaches, and to address various problems in the bilateral ties with optimism and calmness. We must trust the wisdom of the two ancient civilizations for peaceful coexistence, while recognizing the game theory that goes beyond the cultural differences in international relations, especially the "national interests first" logic for sovereign states.

COGNITIVE DIFFERENCES

Differences in almost every issue concerning China-India relations can be traced back to the same question: the hugely contrasted understandings and interpretations of each other's identity and standing. In a way, the misunderstandings between China and India are not caused by misinterpretations of behaviors and intentions, but by different identity recognitions and identity imaginations.

First, China and India have different views on their respective international status. The modern international order based on the *Charter of the United Nations* recognizes that all countries, no matter how big or small, are equal members of the international community. However, equal status under the international law doesn't necessarily mean countries are equal in influence, power, and strength. The international status of a certain country is largely determined by its strength, and also by how it exerts its influence.

China believes that it leads India in almost all widely-accepted parameters that determine the strength of a country. However, in the eyes of India, China is always overshadowed by another more powerful country, so China finds it hard to exercise psychological superiority over India even though it overtakes India in national strength. This more powerful country is the United States. It is difficult to prove which has a higher status in the

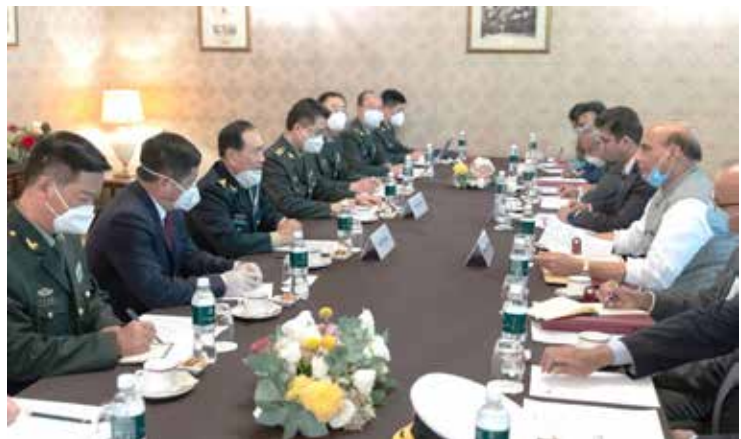
international community: a regional power supported by a superpower or a power contained by a superpower. Nevertheless, even though it is weaker in national strength, India doesn't feel the need to be restrained when dealing with China, especially dealing with issues which may lead to confrontations.

Second, the two countries hold different perceptions on the other side's position in their respective development strategies. Since China and India established diplomatic relations seven decades ago, what have the two sides meant to each other? While India's answer to this question is generally negative, China's strategic thinking on India has been consistent and coherent, which is evident in China's broad picture of strategies. India has never been a key concern in China's global vision, and China has never considered India a major threat. India, on the other

hand, tends to view China as the primary factor undermining its strategic security and as the obstacle for it to realize its aspiration to become a major power. The two sides' strategic positioning toward each other doesn't fit together. Thus, it is hard to guarantee that the signals one side sends will be correctly interpreted by the other.

Third, there is a gap in anticipated benefits when it comes to their policies on bilateral ties. During the interaction between the two countries, it is easy to notice the contrast between national strength and willingness to take action. India, which is weaker in comprehensive strength, has been quite aggressive in its relationship with China. When a problem arises, India always adopts pushy diplomatic measures. In a word, India has played a key role in shaping the status of the bilateral ties.

In recent years, on almost



September 5, 2020: Chinese State Councilor and Minister of National Defense Wei Fenghe (third left) meets with his Indian counterpart Rajnath Singh on the sidelines of a ministerial meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Moscow, Russia. China News Service

all specific issues concerning China-India relations, China has shown goodwill with the best intentions, but didn't receive the same good faith in return. Why did China, as the stronger player, never try to stop India's aggressive diplomatic practices? One possible explanation goes like this: China doesn't think it necessary to fight back with the same or even stronger measures because that may lead to more harm than good.

The mutual strategic misjudgments caused by the two countries' different perceptions of each other's identity can be summarized as follows: China believes that the China-India relationship is a non-zero-sum game between a powerful country and a less powerful country, while India considers it a zero-sum game between two equally powerful countries. The different psychologies and opinions on specific issues serve as the premise and affect the whole development process of China-India ties. They decide the mentalities of the two sides when determining tactics for interaction. It is almost impossible to narrow down the differences through managing and addressing specific issues. Thus, these differences carry a greater and more decisive influence on China-India relations in the long run.

DIFFERENT UNDERSTANDINGS AFFECT CHINA-INDIA RELATIONS

During the interaction between China and India, a

huge gap in identity perception always exists. This huge gap is not conducive to building mutual trust and avoiding misinterpretations of each other. It will increase game costs and reduce the possibility of creating a win-win situation through healthy interaction between the two sides.

During the development of any bilateral ties, greatly different identity perceptions and positioning can lead to serious misinterpretations of the other side's intentions. For example, some Indian scholars believe that India should adopt a hedging strategy against China on the grounds that India needs to deal with threats from China, such as the China-India boundary question, China's challenge to India's dominant position in South Asia, and the possible impact of China's development on India's status and role in Asia. China thinks that all the threats listed by India, except for its concerns on the boundary question, are groundless. In China's view of the geopolitical structure in the Asia-Pacific region, especially when it comes to security, India has never been a key concern. However, this is exactly what India refuses to accept. In India's view, China's attitude is not an unbiased reaction based on existing facts, but rather a goal China wants to achieve—the goal to challenge India's dominant role in South Asia.

It should be noted that the different identity perceptions of China and India and subsequent possible strategic

misunderstandings affect the two countries differently. For China, India has never been its major strategic concern. However, the situation is very different for India. For almost all issues related to China-India relations, their importance is taken for granted by the Indian side.

But when people look at the international environment, they get another picture. Under the current international landscape, as China is becoming a major player in the global arena, the future international pattern is determined to a certain extent by the interaction between China and the current international landscape as well as its rule-makers. India is still far away from this status. With China moving into the center of the world stage, instead of receiving greater honor and respect, the country gets more hostility and attacks from countries that dominate and control the current international system. With returns decreasing and risks increasing from its foreign policy, China gets fewer strategic options when gaming with other entities.

Influenced by the balance of power and its external environment, China's policies toward India become more risk-averse. China's risk aversion mentality has given India enough room for proactive or even aggressive tactics. Thus, in most cases, when China needs to choose between smooth handling of the problems in bilateral ties and launching reciprocal actions to contain India's

offensive intentions, it usually makes certain concessions to avoid escalation of disputes.

Another view holds that China maintains the stability or constructiveness of China-India relations as the starting point of its policies toward India. For example, China believes that both countries have the same needs for peace and development, and share huge common interests at the regional and global levels. China-India relations go beyond just bilateral ties, and affect even regional and international relations. Therefore, China and India must seek common ground while shelving differences, properly handle differences and frictions, and move forward hand in hand.

PROSPECTS FOR CHINA-INDIA RELATIONS

Based on the logic of realism, it is not hard to conclude that India can gain the upper hand in China-India relations in the short term, by virtue of its favorable international and regional environment. However, in the long run, China will be the one to decide the final state of bilateral relations.

For China, the optimal state of China-India relations includes the following aspects: The structural problems in China-India ties are solved; India accepts the progress of the Belt and Road Initiative in South Asia; India and China join hands to oppose U.S. hegemony and work toward a community with a shared future for humanity. However,

a closer look into the future development of China-India ties reveals that it is obviously not rational to only expect the optimal state of bilateral relations. For a long time to come, India will continue to be supported by the leading force in the international status quo. It will be able to derive great benefits from the existing international structure, or at least have high expectations for this. China, on the other hand, has become a target of containment, and will continue to be contained by some Western powers and their allies.

From the perspective of the transformation of the international landscape, it is easy to reach the conclusion that the optimal state of China-India relations that China expects is hard to achieve. What China should expect is a sub-optimal state in line with a cost-benefit balance. This state means that the problems in China-India relations can be effectively managed and controlled to avoid fierce conflicts between the two sides. At the same time, India tacitly recognizes and accepts China's policies toward South Asia and cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative, or at least resolves not to publicly stand in the way. Besides, under special circumstances, India can oppose U.S. actions against China, or at least remain neutral.

For the past seven decades, the development of China-India relations has required a multi-dimensional approach, contained rich elements, and has had multiple interacting

elements. The China-India relationship cannot be simply described as "good" or "bad," for it is a complex unity formed by interactions between various interrelated factors. The state of bilateral relations is affected by both the existing problems of the two sides and the regional and international environments. Ignoring any relevant factor will lead to misinterpretations of China-India relations. Misinterpretations will lead to misjudgments during interactions, result in inflated expectations and even confrontational emotions, and make the two sides miss windows of opportunity for win-win outcomes due to strategic suspicions.

We should do what we can to avoid these misjudgments when looking at prospects for the relationship between the two ancient nations, which account for one third of the world's population. We should examine all aspects of the bilateral relationship from a global perspective, taking international relations and the geopolitical landscape into consideration. We should never fail to see the forest for the trees. We should also face up to the problems in the bilateral relationship, avoid bluntly advocating idealism that goes beyond reality, and never try to ignore structural problems in bilateral ties. 📌

—
The author is vice director and researcher with the National Institute of International Strategy, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

The Tangled Web of the Bilateral Relationship

By Qian Feng

New changes keep emerging, threatening border stability and future relations between China and India.

As two Asian giants sitting across the Himalayas, China and India sometimes have their differences due to the boundary question and geopolitical disputes. The border troops of these two countries confronted each other in May and engaged this June in the most serious border clash since the 1962 border conflict, leaving casualties on both sides. The border tensions, a result of accumulated old and new problems fueled by the profound changes in international and regional landscapes, take a toll on political trust, economic and trade cooperation, and national sentiments between the two countries. The border standoff and ongoing talks

have been simultaneously carried on since June. New changes keep emerging, threatening border stability and future relations between China and India.

CHINA-INDIA RELATIONSHIP IN A STANDSTILL

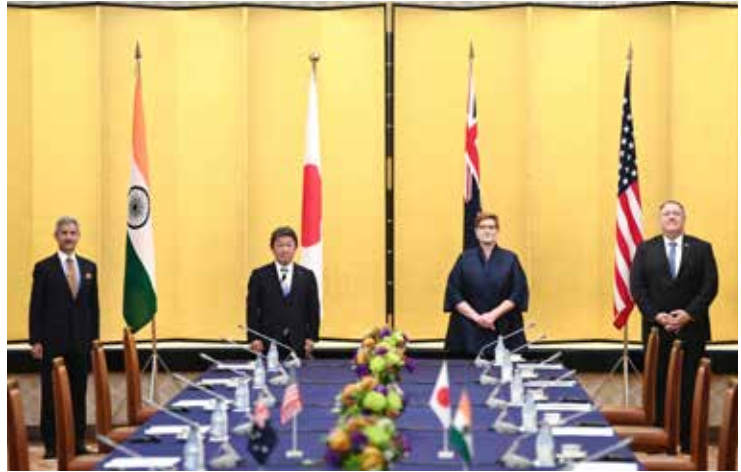
The standoff this time is even severer than the 2017 Dong Lang (Doklam) confrontation in terms of duration, impact and destructiveness. Chinese and Indian leaders worked hard to get the bilateral relationship back on track after the Dong Lang confrontation, achieving remarkable results. This year marks the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and India. It is expected that the scheduled

celebrations would further stabilize and promote China-India relations.

Opportunism and adventurism have long existed in the strategic culture of India. The ups and downs of China-India relations in the past seven decades are rooted in India's mixed attitudes toward China. This year, considering the COVID-19 pandemic's continuous impact on international security and the world economic situation, the negative side of India's China policy gained the upper hand. The escalating China-U.S. competition and Washington's wooing of India seem an endorsement to New Delhi that China is too occupied to deal with India, an opportunity for India to take advantage of. As a result, regardless of China's concerns,

India chose to build sensitive facilities in sensitive areas at a sensitive time, which triggered the border clash.

The Narendra Modi government adopts the strategy of “political retaliation, diplomatic counterattack, and economic punishment” toward China to cater to domestic nationalism following the border friction. India imposes more trade barriers and investment restrictions, cancels Chinese contracts, boycotts Chinese-developed apps and bans Chinese companies from bidding for big projects. All of these measures sour economic and trade cooperation between the two countries and dampen the enthusiasm of Chinese investors. It is worth noting that Gourangalal Das, Joint Secretary (Americas) in India’s Ministry of External Affairs, has recently been appointed as the new representative to China’s Taiwan, a position lower than his high qualifications; while Baushuan Ger, the so-called “director general of the Department of East Asian and Pacific Affairs at the Foreign Ministry” in Taiwan, has been appointed as Taiwan’s new representative to India. The two sides apparently exchanged ideas in private before appointing the two senior diplomats at the same time. Indian and Taiwanese media disclosed that Das is expected to focus on developing India-Taiwan economic and trade cooperation and the tripartite interactions with the U.S. and Taiwan, so as to attract more of Taiwan’s



October 6, 2020: Indian Minister of External Affairs S. Jaishankar, Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi, Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne and U.S. Secretary of State Michael Pompeo (left to right) take a group photo at the prime minister’s official residence in Tokyo, Japan. The four foreign ministers held a face-to-face meeting that day. Agence France-Presse said that the four Quad countries advocated the so-called concept of a “free and open Indo-Pacific.” Visual People

enterprises, especially those that have invested in the mainland of China, to do business in India. This reflects possible adjustments of India’s China policy.

