

中印对话

CHINA-INDIA DIALOGUE

Road to Peace and
Prosperity

United in Post-COVID-19
Economic Recovery

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**HIGH-LEVEL OPENING UP
FOR BETTER TIES**

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塞罕坝

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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2米株距排开，

可绕地球赤道一圈。

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 made 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

A LOOK BACK FOR THE MISSION AHEAD

04



Road to Peace and Prosperity / p.10

COMMENT

Milestone of the Century: The Sixth Plenum / p.14

New Journey Ahead / p.16

STRATEGY

United in Post-COVID-19 Economic Recovery / p.18

High-level Opening Up for China-India Economic Cooperation / p.21

TREND

Digitalization Driving Global Services Trade / p.26

CIFTIS and China's Determination to Further Opening Up / p.28

CASE STUDY

Navigating Headwinds / p.30

Tracing Roots: The Curious Case of Portuguese-Chinese Fishing Nets in India / p.34

Together through Arts and Culture / p.38

The Cultural Glue Binding BRICS / p.42

DISCUSSION

Governance of China / p.44

Key Takeaways for a Better Future / p.48

DATA

Global Survey: Democratic Practices and Governance Effectiveness in China / p.50

YOUNG VOICES

Youth Power in Cross-Cultural Exchange / p.54

COLUMN

Never-Ending Legend In Memory of Indian Sanskrit Scholar Prof. Satya Vrat Shastri / p.58

BOOK

"Water and Mud" of Indian Studies / p.62

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BRICS Seminar on Governance 2021

The BRICS Seminar on Governance 2021 was held online in Beijing on November 2 and 3. Themed “Building Consensus and Confidence for BRICS Cooperation with a Shared Future,” the seminar gathered more than 150 delegates from BRICS nations to exchange experience on governance.

“Multilateralism is an important force that cannot be ignored in the international arena, and BRICS countries should shoulder the responsibility of practicing true multilateralism while adhering to the spirit of openness, inclusiveness, and win-win cooperation,” said Du Zhanyuan, president of China International Communications Group.

At the parallel sessions of the seminar, experts from

BRICS countries conducted pragmatic and productive exchanges on three topics: strengthening the BRICS mechanism for firmer consensus on multilateralism, improving people’s well-being and promoting common development and prosperity for all countries, and upholding common values for more solid and stable BRICS cooperation.

As the world undergoes profound and complex changes, BRICS countries should continuously strengthen cooperation and effective governance through multilateral approaches such as the Belt and Road Initiative, the BRICS mechanism and the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation while promoting common development and prosperity in all countries, experts said.

23rd Meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on China-India Border Affairs

On November 18, Director-General of the Department of Boundary and Ocean Affairs of China’s Foreign Ministry Hong Liang and Additional Secretary of the East Asia Division of India’s Ministry of External Affairs Naveen Srivastava co-chaired the 23rd meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on China-India Border Affairs via video link. Representatives

Seminar on “China-India Relations: Building a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind”

From December 5 to 6, a seminar themed “China-India Relations: Building a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind” was held online alongside the 17th annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Indian Literature (ASIL) under the China Association of Foreign Literature. The seminar was jointly sponsored

by the ASIL and the School of International Cultural Exchange of Tongji University. More than 80 scholars from institutions including the Institute of Foreign Literature under the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Peking University, the National Library of China, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, Shanghai International

Studies University, Lanzhou University, Xi’an International Studies University, Beijing Foreign Studies University, and Shenzhen University attended the event.

At the seminar, scholars pooled ideas under topics including “Community with a Shared Future for Mankind and China-India Cultural Exchange,” “Translation and

from departments related to diplomacy, national defense, and immigration of both countries attended the meeting.

Both sides agreed to abide by the consensus reached at the meeting between Chinese and Indian foreign ministers in Dushanbe, further ease the border situation, and work for the earliest shift from emergency response to routine control. The two sides conducted candid and in-depth exchange of views on the situation in the China-India border areas. Both sides agreed to maintain dialogue and communication through diplomatic and military channels, actively prepare for the

14th round of the China-India Corps Commander Level Meeting, and make efforts to settle remaining issues on the west section of the China-India boundary.

Trade Volume between China and India Exceeds US\$100 Billion in 2021

According to import and export data released by China's General Administration of Customs, the total bilateral trade between China and India in 2021 reached US\$125.6 billion, an increase of 43.3 percent over the previous year. China exported goods worth US\$97.5 billion to India and imported goods worth US\$28.1 billion from India, a year-on-year growth of 46 percent and 34 percent, respectively. China has been India's largest trading partner for two consecutive years.