Some Indian media figures and policy strategists call on the Indian government to reset its China policy and build stronger bonds with the U.S., and even urge the Indian side to take military retaliation against China. Similar national sentiments were seen before the outbreak of the border conflict in 1962.

Back in the early 1960s, China faced a domestic economic plight. Moreover, it was contained by the U.S. and had a rift with the Soviet Union externally, so it made every effort to avoid armed conflicts on the western border. New Delhi, however, started a fight against China

because its policymakers believed that a troubled China would be afraid and unwilling to use force. Clearly, they were not as practical and sensible as Indian policymakers today.

On July 21, 2020, Indian External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar stated that “non-alignment” has somehow become an old concept today, but India will never be part of an alliance system. India is not a bystander in the international arena. It needs to take a more proactive stance on issues including connectivity, maritime security, anti-terrorism, and climate change to realize its own development as the world is rebalancing. He added that these goals cannot be achieved by India alone. India will not ally itself with the U.S., so building ties with the U.S. will not be a problem.

CLOSER INDIA-U.S. RELATIONS

Undoubtedly, the downturn of China-India relations is more likely to push India towards a direction favored by the U.S. For many years, the U.S. has never simply stood by on matters concerning China's core interests. After coming to power, President Donald Trump, influenced by the far right, formulated the "Indo-Pacific strategy" at the end of 2017 to contain China. The U.S. has been trying to draw India, a major power in South Asia, to its side and persuade India to join the "anti-China camp." In 2019, two Indo-Pacific strategic reports, released respectively

terms of its strategic mechanism, the U.S. strengthens relations with other three "Quad" nations (Australia, Japan, and India), pushes India to play a greater role in the Indo-Pacific strategy, and has even declared to build a "new NATO" in the Indo-Pacific region to contain China. With regard to defense, the U.S. has promised to further cooperation with India in the fields of arms sales and joint military exercises. Economically, the U.S. encourages India to decouple from China and applauds India's sweeping bans on Chinese apps. It is not hard to predict that Washington

"America card" to disturb China so India can transform their conceived superiority into real benefits, while not having their efforts backfire or succumbing to a dependency on the U.S. To a large extent, the tone of India's foreign policy for some time to come will be pro-America while not dependent on the U.S., and "pragmatic but less friendly" to China.

CHALLENGES FOR CHINA'S DIPLOMACY

It must be noted that the external environment for China is not much better than that in 1962 although China's strength now far exceeds that of India. In 1962, the top enemy of the U.S. was the Soviet Union during the Cuban Missile Crisis. China and the Soviet Union, despite being at odds, remained in alliance. According to relevant documents declassified in recent years, the U.S. had serious reservations about providing military aid for India in 1962. The reasons for such a conservative attitude were as follows: First, the U.S. was very cautious about Pakistan's response and worried that military aid to India would undermine the unity of the Baghdad Pact. Second, the U.S. noticed the rift between China and the Soviet Union and wanted to exploit their disagreements. It worried that closer U.S.-India relations would annoy Moscow and make China and the Soviet Union get back together.

The situation has changed

China is committed to a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable solution to its boundary question with India through peaceful consultations as an effort to stabilize bilateral relations and reduce external pressures.

by the Pentagon and the U.S. Department of State, confirmed India as a "Major Defense Partner," aiming to use India to compete with China in a wider geographical scope.

The U.S. has been wooing India since India's border row with China this year, an obvious attempt to profit from it. Politically, some U.S. politicians slam China for violent clashes with India and publicly take India's side. In

will play more tricks to influence India's China policy in a direction favoring itself as the strategic competition between the U.S. and China becomes fiercer.

How close India-U.S. relations will go depends on the future development of China-India relations and the intensity of China-U.S. competition as well as political developments in the U.S. It is now a real challenge for Indian diplomacy to play the



June 20, 2015: The medical workers at the Purang border checkpoint in southwestern China's Tibet Autonomous Region check the health of an Indian pilgrim with altitude sickness. There has been a long history of Indian pilgrims visiting Tibet for pilgrimages. Every June, officially organized Indian pilgrims enter Tibet to worship at Mount Kangrinboqe and Lake Manasarovar. China News Service

with the passage of time. The U.S. is now implementing a strategy to contain China, while India is expanding its relations with the U.S. and Russia. Recently, Russia stated that India is a “privileged strategic partner.” In addition, even with the 1987 Sumdorong Chu incident that almost triggered a second China-India border conflict, China's external environment was far better than it is now. At that time, the U.S. was in a “honeymoon period” with China, and not very close with India. China-Soviet relations were also thawing and a declining Soviet Union was

unable to give much support to India.

Frankly speaking, China is committed to a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable solution to its boundary question with India through peaceful consultations as an effort to stabilize bilateral relations and reduce external pressures. This is China's constant principle and position. China does not regard India as an enemy and strives to restore bilateral relations. This is China's general direction. China does not want an eye for an eye but exercises rationality, restraint, and goodwill toward India.

This is China's fundamental policy. However, it is almost certain that New Delhi is moving closer to Washington, while the ongoing China-U.S. confrontation is expected to destabilize China-India relations. This will increase the challenges faced by China in its holistic diplomacy as well as its relations with neighboring countries for some time to come. ■

—
The author is director of the Research Department at the National Strategy Institute, Tsinghua University.

China-India Boundary Question: Calling for New Thoughts and Framework

By Zhang Jiadong

New thoughts and a new framework are necessary for China-India relations to go beyond the boundary question.

A year full of challenges around the globe, 2020 has seen the serious clash between Chinese and Indian border troops at the Galwan Valley which pushed the two ancient civilizations to the brink of confrontation. The incident, which has caused injuries and deaths, is the result of the escalation of tension in the border areas of China and India. However, it also happened by chance, considering various factors such as geography and climate, not from the intention of the decision-makers of the two countries. Nevertheless, this incident shows that the existing border management and control mechanisms of both sides can no longer meet their

needs, and the development of China-India relations has fallen far behind the development of the strengths and international statuses of both countries.

HISTORICALLY-FORMED CHINA-INDIA BOUNDARY QUESTION

China and India are the two most time-honored countries in Asia. The two neighbors never had disputes over territory or border until the establishment of British rule in India (1858-1947). The cruel geographical conditions in the border areas of China and India and the two countries' limited abilities to rule in the past helped form a huge and natural strategic buffer zone. However, with the importation of modern nation-state

concepts and the rising governance capabilities of both countries, the strategic buffer zone gradually shrank and was negated. Therefore, frictions and conflicts emerged. Such frictions and conflicts will be inevitable until a clear China-India boundary is confirmed and recognized by the two sides.

Although the boundary between China and India hasn't been completely demarcated, through border patrols, governance, treaties, conflicts and diplomatic activities over the past few centuries, both countries hold a not-so-specific yet generally clear view on the boundary: The line as a whole should follow the alignment of the Himalayas. In some sections, specific adjustments should be made according to

local governance histories and local people's living habits. For example, in the eastern section of the China-India boundary, in principle the Himalayas serve as a buffer zone, so the watershed can be an ideal boundary between the two countries. However, considering China's governing history in the south of the watershed and locals' habits of living along valleys, the watershed is not the de facto dividing line between China and India. The line should follow the boundary alignment between the southern slope of the Himalayas and the plains on the northern bank of the Brahmaputra River. In terms of the middle and western sections of the China-India boundary, they are different from the eastern section due to local governance histories and the living habits of locals.

DIFFERENT PICTURES OF THE BORDER TENSIONS

It seems that there are two completely different pictures of the boundary tensions between China and India. Media outlets and public opinion portray a territorial dispute between the two sides, which involves land areas from tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands of square kilometers. As a result, any tension in the border areas is mentioned with land areas up to hundreds of thousands of square kilometers, bringing forth huge psychological and publicity effects.

Today, under the consensus that no war or military conflict should happen



April 8, 2003: An exhibition featuring ancient Indian bronze sculptures is held at the Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou City. A total of 80 pieces of world-class bronze artworks spanning more than 1,300 years are displayed, with their themes covering the three major religions of India. China News Service

between the two sides, territorial claims and unilateral boundary delimitations are embodied through infrastructure construction, increasingly frequent patrols, as well as the management and control of border areas. Therefore, interactions and actions of the two governments show that the dispute is just a boundary question rather than a territorial dispute. And although the two countries did not reach a consensus on most sections of the Line of Actual Control (LAC), the cognitive difference is actually much smaller than expected. In some areas, such as the Sikkim section and some mountain passes where the geographical conditions are quite clear, there are

barely any differences and disputes.

Both China and India are big countries. Neither of them has the ability and willingness to force the other side to accept its claims by military means. However, the different viewpoints and stances of the two peoples have produced completely different psychological effects. There is a huge gap of understanding not only between the two countries, but also between the governments, academic circles and public opinions of the two countries. Due to the increasingly democratic and transparent foreign policy-making process in modern times, the decision-making processes on the boundary question in both China and

India have been affected by public opinion in both countries. As a result, the independent decision-making abilities on border issues of the two countries' leaderships have been weakened.

In this sense, the China-India border situation carries more significance in terms of social psychology and domestic politics rather than that of the actual conflict and national interest. Thus, negotiators for the China-India boundary question need to deal with their peers from the other side, and contend with domestic extremist views at the same time.

CONSENSUSES REACHED

The China-India boundary question has gone through several important stages. At each stage, more consensuses were reached between the two countries, and consequently, the gravity and sensitivity of the question itself continue to decrease.

In the first stage, China and India had no consensus on whether their boundary question existed. India gained its independence in 1947. In 1949, the People's Republic of China was founded, and the Republic of India was officially established one year later. The two governments soon established formal diplomatic relations. From 1949 to 1959, both countries' border patrols began to encounter each other in the border region. In February 1951, while the peaceful liberation of Tibet was still underway, the Indian army occupied

Tawang in southern Tibet of China, expelled all the administrative staff dispatched by the local Tibetan government, and announced that "the town has since been placed under the administrative jurisdiction of India."

In 1960, then Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai made a special trip to India. During the visit, he held talks with Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru on the boundary question, but no consensus was reached. The China-India border conflict in 1962 led to a drastic change in China-India relations, as well as changes in the political landscape of South Asia and even the world, affecting the development paths of the two countries. The improved China-Pakistan ties served as a bridge for the betterment of China-U.S. relations. The improvement of China-U.S. relations laid a diplomatic foundation for China's reform and opening up in the late 1970s. India took the path of getting closer to the Soviet Union which also affected its domestic economic development. The China-India boundary question produced a "butterfly effect" that channeled the development directions of the two countries and even drove the evolution of the international political landscape.

In the second stage, China and India reached a consensus on the existence of the boundary question, but not on the content of the boundary question. After the 1962 China-India border conflict, both sides agreed that the

boundary question existed.

After the two countries resumed diplomatic ties in the late 1970s, they kicked off border negotiations. This shows that both sides have recognized the existence of the boundary question. But the two countries failed to agree on the content of the question. The Chinese side believed that the China-India boundary question mainly involved the eastern section of the boundary, covering about 90,000 square kilometers; The Indian side believed that it was mainly in the western section, covering about 40,000 square kilometers. Adding the two figures together, the land areas involved reach 130,000 square kilometers, which is approximately the same area of a medium-sized province in China or a medium-sized state in India.

In the third stage, although China and India still had no consensus on the content of the boundary question, they have reached consensus on the guiding principles for the settlement of the question. In 1987, India made its occupied Chinese territory a state, which led to border tensions and almost resulted in a larger-scale military conflict. The incident pushed both sides to adopt a more pragmatic approach to this issue. Then Prime Minister of India Rajiv Gandhi's trip to China in December 1988 was the first visit to China by an Indian prime minister in 34 years and was an ice-breaking event in China-India relations. The two sides signed landmark agreements on border management

and control in 1993 and 1996, which stabilized the border situation. When then Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee visited China in 2003, the two countries resolved a series of major disputes and problems, and downgraded the territorial dispute to a boundary question. In 2005, the two countries reached an agreement on guiding principles and political parameters for the settlement of the boundary question, with the aim of moving towards an ultimate solution.

During this period, although many problems still existed between China and India, overall peace and stability has been achieved in the border region. On this basis, cooperation between the two countries in the realms of economics, trade, culture, and multilateral and international affairs is expanding. Both China and India have enjoyed huge dividends from the peace and stability in their border areas.

NEW PROBLEMS EMERGED

At present, new problems have emerged in the border areas of China and India, as a result of frequent encounters between the two armies caused by routine patrols and of the occasional violent military standoffs between the two countries. These new problems are also caused by some non-border factors: The rapid development of the two countries has given rise to nationalism in recent years. Thus, both peoples hope that their soldiers and

diplomats will act tougher with the other side. Besides, since the national strengths of both countries have been growing, their border infrastructure construction and border defense military capabilities have been increasing. Moreover, the control capabilities in the border areas of both countries have also significantly increased. Thus, nationalism and national pride, which were in the past mainly manifested in a war of words, now can be transformed into standoffs and violent conflicts due to the enhanced overall capabilities.

This situation shows that current China-India relations have lagged far behind the rising national strengths of the two countries and don't match the importance of the developing China-India relationship. The border management and control mechanisms of China and India also lag behind the increasingly enhanced management and control capabilities of both countries and cannot meet the complications from frequent encounters between the two sides' border troops. Both the relationship between China and India and their border management and control mechanisms urgently call for transformation and upgrading.

The sensitivity of the China-India boundary question weighs over the importance of the question itself, and the social psychological conflict is greater than the conflict of actual national interests. Whether the situation will

escalate depends on the communication between the two governments and the two peoples. Thus, new thoughts and a new framework to solve the problem are required.

China-India relations should reduce the sensitivity of the boundary question and go beyond it. The two countries should better manage and regulate their media outlets and public opinions, and control the boundary question within the border region, so as not to affect the overall bilateral relations. Besides, China and India should strive to build strategic mutual trust. Behind the boundary question and some other disputes is a lack of strategic mutual trust between the two sides. China and India are neighbors and major powers. Long-term coexistence is their historical fate as well as a realistic mission for both countries. Therefore, from the viewpoint of history and civilization, and from the perspective of being responsible to their peoples, China and India should establish a series of strategic mutual trust building mechanisms, including a strategic dialogue mechanism, a cultural exchange mechanism and a communication and mutual learning mechanism on development models. The setting up of these mechanisms is necessary and inevitable. ■

The author is director and professor with the Center for South Asian Studies, Fudan University.

The Structural Predicament in Bilateral Relations

By Li Tao and Yuan Xiaojiao

China and India need to re-define and re-position their bilateral relations under the new circumstances. Both sides will benefit from cooperation and will be hurt by confrontations.

Since the China-India border tension flared up in the Galwan Valley in June 2020, by mid-October, the two countries had held a meeting of defence ministers, a meeting of foreign ministers, seven rounds of corps commander-level talks, and four meetings of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on China-India Border Affairs. Although differences exist between China and India, these meetings and talks have maintained the long-established and recently reinforced consensus between the two countries. Generally speaking,

the border tension has been de-escalated.

On August 31, the Indian troops once again illegally crossed the Line of Actual Control (LAC) near the south bank of Pangong Lake and the Requin mountain pass. On September 7, the Indian troops illegally crossed the LAC in the Shenpao mountain region near the southern bank of Pangong Lake, and for the first time in 45 years, fired warning shots towards Chinese soldiers who approached them for representations in a serious, vile military provocation. India broke the tacit understanding

reached by both sides of not using firearms, which led to further escalation of the border tension. Under this backdrop, India has taken various measures against China. It strengthened its military deployment in border areas, advocated economic “de-coupling” with China, and hindered the people-to-people and cultural exchanges between the two sides. These acts have undermined the foundation and fruits of China-India friendship built over a long period of time.

China and India are neighbours that cannot be moved away from each other. Only

by eliminating suspicion and distrust and pursuing shared development on the basis of seeking common ground while shelving differences can the boundary question between the two countries have a good chance to be solved.

REASONS BEHIND ESCALATED BORDER TENSIONS

Although China and India have reached multiple agreements and established bilateral trust-building mechanisms over the years, the China-India boundary question has existed for a long time and is yet to be settled. From the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949 until now, most of the China-India border has neither been delineated nor demarcated. Thus, it is hard for the two sides to reach consensus on "illegal transgressing." The growing economic ties failed to defuse the military and security suspicions, and either side refused to make concessions on the boundary question. Besides, many other factors in China-India relations, such as the reshaping of the regional geopolitical landscape and both sides' activities in the Indian Ocean, further fuelled mistrust and complicated the boundary question.

The geo-strategic positions of the Galwan Valley and Pangong Lake are of great importance to both China and India. China's Aksai Chin area, where the Galwan Valley and Pangong Lake are located, is close to Kashmir. Kashmir

holds strategic importance in the heart of Eurasia. For China, Aksai Chin serves as an artery connecting Tibet and Xinjiang, China's two autonomous regions, by highway. For India, losing control of this disputed mountainous area would leave its capital New Delhi vulnerable to attack. Aksai Chin is a high-altitude cold region. Thus, the Galwan Valley and Pangong Lake, which sit at lower altitudes, are of great strategic value and serve as strategic passages. India's strengthening of its military presence in this region can consolidate its dominant position in the Siachen Glacier in the India-Pakistan disputed region, and conveniently transport soldiers to the western section of the China-India border areas to place pressure on Chinese border troops in Aksai Chin.

When dealing with the China-India boundary question, India has been sticking to the aggressive "Forward Policy" from the Nehru era in the early 1960s, and never let go of any opportunity for expansion or strengthening its claims. Former Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru unilaterally declared the McMahon Line as the India-China boundary, but Beijing never accepted it. The "Forward Policy" later triggered the 1962 China-India border conflict. One of the reasons behind the China-India border clash this time lies in India's attempt to unilaterally change the LAC. India has been strengthening infrastructure construction in

the border areas, especially in the Galwan Valley. By investing funds and manpower, India has been building highways, railways and airports along the LAC, and has been accelerating the modernization of its military facilities in the areas.

For a long time, there is a huge gap in identity perception between the two sides. While India regards China as its primary threat, China views India as its secondary challenge. China's rapid economic development in recent years filled India with an overwhelming sense of loss, both psychologically and in reality. China's ever-growing international influence has made India anxious. In a word, with various factors working together, India's hostility towards China has been mounting. After the 2017 Dong Lang (Doklam) border standoff, the Indian government began to tighten its management policies in border areas, and increase investments in infrastructure, logistics supporting facilities, equipment and personnel. Later, although the leaders of China and India held two informal meetings and the tension somewhat eased, uncertainties still remained and strategic distrusts even increased in the border areas. Furthermore, besides the boundary question, suspicions over regional balance, trade concerns, and the reinforced India-U.S. relations have further increased antagonism and anxiety between the two sides. These structural differences have exacerbated



May 9, 2006: China is elected as one of the first members of United Nations Human Rights Council. Xinhua

tensions and mistrust in the border areas.

It should be noted that India's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), led by Narendra Modi, is quite nationalistic and tends to be conservative on many issues. Since the BJP became the ruling party of India in 2014, irrational and radical religious nationalist forces have risen in the country, and Indian society has turned increasingly hostile towards China. BBC correspondent Sachin Gogoi pointed out that after the border conflict, the Indian media outlets generally portrayed China as an "aggressor" who disrespected bilateral relations, international rules and conventions. Later, the Indian government launched a number of measures against China, including restrictions on direct investments from China and banning Chinese apps, which further gave rise

to domestic ultranationalism.

Furthermore, India has the motivation to use the border conflict to divert its domestic pressure on stability maintenance. Affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Indian government is gradually losing control of the virus, the jobless rate spikes, and the country is overrun by a locust plague. With the economy shrinking, the Indian public's dissatisfaction with the government continues to grow. India's GDP slipped 23.9 percent in the second quarter of 2020, and the opposition led by the Indian National Congress took the opportunity to clamp down on the Modi administration. Under multiple pressures, using the China-India border conflict to divert domestic attention from these problems has become an optimal option for the Modi administration.

India is also taking advantage of the China-U.S.

confrontation to maximize its interests. It is trying to make the China-U.S. confrontation its opportunity to strengthen its military presence along the LAC in the border areas. Behind the current China-India border tension is India's intention to reinforce U.S.-India military cooperation. A BBC report pointed out that the United States provided intelligence to India during the 2017 Dong Lang standoff. During the border clash in the Galwan Valley, India and the United States once again strengthened intelligence and information sharing related to China. Moreover, India hopes to realize its "Make in India" vision by attacking Chinese products and technologies together with the United States with the excuse of responding to border tensions. It aims to put pressure on China in areas such as trade, technical standards, and maritime security with the support of the United States.

THE FUTURE CALLS FOR MORE MUTUAL TRUST

Various factors, such as the different perceptions between China and India on the boundary question, mistrust between the two sides, domestic political influences and the changing international landscape, have made it clear that the China-India boundary question cannot be settled in the near future. Armed peaceful coexistence accompanied by controllable and less drastic regional crises will be the normal state in the border areas. A

quasi-institutional mechanism for border management, a much-improved mechanism for consultation and coordination on border affairs, and meetings between leaderships from the two sides can prevent accidental incidents or conflicts in the border areas to a certain extent. But for a long time, while conducting diplomatic negotiations with China, India has never given up its penetration into and control over the disputed areas. Therefore, in the short to medium term, in the China-India border areas, people will see armed peaceful coexistence accompanied by controllable and less drastic regional crises or even confrontations.

When dealing with China on disputes and related issues, India always welcomes U.S. support and cooperation, especially diplomatic and military support. In the future, India will take full use of “Quad,” a loose security grouping of the United States, Japan, Australia and India, to produce joint strategies to contain China’s influence in the Indian Ocean region. But India may also adopt a hedge strategy. Some Indian scholars believe that India, as part of the so-called “Indo-Pacific” strategy that aims to contain China, needs to keep its strategic autonomy—at least keep part of it. India should stay away from China-U.S. competition and maintain a balance. Although China-India border tensions may break the balance, in the long run, India’s better policy choice towards China should

be based on maintaining a balanced relationship and a healthy competition.

For a long time to come, China and India will continue to face challenges such as the security dilemma and the lack of mutual trust. A number of problems including uncertainty about future growth, an arms race, military deterrence, historical grudges, border tensions, and third-party intervention will strengthen the security dilemma faced by China and India and bring huge challenges to bilateral relations. Besides, the relationship between the two countries is expected to face new external variables and uncertainties. In terms of the boundary question, India did not make negotiation the major method to manage the differences. Instead, it hoped to further exert geopolitical pressure on China through a closer relationship with the United States, in an attempt to maintain its upper hand in the border areas. In terms of military measures, besides provoking clashes in the border areas, India hinted that it would follow the United States on the South China Sea issue in the future. In terms of economic measures, India has targeted Chinese goods and investments. It asked its people to boycott Chinese goods, ordered customs officials to delay clearance of Chinese shipments, and launched a series of measures against Chinese businesses and products in India. In terms of people-to-people and cultural exchanges, India

placed Confucius Institutes under review to politicize the Chinese language program. The Chinese language was removed from the list approved by India’s National Education Policy among the foreign languages it cites as examples students can learn at the secondary level. The Indian government has also introduced stricter visa norms for Chinese nationals. These practices have deeply hurt the people-to-people exchanges and increased the strategic mistrust between the two sides.

China and India are neighbours and two large developing economies. It will be a great disaster for both sides if they go into a war. The present China-India border management mechanism can no longer meet the needs of maintaining peace and tranquillity in the border areas under current circumstances. Against this backdrop, the two countries need to re-define and re-position their bilateral relations. In the long run, both sides need to use political will and wisdom to correctly judge each other’s strategic intentions and overcome the deteriorating security situation. 📌

—

The author Li Tao is executive vice director and professor with the Institute of South Asian Studies, Sichuan University. The author Yuan Xiaojiao is a Ph.D. candidate with the Collaborative Innovation Center for Security and Development of Western Frontier China, Sichuan University. The article is the research progress of the project 17ZDA170 sponsored by the National Social Science Fund of China and carried out by the Institute of South Asian Studies, Sichuan University.

Surviving through the Crisis

By Aravind Yelery

The pandemic adds another critical item to the existing portfolios of cooperation between India and China.

The COVID-19 pandemic has swept through almost all corners of the world, causing the economies of most regions to shut down, and has also exposed the long-standing differences between the world's major economies. Ever since the pandemic intensified, countries around the world have succumbed to ever-growing numbers of economic problems.

THE PANDEMIC AND THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRISIS

In response to COVID-19, almost all countries across continents have implemented several weeks or months of lockdowns. The number of deaths has continued to rise, and most of the global

economies have been shut down. Perhaps “extreme uncertainty” is the best phrase to describe this historical moment. Smaller economies are restless, enterprises are having problems resuming work, job opportunities are lost, and global travel has come to a standstill. Whether the stimulus policies of the governments and the central banks would halt a recession remains a larger question.