Study of Indian Classical Literature," "China-India Relations and the World," "China-India Cultural Exchange and Comparison," "China-India Literary Exchange and Comparison," "Translation and Study of Modern and Contemporary Indian Literature," and "Translation and Research of Indian Literary Theory."

China-India Vocational Education Cooperation Seminar

On December 26, the China-India Vocational Education Cooperation Seminar, co-hosted by the China Education Association for International Exchange and the Chinese Embassy in India, was held in Tianjin. Nearly 150 people from 33 Chinese and Indian institutions attended the seminar.

Themed "Skills, Employment, and Development," the seminar aimed to pool suggestions from governments, schools, banks, and enterprises on the development of vocational education in China and India.

At the seminar, Dong Gang, chairperson of the Joint Meeting of Presidents of Vocational Schools and Colleges, delivered a speech titled "Enhancing the Adaptability of Vocational Education and Facilitating the Building of a Society with Skilled Labor." K. K. Kataria, director of Haryana State Technical Education Society, delivered a speech titled "Initiative by the Government of India and the Government of Haryana on Technical Education: Challenges and Opportunities for Technical Education in India." Representatives from China and India conducted in-depth discussions of skill training, future employment, and economic development based on the current situation of vocational education in the two countries. 📷

A Look Back for the Mission Ahead

By Sun Weidong



Socialism with Chinese characteristics is a fundamental achievement of the Party and the people, forged through innumerable hardships and great sacrifices over 100 years.

At the important moment of celebrating the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China (CPC), and a critical juncture of the CPC's centenary and realizing the first "centenary goal," the Sixth Plenary Session of the 19th CPC Central Committee concluded successfully in

November 2021. At the session, the Central Committee adopted the *Resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on the Major Achievements and Historical Experience of the Party over the Past Century*. The Party established Comrade Xi Jinping's core position on the Party Central Committee and in the Party

as a whole and defined the guiding role of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era. This reflects the common will of the Party, the armed forces, and the Chinese people of all ethnic groups, and is of decisive significance for advancing the cause of the Party and the country in the new era and for driving the



June 28, 2021: *The Great Journey*, an art performance celebrating the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China, is held at the National Stadium in Beijing. by Duan Wei/China Pictorial

historic process of national rejuvenation forward.

The session summed up 10 points of valuable historical experience gained by the CPC in the past century: upholding the Party's leadership; putting the people first; advancing theoretical innovation; staying independent; following the Chinese path; maintaining a global vision; breaking new ground; standing up for ourselves; promoting the united front; and remaining committed to self-reform.

To understand today's China, we must first get to know the CPC. This plenary session is such a great opportunity.

CHINESE PATH: SUITED TO CHINA'S NATIONAL CONDITIONS

Our direction determines our path, and the path determines the future. After the Opium War of 1840, China suffered greater ravages than ever before. Countless noble-minded patriots sought to save the nation from peril, but all failed. The founding of the CPC 100 years ago profoundly transformed the future and destiny of China and altered the landscape of world development. Socialism with Chinese characteristics is a fundamental achievement of the Party and the people,

forged through innumerable hardships and great sacrifices over the past 100 years, and it is the right path to realize national rejuvenation, to make our country prosperous and strong, and to bring happiness to the people. This correct path is a historical inevitability and the choice of the Chinese people.

The Party's 100-year history witnessed a process of continuing adaptation of Marxism to the Chinese context and exploration of creative and innovative ideas. In the course of long-term struggle, the CPC has established Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, the



Peace Ark, a hospital ship of China's People's Liberation Army Navy, is on a journey. The domestically built 10,000-ton hospital ship has carried out dozens of humanitarian missions, treating over 230,000 patients in more than 40 countries and regions. CFB

Theory of Three Represents, and the Scientific Outlook on Development. Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era is Marxism for contemporary China and the 21st century. It embodies the best of the Chinese culture and ethos in our times and represents a new breakthrough in adapting Marxism to the Chinese context.

As the saying goes, all roads lead to Rome. In this context "Rome" refers to people's aspirations to live a better life. Countries have different histories, cultures, political systems, and development models, and each has the right to follow its own road to "Rome." China adheres to its independence and self-reliance, adheres to the Chinese path, and firmly holds the destiny of China's

development and progress in its own hands. Meanwhile, China has no intention of selling its own development path around the world. On the contrary, China encourages all countries to find development paths tailored to their respective national conditions.