The pandemic will undoubtedly result in a permanent transfer of political and economic power, which will only become apparent in retrospect. The pandemic has not only weakened national economies across the globe but has also adversely affected global institutions and increased the dangers of

a worldwide meltdown, which is going to overshadow all aspects of nation-states' abilities to govern in the decade to come. While economic and social problems are recurring at an accelerated pace, pandemic-related repercussions are not only economic but also include serious issues such as public health and governance. The institutions in developing countries like India and China have an unending list of work to manage.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economy is different than the crises precipitated by the 1929 Great Depression and the 2008 Great Recession. The pandemic caused consumption and production activities to cease at the same time. Therefore, it caused a

complete, dual impact on the supply and demand sides of the economy. The accompanying decrease in demand and supply meant adverse historical consequences utterly different from the impacts of the Great Depression and the Great Recession. The effect of the Great Depression and the Great Recession may impact the demand side and show significant signs of deflation. At the same time, the global pandemic may not necessarily cause prices to fall. On the contrary, one needs to pay attention to the possibility of stagflation. Stagflation is a term that refers to a situation

in which the economy experiences a simultaneous increase in inflation and stagnation of economic output.

DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND ECONOMIC ADVERSITIES

The global pandemic has severely affected international trade activities, leading to the interruption of the worldwide flow of people and goods and the rupture of worldwide supply chains, and worsening the already sluggish global trade. With the disruption of worldwide supply chains and the widespread global shutdown of work and

production, the pandemic will have a severe negative impact on global foreign direct investment (FDI). The United Nations Trade and Development Commission predicts that global FDI may drop by 40 percent in 2020. In the past four decades or so, developing countries are coming to the center stage of international trade and commerce. Hence, unlike the global depression of 1929 or the subsequent crisis in the 20th century, which did not adversely affect the sustainability of global economies, the pandemic has serious widespread consequences.



July 8, 2020: People receive COVID-19 tests in Hyderabad, India. VCG

As the most severe global crisis since World War II, the global outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has caused an unprecedented impact on developing economies, driving growth prospects to plunge into a sharp recession and bringing multiple challenges to economic planning. There is still uncertainty about future development trends, as global recovery may require a longer period of time for developing economies to return to normal. It is particularly worth noting that the pandemic has also entered a period of rapid spread in developing countries with relatively low medical standards, significantly increasing the pressure on global prevention and control. The sharp drop in

corporate revenue and household income has substantially restricted their solvency, and the financial industry is facing increasing pressure from debt defaults. The continued spread of the virus may lead to financial crises in some emerging economies with fragile growth conditions. As a result, more than 90 countries have already requested emergency asset support from the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The global crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic is essentially a crisis of sustainability and governance in developing and low-income countries. If one looks at the response of developing economies, including Brazil, China, and India, these countries

have promptly initiated and launched relief packages, emphasizing the survival of enterprises and protecting those who live at the bottom of the economic hierarchy. In extraordinary times, extraordinary measures need to be taken. The fiscal and monetary policies in a remarkable period are adjusted to strengthen the orientations of economic recovery and increase countercyclical adjustments. At the same time, a package of supporting policies and reform and opening-up measures are taken seriously by these countries. Brazil, whose economy is undergoing a fragile recovery, is expected to fall into negative growth again. Russia, which has already been



August 28, 2020: The Tai'erzhuang ancient town in eastern China's Shandong Province hosts a lively evening show. The Chinese economy has shown its resilience amid the COVID-19 pandemic. VCG

affected by the decline in oil prices, and South Africa, which has suffered from a bottleneck in its power supply, are expected to have a significant decrease in economic growth due to the impact of the pandemic, with a high probability of entering a negative growth zone. India's economic growth rate will remain critically hit for some time to come.

OVERCOMING ECONOMIC CRISIS: PLANS AND MEANS OF INDIA AND CHINA

So far, China's response to the pandemic remains policy-centered, including balanced monetary and fiscal measures. The uncertainty brought about by the pandemic has mounted and accordingly affected China's financial market sentiments. Amidst this crisis, China's prudent monetary policy has taken on a critical importance. In the present context, particular monetary policies in China require greater certainty to deal with uncertainties. China did not adopt an unconventional monetary policy such as zero or even negative interest rates and quantitative easing, so there is no a so-called "exit problem."

On the whole, its monetary policies support the real economy. China's economy has shown a positive growth trend; financial support has been further strengthened to stabilize enterprises and ensure employment. In the next stage, China's monetary policies are expected to be more flexible, moderate

and precise, and improve its cross-cycle design and adjustment. In terms of total volume, extensive use of various monetary policy tools is expected to secure reasonable and sufficient liquidity, maintain moderate growth in the money supply and the scale of social financing, and support the return of the economy to potential growth. Structurally, the precise guiding role of structural monetary policy tools is supposed to regulate the flow of new financing to the real economy such as in manufacturing and in medium, small, and micro enterprises. In terms of prices, the reduction of total financing costs and ensuring that the expected goal of reducing the burden of market entities by 1.5 trillion yuan (US\$220 billion) turn out to be a manageable goal for Chinese policymakers.

On the other hand, Chinese

percentage of GDP. The deficit figures are up compared to the 2019 level. As per the data referred to in China's government work report, the central government planned a fiscal budget deficit of about 3.76 trillion yuan (US\$530 billion) this year, an increase of 1 trillion yuan (US\$147 billion) from 2019. The deficit-to-GDP ratio is projected to be around 3.6 percent or more, compared with 2.8 percent in 2019. According to data from China's Ministry of Finance, in the first half of 2020, the country cut taxes and fees by a total of 154.5 billion yuan (US\$23 billion). This has effectively hedged the impact of the pandemic and played an essential role in alleviating the difficulties of enterprises, supporting the resumption of work and production as well as the smooth operation of the economy. According to a report on the implementation

The cooperation between China and India holds the key to help each other develop and contribute to peace, stability, and prosperity in Asia and the world.

policymakers stuck to practical fiscal policies and measures. In response to the impact of the epidemic, proactive budgetary policies have been stepped up, that is, increasing the size of the fiscal deficit and growing expenditures to support the economy. The current official deficit rate refers to the general public budget deficit as a

of China's fiscal policy in the first half of 2020, the subsequent fiscal policy will be more proactive. Besides, China also proposed measures to stabilize foreign trade and foreign investment to encourage foreign businesses to invest in China and establish R&D centers.

In the case of India, the economic impact has been

equally bad. India, although it is a smaller economy in size, has resilience equivalent to that of China, so it has a good chance to bounce back. The monetary measures have reflected some of the concrete efforts undertaken. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) – the central bank of India – decided to maintain the previous 4-percent repo rate unchanged and the reverse repo rate at 3.35 percent while continuing to maintain a loose monetary policy stance. For economic planners in India, controlling inflation is secondary to efforts to promote growth. Growth has been critical for an economy like India's. As per the recently announced figures, the Indian economy shrank by 23.9 percent year-on-year in the second quarter of 2020, much worse than market forecasts of an 18.3-percent drop. Given the fact that negative growth

may persist for some time to come, India's central bank's task to promote growth looks arduous.

To stabilize the economy, India's Ministry of Finance issued an economic stimulus plan of 20.9 trillion rupees (US\$265 billion, equivalent to about 10 percent of the country's GDP) in May. Still, in this plan, monetary policy accounts for almost half. In addition to the aforesaid monetary measures, India's central bank announced that it would keep interest rates unchanged while allowing banks to restructure borrowers' loans. As per the plans, once the loans are reorganized, such loans of the borrowers will be regarded as standard loans and will not be counted as bad loans or bad debts, and will not affect subsequent borrowing plans.

HOW COULD CHINA AND INDIA WORK TOGETHER TO DEAL WITH THE CRISIS?

The pandemic has hit Asian economies hard. India and China have been attempting ways to circumvent the pressure mounting up. Before the outbreak of COVID-19, both countries worked hard to set reasonable goals to achieve growth, which looks like an uphill task to accomplish, given the global crisis triggered by the pandemic.

China is accelerating the building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects. India also proposed the ambitious goal of building a US\$5 trillion economy within five years; this indicates how both countries have broadly similar aspirations to fulfill. The pandemic has compromised the developmental needs of countries. Still, in the coming years, both economies will seek ways to re-start their efforts to achieve these agendas once the economies attain a minimal standing. Being part of the competitive forces in the globalized world, China and India, individually as well as together, stand at a critical point. The cooperation between China and India holds the key to help each other develop and contribute to peace, stability, and prosperity in Asia and the world.

As an economic engine of global growth, the Asian region is becoming more critical. In the past few years, both China and India have strengthened engagement by augmenting the Strategic Economic Dialogue mechanism, which enables both



August 31, 2020: A clothes seller waits for customers in front of his shop in New Delhi. Data released by India's National Statistical Office shows that the Indian economy slumped 23.9 percent in the second quarter of 2020 amid the COVID-19 pandemic, which marked the worst quarterly economic contraction since 1996. Xinhua

countries to let various government departments, financial institutions and enterprises actively participate and achieve common answers to existing issues. In the post-pandemic situation, these two Asian economies have responsibilities to continue strengthening communication and ties. The pandemic adds another essential and critical part to their existing portfolios of cooperation.

With demography being key to national strength and rejuvenation, the public health-related web of technologies and services is going to play a central role in the bilateral economic relations of the two countries. These are new avenues of cooperation that can be built upon factors such as education. All new frontiers of economic development and bilateral understanding can be built around these new areas of collaboration. Technological and scientific research cooperation with extensive applications and benefits in the fields of urban development and public transportation, environmental protection and pollution control, climate change and renewable resources, biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, electronics, and communications should become part of China-India relations.

The outbreak of the pandemic paralyzed the national economies leading to a historic global economic cycle, which is challenging to come over. To hedge the adverse effects of the economic crisis and maintain



July 15, 2020: A volunteer gets the COVID-19 vaccine in São Paulo, Brazil. Visual People

domestic economic growth, both countries correspond to fiscal, monetary, and industrial policies to stimulate the macro-economy. As far as the effect of the system is concerned, in the short term, it has encouraged domestic investment and consumption to a certain extent, restored market confidence, and avoided the decline of the domestic economy, but the cooperation between these two economies is essential in the broader interests. There are unaccomplished goals of creating prosperous societies and a safe environment, which can only be assured by cooperation. Moreover, as discussed above, the cooperation between the two countries will also help other developing and low-income countries to learn and benefit from these two leading Asian economies.

A package of complete

shutdowns, stricter business controls, and inward-looking policies are sometimes the default settings in times of crisis. Under the influence of the pandemic, India and China have suffered both supply-side and demand-side shocks. The global pandemic has also caused the two Asian economies to encounter both external and domestic demand shocks. The coronavirus may further exacerbate the crisis in developing countries. And given the fact that the pandemic is a global crisis, so is the economic recessions and both these crises would need calibrated and well-organized efforts to cope up with. India and China hold importance in this scenario, and hence the inevitability of cooperation persists. 📺

The author is a senior research fellow at Peking University HSBC Business School.

Can “Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan” Make India a Major Manufacturing Power?

By Yuan Jirong

India’s ambition of becoming a major manufacturing power through upgrading its manufacturing industry is understandable. But the goal of “Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan” is too ambitious.

On May 12, 2020, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the nation on TV, mentioning “Atmanirbhar Bharat” (Self-reliant India) 17 times in a 33-minute speech. This was the first time the Modi administration mentioned “Atmanirbhar Bharat” since the pandemic. From then on, Modi has repeatedly mentioned this concept on many occasions. In fact, due to their long history of suffering from invasion and colonization, Indians have always emphasized that

they must control their own destiny. Self-reliance was Nehru’s strategy of governing the country at the beginning of India’s independence. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic raging around the world, why does India renew its commitment to “self-reliance”? What is the difference between the 2020 version of “Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan” and the self-reliance strategy of Nehru? Are the Indian government and ordinary Indian people confident in achieving “self-reliance”?

CONTEXT AND MOTIVATION

The connotation of “Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan” proposed by the Indian government at present can be summarized from Prime Minister Modi’s speeches on various occasions. On May 31, Modi said in his speech that India can easily create substitutes for imported products. At the 95th annual plenary of the Indian Chamber of Commerce on June 11, Modi emphasized that the pandemic has changed the structure of the global industrial chain. He added that India should turn

the crisis into an opportunity, abandon a conservative attitude, seize historic opportunities, and build a globally competitive supply chain, so as to sell Indian products in the international market and to shape “a big turning point” for the country’s self-reliance. Modi said that “Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan” is to reduce India’s dependence on the world economy and offer more to the world. It can be seen from the above statement that Modi’s “Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan” has at least two meanings: first, reducing dependence on the world economy by encouraging localized production and procurement; second, increasing Indian manufacturing exports and their proportion

in the global supply chain, and building the country into a major manufacturing power in the world.

To better understand these two meanings, it is necessary to dig deeper into the background of “Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan.” First of all, the COVID-19 pandemic has had an unprecedented impact on the Indian economy. The Indian government has to turn back to “Atmanirbhar Bharat” to rescue the domestic economy which is in a precarious situation. According to the Indian Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the total number of deaths from COVID-19 in India exceeded 100,000 by October 3, making it the country with the third highest number of deaths

from the disease after the United States and Brazil. In addition, India already had over 6.4 million confirmed cases by then. Damage to the economy owing to the lockdown measures has made the Modi government more aware of the shortcomings of India’s economy, especially in the manufacturing sector. The most prominent problem is the inability to provide epidemic prevention and control supplies in a timely and effective manner. This prompted Modi to propose improving India’s manufacturing industry through self-reliance.