ENSURING THE PEOPLE RUN THE COUNTRY

In 1945, on the eve of the victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression, famous Chinese educator Huang Yanpei asked Mao Zedong in a cave-dwelling in Yan'an in Shaanxi Province a question: How should China break free of the wheel of history and the "vicious cycle" of dynastic rise and collapse? "We have found a

new path, and this new path is called democracy," Mao replied. "As long as the people have oversight of the government, the government will not slacken in its efforts. When everyone takes responsibility, there will be no danger that things will return to how they were even if the leader has gone."

Democracy is an abiding philosophy to which the CPC and the Chinese people are committed. Through long-term exploration, the CPC has led the Chinese people to develop a path of whole-process people's democracy, which is the broadest, most genuine, and most effective socialist democracy. Major decisions in China are made through public opinion solicitation and democratic deliberation and are based on scientific study and democratic decision-making. Since the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012, public opinion has been solicited on draft laws on 187 occasions and more than three million comments from about 1.1 million people have been received. During the formulation of the 14th Five-Year Plan, the Chinese government heavily relied on soliciting opinions from all sides; more than one million opinions and suggestions were collected online alone.

Civilizations are rich and diverse, and so is democracy. Democracy is not mass produced with a uniform model or configuration for countries around the world. Dismissing forms of democracy that differ from one's

own is in itself undemocratic. Whether a country is democratic or not should be left to its own people to decide. China has continuously explored and optimized the path of democracy which is rooted in China's history and culture and fits the country's conditions. Chinese democracy enjoys popular support from an overwhelming majority of the Chinese people. According to the latest authoritative international poll, the Chinese people's overall satisfaction with the Party and the government exceeds 95 percent and 98 percent, respectively.

ACHIEVING COMMON PROSPERITY

Common prosperity is an essential requirement of socialism and a key feature of Chinese-style modernization. Victory in the anti-poverty fight and in the building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects has created favorable conditions for promoting common prosperity. Now, China is at the historical stage to advance common prosperity.

Common prosperity requires "making the pie bigger" by all means. China is transitioning from rapid growth to high-quality development, taking a scientific approach in the new development stage, and pursuing a vision of innovative, coordinated, green, and open development that serves everyone. China has also accelerated construction of a



September 11, 2019: Locals pose for a group photo with Chinese medical workers from Guangdong Province dedicated to treating malaria using artemisinin therapy in Comoros. The Chinese medical team has helped curb the spread of malaria effectively in the African country. Visual People

new development paradigm featuring dual circulation in which domestic and overseas markets reinforce each other, with the domestic market as the mainstay.

Common prosperity also requires "distributing the pie" fairly and reasonably. This does not mean undercutting the rich to benefit the poor or implementing egalitarianism, but optimizing the income distribution system to reflect efficiency and promote fairness. By reasonably controlling the distribution gap, improving the social security system, and increasing support and assistance for low-income people and poverty-stricken areas, China is working to gradually form an olive-shaped income distribution structure with a large middle and two small ends.

CPC MAINTAINS GLOBAL VISION AND OPPOSES HEGEMONY AND POWER POLITICS

The CPC has been seeking not only happiness for the Chinese people and rejuvenation for the Chinese nation, but also progress for all mankind and common good for the world. The Party has been cogitating on the future of humanity with a global vision and has understood and handled China's relations with the rest of the world in the context of the general trend of human development, the grand scheme of global changes, and the entire course of Chinese history. This has enabled the Party to stay on the right side of history and the side of human progress.

There is only one Earth in the universe, and mankind



February 12, 2021: "Stand in the East: An Exhibition of Classic Fine Art Works Collected in the National Museum of China" attracts many spectators to the museum in Dongcheng District, Beijing. by Xu Xun/*China Pictorial*

has only one homeland. Facing the question of "What has happened to the world, and how should we respond" and standing at the height of the future and destiny of mankind, President Xi Jinping put forward the important concept of building a community with a shared future for humanity, to build an open, inclusive, clean and beautiful world that enjoys lasting peace, universal security, and common prosperity.