In addition, some voices in a few Western countries call for reorganization of the global industrial chain in response to the pandemic.



Mumbai suffered an unprecedented power outage on October 12, 2020, which led to breakdowns in railway operations and traffic jams. Visual People

Indian policymakers believe that India will embrace a historic opportunity. In the face of the pandemic's impact, some Western countries including the United States have proposed reorganizing the global industrial chain, reducing dependence on the Chinese economy, and moving some industries to countries including India and Vietnam for the sake of risk diversification. In this context, some Indian elites believe that it is high time to replace China as the global manufacturing center. In the early stage of the COVID-19 outbreak in China, the Indian government frequently held policy consultation meetings and sent several working groups to contact foreign companies in China and vigorously lobby these companies to leave China for India.

The pandemic has made the Modi administration more deeply aware of the Indian economy's dependence on

China, which is unacceptable in the minds of Hindu nationalists. According to statistics from the Indian Ministry of Commerce and Industry, India imported goods worth about US\$68.37 billion from China in 2019, accounting for 14 percent of its total imports. More than 70 percent of India's Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs), 25 percent of auto parts, 50 percent of durable consumer parts, and a large number of electronic products and components come from China. India's garment manufacturing industry is also closely connected to China. The United Nations reported in early March 2020 that India is one of the 15 countries most affected by China's production slowdown due to the pandemic, and the affected trade volume is about 3.48 percent. Since June, the conflict between China and India in the Galwan Valley has further exacerbated India's

concerns about its economic dependence on China. India has begun to implement economic "de-sinicization" policies, including banning Chinese software, halting some Chinese factories and investments, and setting up a review mechanism for investment from China.

"Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan" also reflects the rise of conservatism and trade protectionism in India. With the impact of the pandemic on the economy, India's domestic conservative wing has got a bigger say. Modi's economic policy after his re-election emphasized market protection and local economic development. The proposal of "Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan" is the result of the continuous rise of social and economic xenophobia and conservatism in the country.

PROSPECTS OF INDIA'S MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

Different from the Nehru administration's policy of restricting foreign investment and over-emphasizing India's self-development, the Modi administration's "Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan" doesn't intend to build the country behind closed doors, but aims to improve the domestic industrial chain and strengthen its own manufacturing capacity with the help of foreign capital, so as to make India a global manufacturing power. To this end, India has introduced a series of supporting measures, including the introduction of an economic



October 13, 2020: A resident in Rajkot, India shows "chips" made of cow dung. VCG

package of 20 trillion rupees (about 10 percent of India's GDP), a series of reforms of laws concerning land and labour, and fostering the local market and supply chain. The Indian government has allocated about 460,000 hectares of land for companies that have moved out of China, and has also been in close contact with thousands of American companies operating in China through its embassies and consulates abroad. In June, India introduced an incentive plan worth 500 billion rupees to attract foreign investment.

India's ambition of becoming a major manufacturing power through upgrading its manufacturing industry is understandable. However, the goal of "Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan" is too ambitious. With limited means and financial resources, the policy will aggravate India's economic protectionism, delay its industrial upgrading and hinder the development of its manufacturing industry.

First, with a too ambitious goal, the prospects for "Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan" are limited. The international rating agency Fitch Ratings pointed out that the actual financial support from the Indian government is limited, which makes it difficult to solve the urgent needs of its economy. As the economy continues to slow down and the government's financial situation may deteriorate, there is a major challenge for "Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan" with regard to investment.

Second, India's economic

structure and development stage also constrain "Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan." In the 2019-2020 fiscal year, India's service industry accounted for approximately 56 percent of its GDP, industry around 30 percent, and agriculture about 14 percent. Though this structure is normal in developed economies, it is abnormal for a developing country. Without large-scale industrialization, the manufacturing sector is not strong. If the service sector dominates the economy under such circumstances, the foundation of the domestic economy will be weak. It will also be prone to twin deficits: excessive dependence on foreign countries, and susceptibility to international influence—which are common in developing countries. Modi is working to address what he sees as the main issue of the Indian economy today and wants to make India a major power by expanding its manufacturing industry. However, the prescriptions he gave do not completely match the economic symptoms of India, which needs external capital and technology. Instead, it will prevent India's manufacturing sector from getting the technology and upgrading it needs.

Third, the Indian government expects to cultivate its own manufacturing sector through a "high tariff + large-scale industrial policy" formula. However, without the pressure of external competitions, it will be not only difficult for Indian companies to gain

international competitiveness, but also very likely to see oligopoly in the country. On the one hand, India is unwilling to let foreign companies "erode" the domestic market, and on the other hand, it hopes to attract a large amount of foreign investment. In today's sluggish global economy, developed economies such as the United States and Europe are pursuing trade protectionism. How can India achieve "self-reliance" and attract foreign investment at the same time?

Fourth, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) lacks the motivation to advance structural reforms. In Indian scholar Puja Mehra's new book *The Lost Decade (2008-18): How India's Growth Story Devolved into Growth Without a Story*, she pointed out that from former Prime Minister Singh to incumbent Modi, the Indian government lacked the driving force for structural reforms. From a realistic point of view, the BJP is keen to promote the ideology of "Hinduism" and is trying to establish a Hindu nation to reach domestic consensus and consolidate the electoral base. From this perspective, "Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan" may be more to cater to domestic conservatism and Hindu nationalism, and it will eventually become a slogan that will not be achieved. 🇮🇳

—
The author is a senior journalist with the International Department of People's Daily and works in India.

To Survive the Pandemic

By Deepa Nair

The current COVID-19 crisis has proven that even without enough time, creativity can thrive and flourish.

Adapting to find solutions and surviving difficult times is probably the most constant factor in human history. After all, necessity is the mother of all inventions. New creations arise out

of disruption and crisis is a strong driver of creativity and innovation.

Creativity helps us take necessary risks and come up with ideas that help us move forward against challenges. Instead of seeing insurmountable obstacles when faced with a problem, creative thinkers will see opportunities to exercise their imaginative and critical thinking muscles, and can turn sparks of inspiration into meaningful action.

The current COVID-19 crisis has proven that even without enough time, creativity can thrive and flourish. With lockdowns affecting the way people and businesses work, almost every sector has seen an impact and has been forced to reinvent. While we cannot solve problems overnight, the engagement



August 31, 2020: A COVID-19 nucleic acid test is performed in Hyderabad, India. Visual People

of companies, universities, governments, non-profit organizations, and individuals around the world has shown how society can focus on tackling real-world challenges.

Corporate supply chains are adapting in a manner similar to the World War era when factories were repurposed to build war supplies. For example, luxury goods manufacturers have started manufacturing hand sanitizers, fashion designers have temporarily pivoted from evening gowns to medical gowns, and automakers have taken on making ventilators. Engineers are also rising to the occasion to create plastic shields for healthcare workers. The list goes on and on.

Some sectors that may have flourished before the global lockdowns are struggling now—transport companies, travel and hospitality businesses particularly. It is estimated that 40 percent of Indian start-ups have either temporarily shut down operations or are on the verge of shutting down their operations on account of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, one sector which has beaten the trend is the education technology (EdTech) sector. Schools and colleges are going online to continue classes and e-learning companies are rising to the occasion.

It's not just high school and college students who are using their services; even professionals are employing their products for vocational courses and reskilling programs. Therefore,

start-ups that have designed software to enhance teacher-led learning in classrooms and improve students' education outcomes have surged. Globally too the sector is cashing in on the paradigm shift in education. Global EdTech expenditure is expected to rise to a stunning US\$10 trillion by 2030.

The need to provide innovative solutions to the various changes and crises that we face today from global warming, the pandemic, or problems related to rapid urbanisation is the need of the hour. It is important to empathize with the people you're designing for so that you can understand their needs, thoughts, emotions and motivation.

Barcelona-based Guallart Architects' winning proposal is based on the idea of a "self-sufficient" city which incorporates local resource production and sustainability, and aims to reduce disruption to daily life "even in moments of confinement," such as future pandemic lockdowns. It includes buildings with communal greenhouses to allow for food production and solar-panelled sloping roofs to produce energy. Small co-working "digital factories" offer 3D printers and rapid prototyping machines to produce everyday goods. All the apartments feature a large south-facing terrace which acts as a thermal regulator and they also come with dedicated remote working and learning spaces as well as 5G connectivity.

In the face of COVID-19,

almost all businesses, amateurs, engineering students are stepping up to contribute in the best possible way to support society. For example, the various innovations like airport cleaning robots, germ trap masks, usage of drones to transport medical equipment, smart helmets, and sanitizing UVD robots are just a few other innovations that countries across the globe have come up with.

While the short term inevitably presents deep challenges for individuals and corporations, innovative and open-ended thinking can potentially lead to better working culture within organizations and employee satisfaction both now and in the future.

As the world emerges from the crisis, employees will find new ways to interact and work, entrepreneurs will find new business opportunities, managers can reassess innovation strategies, consumers will be able to take advantage of new environments, and policy and regulation will adapt to keep everyone safer in the future.

With foresight, the results of these innovations may also support long-term solutions for climate change mitigation with diminished travel and better investment in public healthcare allowing our ecosystem to grow stronger as it overcomes these challenging times. ■

The author is a freelance business journalist in Mumbai.

Complete Economic Decoupling Impossible

By Song Yiming

Finding a political solution to alleviate the current dilemma in economic cooperation is the only correct choice for the two countries.

Recently, influenced by an escalation of boundary friction and a downturn of political relations between the two countries, China and India are seeing a cooldown in terms of economic connections, which has not only impacted normal business operations of Chinese enterprises but also harmed Indian people's welfare. Faced with the COVID-19 pandemic that is still raging worldwide and the stagnant global economy, China and India, two neighboring countries in Asia, should choose "mutual kindness" rather than "mutual meanness."

UNILATERAL DECOUPLING

Since April 2020, the Indian

government has adopted many policies to restrict China's exports to the country and the legal operations of Chinese businesses in the country, seriously threatening the development of bilateral economic relations and unilaterally initiating the decoupling of the economic relationship between the two countries. As a result, the decoupling has happened in four aspects of their economic relationship.

In terms of trade, China's exports to India have been limited or hindered. The Indian government is considering putting 371 categories of products such as steel, chemicals and pharmaceuticals into a compulsory standards system. As China has long been the country with the

largest trade surplus with India, this measure which seemingly aims to eliminate imported commodities that do not meet relevant standards, in fact, provides a "legitimate excuse" for India to depress China's exports. India's Ministry of Power issued a new regulation demanding Indian enterprises to acquire government approvals before they import power generating equipment and replacement parts from China, which shows the caution of the Indian government when importing key equipment parts from China. Additionally, Indian airports and ports including Mumbai and Kolkata have suspended customs clearance of Chinese goods and required cargo containers from China to be

opened for inspections. The EMS (Express Mail Service) cooperation between China and India has been forced to stop. Hundreds of kinds of Chinese commodities are facing anti-dumping measures in India.

In terms of investment, direct investment from China into India is restricted or under strict scrutiny. In April this year, India's Ministry of Commerce and Industry announced a new regulation, requiring all foreign direct investments from its neighboring countries to be approved by the Indian government. Of its neighbors, China is the only country able to invest in India on a large scale. In this context,

it is obvious that this new regulation targets China specifically, which means China's investments would be fully reviewed before going into India.

In terms of government procurement, Chinese enterprises are almost completely excluded from the list. In July this year, India's Ministry of Finance adjusted the country's public finance rules, asking companies from its neighboring countries to undergo relevant registration and examination procedures before they bid for India's government procurement projects. This policy, however, exempts those countries which enjoy India's aid. So as a matter of

fact, it only affects China and Pakistan. In addition, India's Ministry of Road Transport and Highways announced that it would no longer allow Chinese companies to join the country's highway projects. Governments at all levels in India, as well as some Indian state-owned enterprises, have begun to call off already-reached procurement agreements or bids that involve Chinese companies.

In terms of internet service, a lot of apps developed by Chinese companies are banned in India. In June, India announced a decision to ban and remove access to hundreds of mobile apps developed by or related to Chinese firms, including



September 15, 2020: A busy market in New Delhi is filled with people who fail to strictly follow the social distancing rules. The COVID-19 pandemic has heavily hit the Indian economy. Visual People

TikTok, WeChat, Weibo, Kuaishou and Baidu.

So far, this round of economic restrictions India launched against China is characterized by three features. Firstly, it covers many sectors with strict review policies and restrictive measures. Secondly, it has greatly impacted the economic cooperation between the two countries and exerted far-reaching influence by adopting a series of the most destructive measures since 1962. Thirdly, the policies it implemented are coherent and leave little room to back down. In other words, for the time being,

the Indian government has neither the will nor the capacity to ease the tension in its economic relationship with China. What is worse, more restrictive measures with higher destructive potential are on the way.

AGGRESSIVE VS. RESTRAINED

These measures will certainly backfire. Even so, the Indian government has not shown any restraint but continuously announced restrictive measures against China, which has had deleterious effects for bilateral relations. On the contrary, China has not taken tit-for-tat

measures but remained restrained to seek for new ways to alleviate bilateral tensions.