As the term suggests, a community with a shared future for humanity means that the destiny and future of each and every nation and country are interlocked. We should stick together through thick and thin and endeavor to build this planet of ours into a big harmonious family and realize mankind's longing for a better life. Building a community

with a shared future for humanity is included in important documents of multilateral mechanisms such as the United Nations and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). It reflects

The Party has been cogitating on the future of humanity with a global vision and has understood and handled China's relations with the rest of the world in the context of the general trend of human development, the grand scheme of global changes, and the entire course of Chinese history.

the common aspirations and value pursuits of the people of all countries and embodies broad consensus of the international community. Its far-reaching influence is continuing to expand and will

be further manifested with the development of China and the world.

China doesn't believe in the outdated logic that power inevitably leads to hegemony. Instead, China advocates fostering a new type of international relations which is by nature beyond traditional power politics and the Law of Jungle, with its core values being mutual respect, fairness, justice, and win-win cooperation. China advocates practicing true multilateralism and upholding the international system with the United Nations at its core and the international order underpinned by international law to advance democracy in international relations. International affairs can only be addressed through consultation by everyone, and international rules can only be made through universal consensus. Decisions should not be made by those who simply have bigger fists.

China opposes anti-democratic behavior under the banner of democracy, which stokes ideological confrontation in the world, creating new dividing lines.

The world today is facing

the combined impacts of the pandemic and profound changes, both unseen in a century. Global economic recovery has been uneven. With the international development poised at crossroads, President Xi Jinping solemnly proposed the Global Development Initiative. He called on the international community to accelerate implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals for more robust, greener and more balanced global development that leaves no countries or individuals behind. The initiative pointed the way forward for global development and international development cooperation, and is another important public good that China has provided to the international community.

THE FUTURE OF CHINA-INDIA RELATIONS

Deng Xiaoping once said that no genuine Asian century would come without the collective development of China, India, and other regional developing countries. Both ancient civilizations, China and India have always pursued the visions of “universal peace” and “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakum” (the world as one family), and advocated the principles of inclusiveness and harmony. Both major developing countries with a population of over one billion, China and India are facing similar arduous development tasks and broad development prospects. Both countries are also important




A good harvest of goji berries in Tongxin County, northwestern China's Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region. In recent years, Ningxia has made remarkable achievements in poverty alleviation and development. Industrial clusters with local features are changing the backward production structure in poor areas. CFB

emerging economies that maintain close cooperation within multilateral organizations including BRICS and SCO. We share similar positions on climate change and other fields. Our common interests far outweigh our differences. China's development provides opportunities for India rather than challenges.

China-India relations are comprehensive and multi-dimensional and should not be defined by just one certain issue. It is obviously a bad strategic judgment to deem China as a “major threat” or “strategic adversary” to India. Such a stance is inconsistent with fact and not constructive. We need to view China-India relations from a long-term perspective rather than being short-sighted, with a broad vision rather than being narrow-minded, with

cooperative thinking rather than the zero-sum mentality.

China has shown the willingness to take action to improve China-India relations. But it needs both sides to meet each other halfway and properly handle differences. We hope that more Indian friends can understand the CPC and China from an objective and rational perspective and help enhance mutual understanding, trust, and friendship between the two peoples to ensure the two neighboring major countries live in peace and harmony and achieve common development and rejuvenation. 

The author is the Chinese Ambassador to India.

Road to Peace and Prosperity

By Karori Singh



Human rights should be restored to the most vulnerable sections of society. Democracy can never thrive alongside extreme poverty. People's democracy and common prosperity are the most viable, feasible, and appropriate systems for many places.

The Sixth Plenary Session of the 19th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) passed a landmark resolution in November 2021. The resolution focused on reflecting on past achievements of the Party and recognizing the accomplishments of China under the leadership of the CPC, which

celebrated its centenary the same year.

Over the last hundred years since its founding in 1921, the CPC has adopted three resolutions on historical issues. The first resolution passed in 1945 laid the foundation for establishing Mao Zedong Thought as the Party's guiding ideology. The second resolution passed in 1981 marked

a turn to the reform and opening-up drive led by Deng Xiaoping which propelled China towards becoming the world's second-largest economy. The third resolution passed recently summarized the major achievements and historical experience of the CPC over a century, adapting the ideological contours to the changing context.

All of the three resolutions are key steps along the Chinese path of development, governance, and civilization towards making China a great nation with a distinct identity. The communiqué of the Sixth Plenary Session required that all Party members adopt “a rational outlook on the Party’s history” to understand why China is successful and how China can continue to succeed in the future. It presented a “meticulous assessment and deep reflection on a number of major theoretical and practical questions regarding the cause of the Party and the country in the new era.”