India has several conditions pushing it to be aggressive. Firstly, the negative impacts caused by above-mentioned measures burden the whole Indian people, which makes any single company or individual not so sensitive to the loss. For instance, India imported 30 percent of its power generation equipment from China in 2019, which was competitively priced and has helped India lower its electricity costs and stabilize its power grid. After India imposed many restrictions on



September 15, 2020: A vendor waits for customers in Old Delhi, India. Visual People

imports from China, its power sector has to choose more expensive substitutes. As the extra costs will be shared by the large Indian public, they can hardly feel the negative impact resulting from India's inimical moves toward China. Consequently, the Indian government can launch economic attacks on China without scruple.

What's more, the Galwan Valley clash caused casualties of Indian border troops, arousing a wave of nationalist sentiment among the Indian people. In this context, the Indian government was forced to take an aggressive attitude toward China. Traditionally, India isn't considered a hotbed of nationalism due to its long history of being colonized and its loose governance structure with native states and caste-dominated social structures. But during its fight for independence from British colonial rule and the three India-Pakistan wars, India gradually set up its own national ego, which has been intensified by the country's development in recent years as well as its worries about China's rise. It can be said that nationalism has become a domestic trend in India. A mobile app called "Remove China Apps" became a hit in India as soon as it was launched in May this year. Its four million downloads mean that many apps developed by Chinese enterprises had been voluntarily deleted by Indian users. Against this backdrop, it is no wonder that India dares to ban Chinese apps on a large scale.

On the one hand, India's economic offensive against China has had a direct and obvious impact on some Chinese companies. Therefore, easing rather than escalating the situation has become a top priority for China's economic diplomacy with India. For example, the current single-day loss of TikTok's parent company ByteDance in India is approximately US\$500,000, and the total losses of various types may exceed US\$6 billion. At present, Chinese companies have to face the cruel reality of limited operations, lost market shares, reduced profits and even being expelled from India. In order to prevent these companies from suffering more losses, the Chinese government has not implemented retaliatory policies that may worsen the situation.

On the other hand, in the context of the global spread of the coronavirus and the continued China-U.S. economic and trade friction, "stability" has become the core goal of China's economic diplomacy with India. In the current complex situation, maintaining the stability of global industrial chains and responding to the U.S. economic pressure has been on the top of the agenda of China's economic diplomacy. Taking retaliatory measures and escalating economic friction with India would not only go against the priority goal of China's economic diplomacy, but also drag China into an endless cycle of mutual retaliation with India, thereby degrading China's external

economic environment. The Chinese government's restrained attitude toward India's current economic offensive is a prudent choice to ease the economic friction between the two sides and stabilize their economic relations.

NO MORE ECONOMIC DECOUPLING

China's restraint shows that China-India economic relations are not in free fall, and a complete economic decoupling between the two countries is unlikely to happen. If "decoupling" is regarded as a process, there is no doubt that the economic decoupling between China and India has already begun since the Indian government unilaterally launched an economic offensive against China. But in the long run, this does not mean that China-India economic relations will fall into an abyss, because decoupling as a process is quite common. In this sense, decoupling is more like a barometer of international relations. With the improvement of political relations between countries, the process of economic decoupling often ends naturally.

If decoupling is defined as the final state where the two sides completely cut off contact, the current economic friction between China and India is far from decoupling. It is expected that both China-India bilateral trade volume and China's direct investment in India will see a significant decline this year, but even so, the scale of bilateral trade



August 19, 2020: A worker in Mumbai checks the quality of eggs before shipping. Agricultural products and primary materials that make up the majority of India's exports to China are of much lower value than its imports of finished products from China, which is a major cause of its trade deficit with China. VCG

and investment is still enormous. Even if India launches a new economic offensive against China in the future, there is still room for China-India economic relations to withstand pressure, and the complete decoupling between the two countries is basically impossible.

The structural contradictions in international politics brought about by the simultaneous rise of China and India, the boundary question between the two countries, and the tortuous development of bilateral relations over the past decades all mean that China-India economic cooperation is inevitably affected

by the political relationship and border situation of the two countries. It is foreseeable that unless the border tensions between China and India are properly managed and the political mutual trust between the two countries is rebuilt, China-India economic relations will continue to be under pressure. However, the economic disputes and geopolitical games of the major countries since the 20th century have left a valuable historical lesson for China and India: peace benefits both, and conflict hurts both. Therefore, launching an economic offensive and intensifying economic decoupling

should not become the main tone of China-India economic relations. On the contrary, finding a political solution to alleviate the current dilemma in economic cooperation is the only correct choice for the two countries. ■

—
The author is deputy editor-in-chief of China Economic Diplomacy Blue Book and a PhD candidate of the School of International Studies at Renmin University of China.

Modi's Dream of "Self-Reliant India" Will be Incomplete without China

By Rabi Sankar Bosu

The healthy growth of China-India relations is a blessing not only for the two peoples residing on either side of the Himalayas but also for world peace and prosperity.



June 27, 2019: Chinese carmaker SAIC Motor launches its MG Hector in Gurgaon, Haryana, India. VCG

Following the Ladakh clash, anti-China sentiment is taking new dimensions when several ultranationalist politicians, senior military veterans and even some Union ministers in India have been ramping up the measures against Chinese products responding to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call for an "Aatamnirbhar Bharat" (a self-reliant India).

Right now, the "boycott China" chorus is gaining momentum on social media platforms in India. Highlighting India's trade deficit with China as well as the June 15 border clash in the Galwan Valley, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the key founder of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and the

Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM), a nationalist economic policy group linked to the ruling BJP, have taken the lead in voicing campaign against Chinese products and urged Indian citizens and labor associations to strongly support Modi's much-hyped "Make in India" program by boycotting Chinese goods. And Modi's ardent followers in various parts of the country demonstrated massive protest against China by smashing Chinese TV sets, phones and other Chinese products. They even asked Indian shopkeepers not to sell Chinese-made rakhis during the recent Raksha Bandhan festival.

Since the boycott movement against Chinese goods spread to the streets, veteran Modi has taken public anger

as an opportunity to garner political momentum in his party's favor. He is imposing higher non-tariff barriers on Chinese goods as well as restricting Chinese investment in the Indian market by introducing the revised foreign investment policy.

Furthermore, Prime Minister Modi has proposed to be "vocal for locals" to make Indian citizens self-reliant by boycotting Chinese products. On June 29, the Indian government banned 59 Chinese apps including WeChat, TikTok, Weibo and CamScanner, explaining that they are "prejudicial to sovereignty and integrity of India, defense of India, security of state and public order," without considering the core interests of Indian citizens. The Modi government has also systematically discouraged imports from China, making it difficult for Chinese companies to function in India.

So far, India's current boycott China movement only exists at the government level, which can end up severely damaging the China-India relations. The Indian boycott of Chinese goods doesn't do justice to its own citizens who still prefer to buy low-priced Chinese items, no matter how much the Indian authorities go on about getting rid of Chinese products. Interestingly, during India's online shopping festivals from August 6 to 10, Redmi, Oppo and Vivo were the big stars despite the 'boycott China' call, thus demonstrating that the "consumer is king" at all times.



June 30, 2020: A resident in Faridabad, India is using the app TikTok to watch videos. Visual People

Prime Minister Modi should keep in mind that tactical diplomacy shouldn't be carried out with theater tricks. Breaking second-hand Chinese TV sets, regulating Chinese investments and blocking Chinese apps are nothing but self-deceiving patriotism. The Indian political leadership should realize that no country in today's globalized world of mutual economic interdependence is entirely self-reliant.

The hard reality is that Modi's call for self-reliance will remain incomplete without the help of China, which has been India's largest trading partner with a cumulative investment of more than US\$8 billion in India, a source of imports and India's fourth-largest export market. By boycotting Chinese goods or not using China's products, India will hamper its own economy more than China's. Besides, Indian exporters would also lose the large Chinese market.

The way in which Chinese goods are gaining ground in diverse sectors of India casts doubt on the extent to which it is possible to eliminate Chinese products in practice. Over the years, India has been almost "China dependent" in all areas of industries from electrical appliances and fertilizers to raw materials for essential medicines. Here it is pertinent to mention that about 70 percent of active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) of the medicines labeled "Made in India" are imported from China. If China stops API

supply to India, products ranging from cough syrup to expensive antibiotics will vanish at once from all stores. The majority of the best-selling mobile brands in the Indian market are also from China.

Former Finance Minister

The Indian political leadership should realize that no country in today's globalized world of mutual economic interdependence is entirely self-reliant.

and senior Congress leader P. Chidambaram rightly said that boycotting Chinese products will not hurt the economy of the neighboring country as Chinese trade with India is only a small fraction of its world trade. Chidambaram's opinion is reaffirmed by the Chinese embassy in New Delhi saying that the biggest losers of the boycott will be Indian traders and consumers.

Furthermore, the livelihoods of 1.3 billion ordinary Indian people are directly and indirectly involved in the process of importing Chinese goods. The Indian government's ban on WeChat has greatly affected Indian students, academics, professionals, and traders who are in contact with China. On the other hand, the banning of TikTok, one of the most popular short video apps with 610 million downloads in India as of April, hurts the livelihoods of millions of Indians.

Over the years, Chinese

investment has boosted the development of industries such as mobile phones, household appliances, infrastructure, automobile, medicine, and biology in India, creating a large number of local jobs and cost-effective products for Indians. There


can be little doubt that India requires Chinese investment to make it an ideal manufacturing hub under the "Make in India" initiative as well as the "Make for World" campaign. Modi's dream of building a "self-reliant India" will become a success if his administration turns off its hostility toward China. Currently, China and India should restore cooperation and trade to boost the economy. The healthy growth of China-India relations is a blessing not only for the two peoples residing on either side of the Himalayas but also for world peace and prosperity. 🇮🇳

—
The author is an Indian analyst and commentator focusing on China's development, China-India relations and the Belt and Road Initiative. This is an edited version of the article Modi's Dream of "Self-reliant India" Will be Incomplete without China published by Cnfocus.com.

China's Poverty Alleviation Achievements 1978 - 2020

Edited and Designed by Cecile Zehnacker





END OF 2019

- Poverty rate dropped to **0.6%**
- **5.51 million** people still in poverty

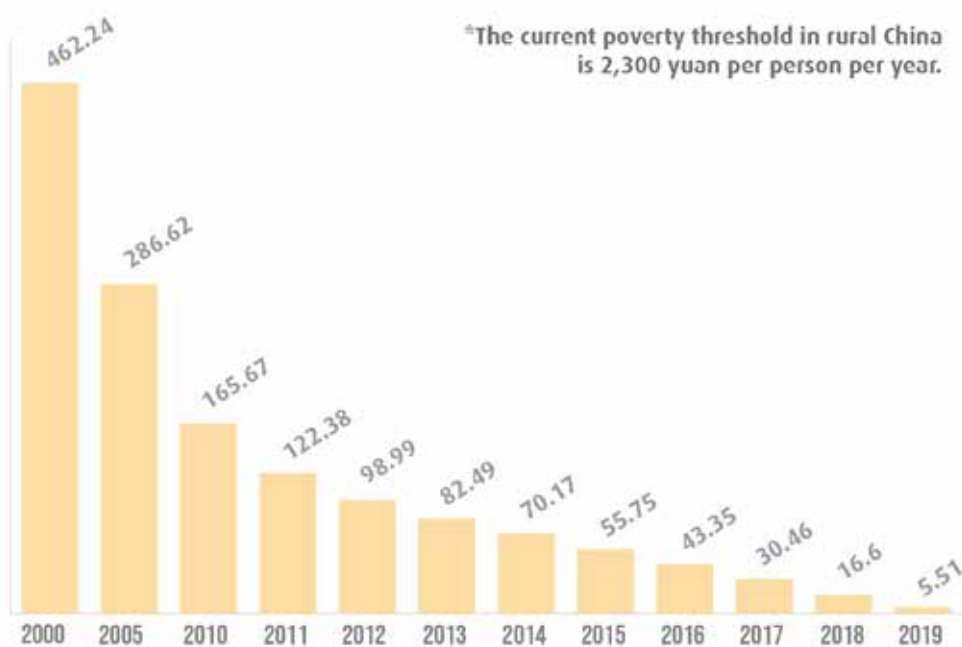
2012-2019

- **Over 93 million** rural people lifted out of poverty
- **9.6 million** poor people relocated to more habitable areas, bringing them access to more job opportunities and better public services

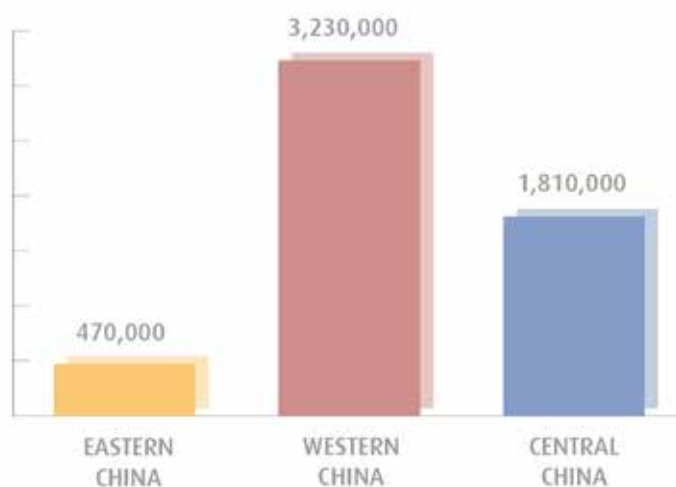
1978-2018

- **850 million** people lifted out of poverty
- **70%** of global poverty reduction