Moreover, the communiqué underlined that the Chinese economy is now on a path to higher-quality development that is more efficient, equitable, sustainable, and secure. It explained factors related to institutional capacity, economic strength, cultural advancement, sustainable development, ecological conservation, and sound national defence and security, all of which have contributed immensely to the growth of socialism with Chinese characteristics, national rejuvenation, and building of the community with a shared future for humanity. Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era “embodies the best of the Chinese culture and ethos in our times and represents a new breakthrough in adapting Marxism to the Chinese context,” noted in the communiqué. It also applauded efforts to respond to the COVID-19



From November 8 to 11, 2021, the Sixth Plenary Session of the 19th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) was held in Beijing. The meeting adopted a landmark resolution on the major achievements and historical experience of the CPC’s 100 years of endeavors. by Yan Yan/Xinhua

pandemic, tackle corruption, and ensure balanced economic growth. The Sixth Plenary Session also reviewed and passed a resolution on convening the 20th National Congress of the CPC in the second half of 2022 in Beijing.

PEOPLE’S DEMOCRACY AND COMMON PROSPERITY

The 100th anniversary of the birth of the CPC is significant not only as a chance to reflect on the past, review progress, and chart the future course, but also to respond to questions about China’s development path and governance model at a global level. China released several white papers on major issues including poverty alleviation, human rights, and democracy as it has remained committed to common prosperity and dialogue between civilizations. These interconnected measures stressed

that human rights must be restored to vulnerable sections of society and that democracy cannot thrive alongside extreme poverty. This is why a people’s democracy seeking common prosperity is the most viable, feasible, and appropriate system.

China’s whole-process people’s democracy features extensive consultation and power-sharing with the people in governance rather than a one-time electoral affair for a fixed term. A key supportive institutional platform is the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), a main organ of the country’s governance model. Alongside the CPPCC are other arrangements to serve autonomous regions and support community-level self-governance systems. The white paper *China: Democracy that Works* declared in no uncertain terms that China draws



November 9, 2021: Residents cast ballots to elect deputies of township- and county-level people's congresses at a voting station of Yinxin Community, a resettlement site for relocated poor people in Congjiang County, southwestern China's Guizhou Province. Visual People

on collective wisdom and promotes full expression and in-depth exchange of different ideas and viewpoints through democratic consultation.

The white paper concluded that “there is always scope for improving the system of democracy.” “Humanity’s quest for and experiments with greater democracy will never end,” it stated. It highlighted continuous reform and learning from experience. “All paths to democracy chosen by the peoples themselves deserve proper respect.” The wisdom and prudence of the concept lie in the recognition of diversity and dialogue as integral to the democratic process supporting peace at home and abroad. That is why China has reiterated its commitment to multilateralism, openness, and inclusivity in international relations so frequently.

Despite all its efforts, China has still been criticized by

some Western advocacy groups for being “authoritarian” or “autocratic.” However, China firmly advocates dialogue between civilizations towards promoting multilateralism, inclusivity, and openness in international relations. The country hosted the first Conference on Dialogue of Asian Civilizations (CDAC) in May 2019 in Beijing. While speaking at the CDAC, President Xi Jinping underlined that it “creates a new platform for civilizations in Asia and beyond to engage in dialogue and exchanges on an equal footing to facilitate mutual learning.” “Our forefathers in Asia have long engaged in inter-civilizational exchanges and mutual learning,” he said. “The ancient trade routes, notably the Silk Road, the Tea Road, and the Spice Road, brought silk, tea, porcelain, spices, paintings and sculpture to all corners

of Asia and witnessed inter-civilizational dialogue in the form of trade and cultural interflow.” At the opening ceremony of the conference, UNESCO director-general Audrey Azoulay echoed his sentiments by emphasizing the importance of production and diffusion of research and knowledge about the cultural and scientific exchanges along the Silk Road in the name of deeper dialogue.

CIVILIZATIONAL DIALOGUE: ANTIDOTE TO UNILATERALISM AND HEGEMONY

There are two different views of civilizations: a technology-centric universalistic view looking towards a fifth industrial revolution, and a culture-centric view of the clashes and dialogue between diverse civilizations. In both, civilizational interaction and mutual enrichment have advanced human development throughout history.

Recent debate on civilizational interaction, however, has politico-strategic overtones aimed at shaping the emerging world order. The end of the Cold War in the 1990s generated an opportunity for the emergence of a unipolar world that received ideational and philosophical support in the form of end of history, end of ideology, and clash of civilizations through undermining prevalent diversity and dialogue around the eve of the millennium. It clearly aimed at strengthening unipolarity which naturally invited multiple responses for civilizational dialogue. The following six

streams are such responses.