Number of rural people living below the poverty line* (in millions)



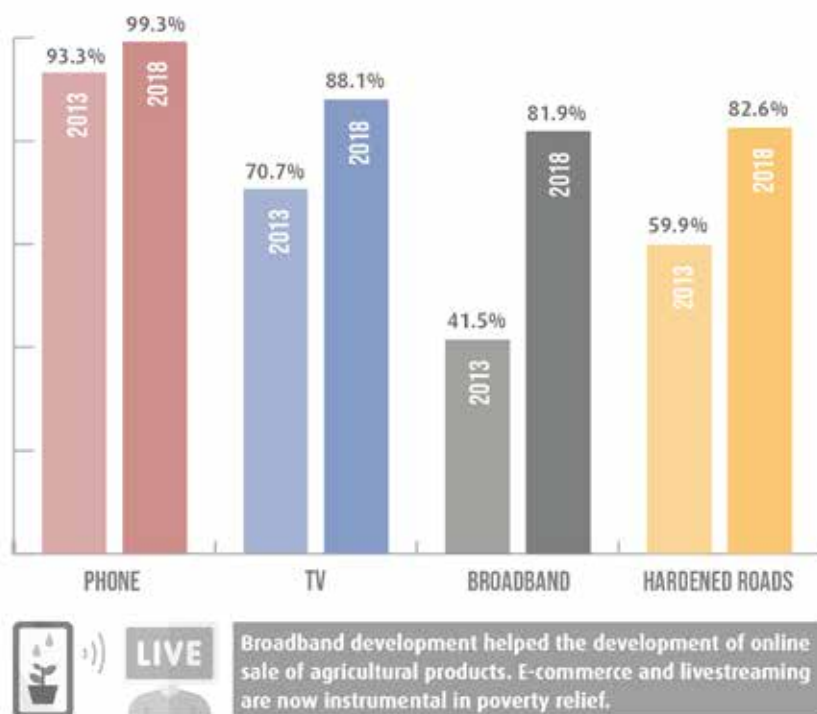
Number of rural people living below the poverty line in 2019 per region



Number of counties lifted out of poverty



Improvement of rural infrastructure



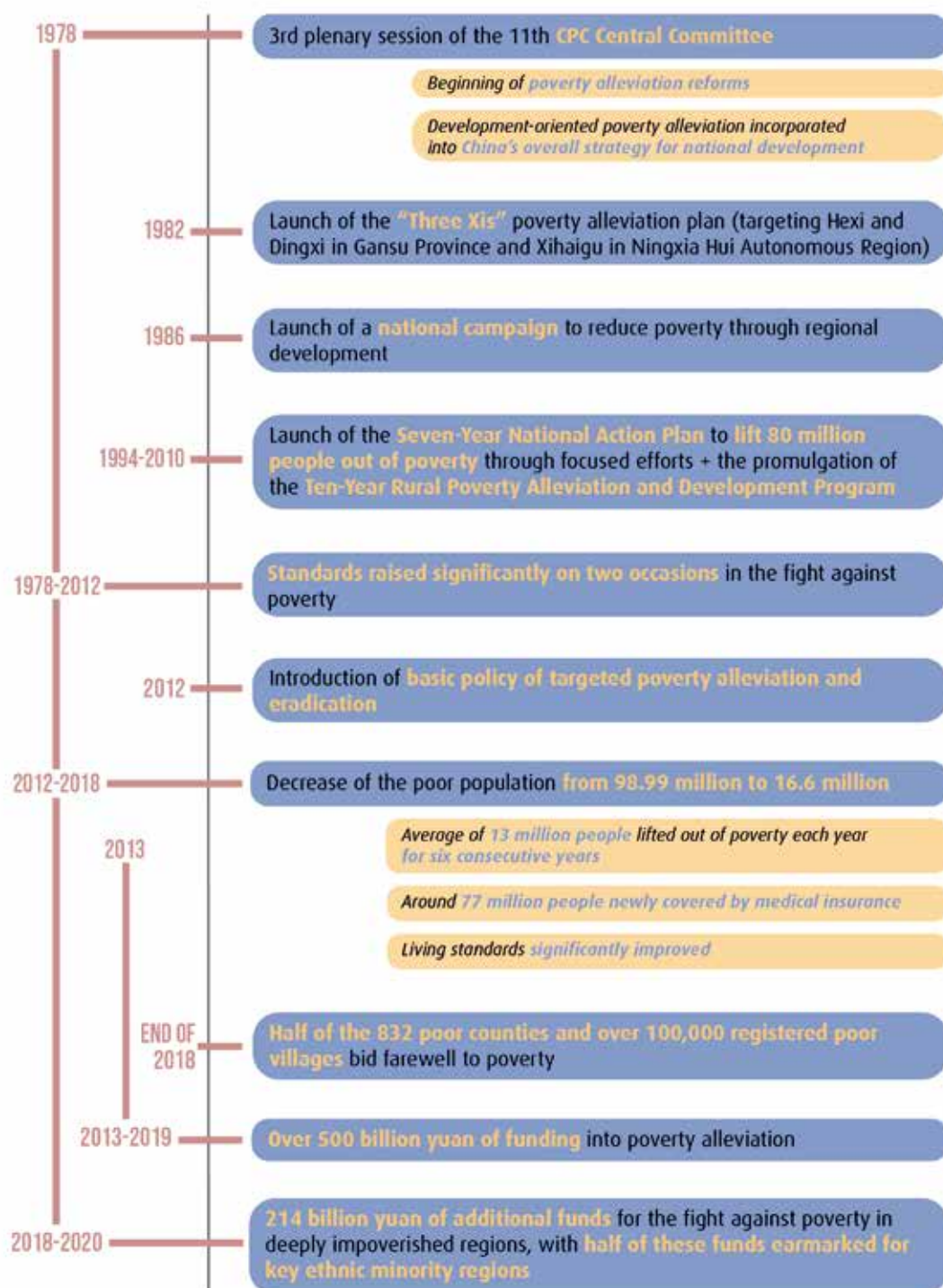
Poverty alleviation for ethnic minorities

Largest concentration of ethnic minority groups:

- Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region
- Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region
- Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region
- Tibet Autonomous Region
- Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region
- Guizhou Province
- Yunnan Province
- Qinghai Province



Poverty alleviation timeline



Source: National Bureau of Statistics of China, Global Times, Statista, Xinhua, China.org.cn, CGTN, Qiushi Journal

How Do We Think Outside the Box?

Concept by *China-India Dialogue*

Image, Courage, and Fun

Prasad Khake

Age: 24

Occupation: Entrepreneur

Birth place: Nasik, Maharashtra, India

Current residence: Nasik, Maharashtra, India



Thinking outside the box requires imagination and

creativity. You also need to have the ability to take risks and the courage to go against convention. Most importantly, you should have fun!

Hackers can be particularly good at thinking outside the box. Note that “hacker” here refers to anyone exploiting the anomalies or shortcomings of a system. Hence, you can either follow the conventional, well-trodden path or create a new one. Creating a new path can be easier if you love what you do and have the tools to do it. Work doesn’t feel like work if you love what you’re doing, and you are more likely to innovate.

This is where technology comes in handy. Technology crudely means “technique to do something.” Our ancestors could think outside the box when they saw logs of wood rolling and were inspired to make the wheel and set the wheels of development in motion. You need to be able to extract useful

knowledge from the system in order to work out a more efficient way to do it. So, be like hackers, look for patterns, and see where else you can apply them. Albert Einstein did this and found out that physics acted on everything equally. He realized that exceptions were there because of the way high-speed objects interacted with light which has the highest speed, and then found out a pattern between all these exceptions leading to the theory of relativity.

Albert Einstein also said that “creativity is intelligence having fun.” All you need is to be keen and observant. Look around. Pay attention and make notes. Pen down your thoughts on the things in your world which seem beautiful, ugly, useful, and flawed. Think about what is redundant in them. Observe. Look for what annoys you. And then recreate. Be like an artist and hone your creative process.

Another useful thing which helps is vision. All you need is change of perspective. Humans have a tendency towards conformity. We crave stability and uniformity. Anything that disturbs our homeostasis around will be perceived as something outside the box. You need to be able to take unpopular and contrary decisions. This is where the risk and courage come in. You need to have firm faith in your beliefs. You need to be a little more optimistic than normal. You need to be a little crazy. That's how Mahatma Gandhi did it with his Satyagrahas, forcing the British to fight on a different level and helping the freedom struggle of India. That's how Apple did it when the company launched the iPhone with no keypad and full touch screen when the reigning king Blackberry had tactile, hardware keyboards. It may not work and can even backfire, but you need to have conviction to be able to think outside the box.

What we've seen until now is to observe, rebuild, and see things from a different perspective. All these are hinting at one common theme which brings me to my next point. Break the routine. Do you ever have those epiphanies in the shower or during an early morning jog for a problem you've been working on for a long time? What makes that unrelated moment so special and impactful that it reveals the complete solution? There's a science behind it. It can be hard for our brains to think of the solution when we're too comfortable. Getting into a different setting causes our

brains to think subconsciously on the matter at hand in a better way. Darwin, Twain and many other huge personalities used to have this break or the out-of-work routine designed to spend time alone with their thoughts and get some good ideas.

Now, here's something counterintuitive. In order to think outside the box, you have to restrict the free-flowing thoughts and impose some constraints, like making a painting only with primary colors or thinking about a topic only from the perspective of counterarguments. Restrictions force us into divergence. Divergence is going away from the conventional path. This is what helped Snapchat become a billion-dollar company—it has restrictions forcing users to post stories that are not permanent, different from its competitors Facebook and Instagram. This is what led Ernest Hemingway to challenge himself to write a short story in six words and here's what he came up with: "For sale: Baby shoe, never worn."

Coming from India, the proverbial concept of "Jugaad"

is our very own national outside-the-box thinking framework. There's a great deal of inspiration for novel and not so novel "Jugaads," from using a motorcycle tyre to husk corn to cancelling railway tickets online, which are booked using cash, so that the refund will be deposited in a bank account directly when the next day certain denominations of our currency notes are going to be demonetized. It is inherently due to limited resources that one can find inspiration and the need for such ideas.

F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote that "The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in mind at the same time and still retain the ability to function." I think this perfectly captures the essence of thinking outside the box. Whether you can find vulnerability and exploit the system, or observe and reorient, as well as think from a different pair of lenses while going out of your routine periodically, any one or a combination of these things will hopefully fire those neurons in your brain and help you out.



Tear Down the Walls in Your Mind

Shawn Miao

Age: 26

Occupation: Freelancer

Birth place: Zhejiang Province, China

Current residence: New Zealand



When we face physical limitations, we often react swiftly and violently, but facing psychological limitations, we seem to be dull and clumsy.

It is quite unpleasant to admit that our thinking is limited. But if you are told that the limitations of thinking are the results of human evolution, and people with stronger adaptability are more likely to have such limitations, would it be easier? Darwin's theory of evolution explains human adaptation to the changing environment. Natural selection, survival of the fittest, and we are the

survivors. However, while adapting to the environment, we also find ourselves bound in "invisible shackles"—common sense is developed together with prejudices, blocking the way to acquire new knowledge. So, how do we think outside the box? The walls of the "box" are actually the walls in our minds. How do we tear down the walls? I've got a "hammer" for going beyond common sense.

Going beyond common sense means opening up to everything that may challenge your knowledge. Common sense can help reduce the cognitive load and improve society's operating efficiency, but it is also common sense that hinders access to new knowledge. Now we all know that the earth is round and it revolves around the sun, but these views were not common sense before Ferdinand Magellan circumnavigated the globe and Nicolaus Copernicus put forward the heliocentric theory. Unlike others who believe common sense is always right, Magellan and Copernicus not only questioned common sense but also brought up hypotheses against common sense and proved them. They tore down the mental walls of their times. In fact, those who keep a critical posture toward common sense and go beyond it by proving their hypotheses are often known as scientists.

Academic monographs and popular science books are the most readily available sources for knowledge beyond common sense. Always bring the "hammer" and gradually

you will break the boundaries of your cognition. For example, to reshape your body, common sense points to following the law of energy conservation, so the most popular way to lose weight comes up—"close your mouth and move your legs." But Tim Specter, a British professor of genetic epidemiology who focuses on intestinal flora studies, holds that it is more important to improve the flora of our body since the human body contains a large number of bacteria that also consume energy and our eating habits determine our intestinal flora. For another example, to pursue career development, common sense tells us to make a good career plan first and then complete it step by step. But Herminia Ibarra, a professor of organizational behavior with the European Institute of Business Administration, thinks otherwise. She believes that a career change requires action before thorough thinking. One cannot discover who he or she truly is through introspection alone, and personal potential must be discovered through real action.

Famous American investor Charlie Munger once said, "All I want to know is where I'm going to die so I'll never go there." Always remind yourself that you might be trapped in conventional thinking, and you can tear down the walls in the mind with your "hammer" and go beyond mere common sense. 📖



Plant Trees Love Trees

**Protect the "lungs of the earth"
to enjoy clean air.**

Origins of Indians' Veneration of Mount Kailash and Lake Manasarovar

By Mao Shichang

Respecting the religious sensibilities of the Indian people is the best way to show our friendliness.

Mount Kailash, located in Purang County, southwestern China's Tibet Autonomous Region, identified as Mount Meru by Buddhists, is the most venerated holy mountain. In Buddhism and Tibet's indigenous religion Bonism, the mountain is considered to be the center of the physical, metaphysical and spiritual universes. Thirty kilometers southeast of Mount Kailash is the sacred Lake Manasarovar, covering an area of over

400 square kilometers. It is believed that Lake Manasarovar is the nectar bestowed by the gods and can wipe away all dirt, sorrows and illnesses. If one makes the journey around the lake, that person would be freed from all sins.

In fact, Indians venerate Mount Kailash and Lake Manasarovar as highly as Chinese believers do. Kapil Kapoor, a well-known Sanskrit professor and my PhD supervisor at Jawaharlal Nehru University

in India, has told me more than once that it is his long-cherished wish as a Hindu that he would take his wife on a pilgrimage to Mount Kailash and then bathe (symbolically) in Lake Manasarovar.

The name "Kailash" literally means "Mountain of Lord Shiva" in the Sanskrit epics *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata* and *Bhagavata Purana*, so it can be estimated that Indians' worship of Mount Kailash dates back to 1000 B.C. In Jainism, a

traditional Indian religion that emerged in the sixth and fifth centuries B.C., Kailash is known as Ashtapada, meaning “the highest mountain.” It is thought to be the place where the first Jain Tirthankara, Rishabhdeva, attained Nirvana.

In Hindu mythology, Shiva, with the highest mana and status among the three main deities, retreated into Mount Kailash. He practiced asceticism and meditated to gain profound knowledge and magical power. Parvati, daughter of the snow mountain god, fell in love with Shiva, but was refused by Shiva who devoted himself to practicing asceticism. Undeterred, Parvati underwent severe ascetic discipline for thousands of years and finally won Shiva’s affection.

It is said that Shiva, considered the “lord of dancers” by Indians, could perform 108 types of dance. Thousands of his dance movements, carved at the Konark Sun Temple by the Bay of Bengal, inspire Indian classical dance artists today. Hindus’ worship of Shiva can be seen throughout India, and statues of Shiva’s genital organ Lingga, a symbol of fertility and creativity, are enshrined in many Hindu temples.

Major rivers in the Indian subcontinent all originate in the vast area around Mount Kailash. Therefore, the religions arising in the subcontinent and other religions influenced by them all regard Mount Kailash as the “source of hundreds of



Mount Kailash, with an altitude of 6,656 meters, is located in Purang County, southwestern China’s Tibet Autonomous Region. With its peak covered with snow all year round, the mountain’s splendid scenery attracts a large number of tourists every year. CFB

rivers.”

Lake Manasarovar is reputed as “the mother of rivers in the world.” Chinese Buddhist monk Xuanzang (602-664) in the Tang Dynasty (618-907) called it “Xitian Yaochi,” literally meaning “abode of immortals in the western heaven.” “Manasarovar” in Sanskrit means “the lake born from the heart of Brahma.” In

Indian mythology, Brahma, the god of creation of the four Vedas, practiced in the Himalayas, and created the lake in the mountains when his son needed a place to bathe after asceticism. Hindus believe that the water of the sacred lake can wash away the “five poisons” (greed, hatred, ignorance, sloth, and jealousy), so they often bathe in the lake when

Hindus’ worship of Shiva draws them to Mount Kailash and Lake Manasarovar despite innumerable hardships along the yatra. Their religious veneration of the sacred mountain and lake may not find an echo in the hearts of some Chinese people, but it deserves our full respect.

walking around it. There is also a small lake near Lake Manasarovar called Lake Lanka. In the *Ramayana*, it was ruled by Ravana, a ten-headed demon who abducted Rama's wife Sita. Lake Manasarovar symbolizes the sun and brightness, while Lake Lanka represents the moon and darkness.

You will easily notice the profound influence of religion on Indian culture after living in India for a long time. Known as the "museum of religions," India is the birthplace of four of the world's major religions—namely Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism—and it embraces most religious beliefs and

practices existing in the world. Hinduism is the mainstream among India's indigenous religions. More than 80 percent of the population of India practices Hinduism, and what foreigners often see and know about Indian culture, such as philosophy, literature, song and dancing, painting, sculpture, film, and folklore, is largely a reflection of Hindu culture. Walking on the streets of India, you can feel a strong religious atmosphere: wherever there are people, there is a temple, and there are devout men and women in the temple. In most Hindu families, Hindu belief is a way of life, and children grow up and

practice Hinduism naturally in such an atmosphere.

Shiva, the god of destruction, creation and asceticism and the lord of dancers, is worshiped by Hindus. Thousands of people bathe every morning in the Ganges River in Varanasi, a holy city which was built by Shiva 6,000 years ago according to Hindu mythology.

Hindus' worship of Shiva draws them to Mount Kailash and Lake Manasarovar despite innumerable hardships along the yatra. Their religious veneration of the sacred mountain and lake may not find an echo in the hearts of some Chinese people, but it deserves our full respect.



July 1, 2018: Indian pilgrims bathe at Lake Manasarovar in the early morning. VCG



■ Mount Kailash is venerated as a sacred mountain in several religions and enjoys an unparalleled status in Hinduism and Tibetan Buddhism. Many Tibetan Buddhists regard it as an important pilgrimage to walk around the base of Mount Kailash. VCG

Respecting the religious sensibilities of the Indian people is the best way to show our friendliness. Therefore, it is undoubtedly important to make Indians' Kailash Manasarovar yatra easier and safer to enhance people-to-people exchanges between China and India.

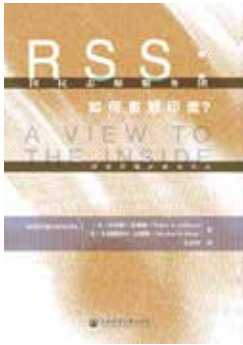
In September 2014, Chinese President Xi Jinping reached an important consensus with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his visit to India and the two sides decided to open a new land crossing into Tibet through the Nathu La Pass in 2015. Today, there are two routes for Indian pilgrims to reach Mount Kailash and Lake Manasarovar: one from

the Lipulekh Pass in Purang County, and the other from the Nathu La Pass in Yadong County, which opened in 2015. Due to surrounding mountain ranges, harsh climate conditions and lack of oxygen, the first route is dangerous and most sections of the road are covered with snow all year round and have no vehicular access. It takes more than 20 days for Indian pilgrims to reach Mount Kailash via the Lipulekh Pass. The latter one via the Nathu La Pass, though longer, is a safer and easier route connecting the China-India border.

Ngari Prefecture in Tibet received a total of 8,649 Indian pilgrims between

2000 and July 2015. After the opening of the Nathu La Pass, the number of Indian pilgrims has increased, but slowly. This is due in part to the inadequacy of supporting tourist facilities. As more and more Indian pilgrims come to venerate the holy mountain and the sacred lake, the people-to-people contacts between China and India will be friendlier, and the bilateral ties will become closer. 📷

—
The author received a PhD from Jawaharlal Nehru University, India and is now director and professor of the India Research Center at Lanzhou University, northwestern China's Gansu Province.



The Reshaped India

By Zhu Cuiping

RSS: A View to the Inside

Walter K. Andersen and Shridhar D. Damle,
Translated by Zhu Cuiping,
Social Sciences Academic Press (China),
September 2020

In May 2019, India's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi won the general election with an "overwhelming" majority—303 out of 543 seats, taking the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance's count to 353, and Modi secured his re-election. Even Modi himself did not expect this result. No wonder he went to the Rudra Cave in Kedarnath to meditate. More than a year has passed, and the academic community is still analyzing the reasons for the "expected" and "unexpected" election results.

The BJP's efforts were absolutely "crucial" for the "unexpected" election in 2019, along with the "cornerstone"—Modi's political achievements, and the "safety card"—the India-Pakistan conflict. Yet few people know that the substantial support from the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), "messengers" of Hindu nationalism, played a part in the re-election of Modi's BJP government.

The book is co-authored by Walter K. Anderson, a well-known scholar of South Asian Studies at Johns Hopkins University in the United States, and Indian-American freelance journalist Shridhar D. Damle who has conducted many interviews on the RSS in recent years.

First, this book allows readers to learn more about Modi's personal development and his ideas of state governance. Modi has attended the regular meetings of the RSS since

1958, when he was 18 years old, which gave him a sense of mission and discipline throughout his life. Such experience, of course, instilled in him Hindu nationalism, a persistent feature in his entire life and political career. In 1995, the BJP leader Lal Krishna Advani brought Modi to Delhi and appointed him National Secretary of the party. Three years later, Modi was promoted to General Secretary of the party when he played a vital role in the state elections including the successful 1998 Gujarat state election campaign.

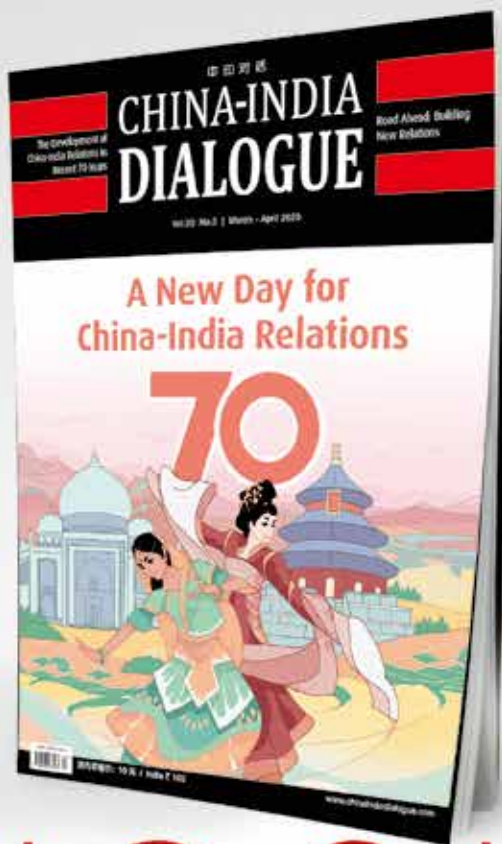
Second, the book offers an essential account of the RSS's role in the election by analyzing the relationship between the RSS and its affiliates. The affiliate organizations utilized their networks to reach out to diverse social constituencies, a key factor for the BJP's victory in areas where it had previously been at a disadvantage. Thousands of RSS volunteers provided help to the BJP. It was reported that 50,000 volunteers carried out propaganda activities for the BJP, 6,000 trained full-timers held senior management positions (organization secretary, general secretary and joint general secretary) in the RSS and almost all its affiliates, and dozens of returned overseas Indian professionals provided information technology expertise for Modi's parliamentary elections. RSS-funded think tanks also played an important role. In Delhi alone, there are eight think tanks affiliated with the RSS. Among these RSS think tanks, the

oldest is the Vivekananda International Foundation (VIF) run by Ajit Doval, who was nominated as National Security Advisor. In addition, the India Foundation (IF) is one of the most influential think tanks established after the victory of the BJP in 2014. Ram Madhav, a former RSS full-timer, has served as the National General Secretary of the BJP.

Third, it explores the influence of Hindutva on the national ideology and how the RSS plays a part in shaping a rapidly changing India. Hindutva ideology promoted by the RSS undoubtedly played a vital role in the 2019 general election that was "beyond expectation," although no single factor could explain this confounding result. Amit Shah tried to reduce the BJP's dependence on the RSS by enlarging the number of party members and expanding the party's influence when he became the president of the party in July 2014. However, the BJP's loss in five states at the end of 2018 forced Amit Shah to change his strategy and rely on the RSS as an effective tool for election campaigns. In any case, the RSS will play a greater role in future Indian elections and in reshaping the country's internal and even external policies.

This book is expected to give readers clear insights into the RSS's historical context, development course, ideology, philosophy, political trend, and influence on society, and help readers learn more about the "incredible" India. 

The author Zhu Cuiping is executive deputy director, professor, and doctoral supervisor at the Research Institute for Indian Ocean Economics, Yunnan University of Finance and Economics. She is the translator for the book RSS: A View to the Inside.



BRIDGING CHINA AND INDIA



**FIND US
ON VARIOUS MEDIA**



Any question or comment about *CHINA-INDIA DIALOGUE*
Please email us at contact@chinaindiadialogue.com

人民畫報

China Pictorial Publications



A Window to the Nation A Welcome to the World
Chinese Passion Global Vision

Advertisement hotline: 86-10-8841 7354 / 7355 / 7419