The first came from the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) choosing to recognize 2001 as the UN Year of Dialogue among Civilizations to raise awareness about the concept. UNESCO has mandated promoting cultural interaction since its inception. Second, Spain and Turkey proposed establishment of the Alliance of Civilizations at UNGA in 2004. Third, former Iranian President Seyyed Mohammad Khatami responded to the development by emphasizing dialogue among civilizations until it was institutionalized in the form of the Foundation for Dialogue among Civilizations. Fourth, the Eurasian region responded in the form of the World Public Forum Dialogue of Civilizations and the 2016 establishment of the Dialogue of Civilizations Research Institute. It focuses on broad dialogue in the fields of culture, civilizations, economics, governance, and geopolitics. The fifth response came in the form of the World Forum on Inter-Cultural Dialogue in Baku, capital of Azerbaijan. Sixth, China introduced the CDAC in 2019.

Contrasting the proposition of a clash of civilizations, such responses seek multilateralism, recognition of diversity, and promotion of dialogue, which aligns with building a community with a shared future for humanity, which China seeks and aspires to achieve.

By instilling confidence in the Chinese people with a sense of introspection, caution, optimism and commitment, the resolution passed at the Sixth



A photo exhibition commemorating the 50th anniversary of the restoration of the lawful rights of the People's Republic of China in the United Nations (UN) was opened on October 25, 2021 local time at the UN headquarters in New York. The photo shows Ambassador Zhang Jun (left), China's permanent representative to the UN, and his Pakistani counterpart Munir Akram at the exhibition. The Paper

Plenary Session determined that “we will always remember the glories and hardships of yesterday, rise to the mission of today, and live up to the great dream of tomorrow.” “We will learn from history, work hard, forge ahead for a better future, and make tireless efforts to realize the Second Centenary Goal and the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation,” stated the resolution.

This analysis indicates that China should shoulder the responsibility to foster broad dialogue among civilizations and make it composite by encompassing all aspects of the civilizational evolution including exchange of development paths, governance patterns, cultural moorings, and historical experience free of bias. Convergence of different civilizational perspectives should be encouraged to resist all forms of unilateralism and hegemony. China must be fully supportive

of the UN's “Our Common Agenda” which states that “we are at an inflection point in history” and that humanity faces a stark and urgent choice: breakdown or breakthrough. The factors and actors holding back this common agenda must be clearly identified so that the vision of “global cooperation through an inclusive, networked, and effective multilateralism” can be realized.

In essence, China has acquired domestic strength through policy coherence and institutional capacity, and is now consolidating its position in all aspects. China must intensify its efforts to unify different streams of dialogue among civilizations while keeping the common vision in mind. ■

The author is former director and emeritus fellow of the South Asia Studies Centre at the University of Rajasthan in Jaipur, India.

Milestone of the Century: The Sixth Plenum

By Anil Kumar

The world has been increasingly looking to China and its consistent leadership under the CPC as it has withstood the test of time.

The Sixth Plenary Session of the 19th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) was held in Beijing from November 8 to 11. The highlight of this plenum was a landmark resolution on the major achievements and historical experience of the CPC's 100 years of endeavors, according to a communiqué released on November 11. President Xi Jinping, also general secretary of the CPC Central Committee, delivered an important speech at the session attended by 197 members and 151 alternate members of the Party Central Committee. The session discussed a work report delivered by Xi on behalf of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee. The session also reviewed

and passed a resolution on convening the 20th National Congress of the CPC in the second half of 2022.

PLENUMS AND LANDMARK CHANGES

This year's four-day meeting laid the groundwork for the 20th National Party Congress to be held later in 2022 that is expected to approve a new leadership lineup for China. Plenums of the CPC Central Committee create opportunities for China's top political leaders to gather and brainstorm directions for the country's future. Such meetings have produced some of the greatest landmark changes in the history of the People's Republic of China.

Understanding the key importance of the plenums requires taking a close look at

the history of the Party. The Third Plenary Session of the 11th CPC Central Committee in 1978 triggered the historic policy of reform and opening up. The subsequent 40-plus years of economic growth enshrined the policy as a vital step shaping contemporary China. The Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee in 2013 produced a transformative vision for China and paved the road to the Chinese Dream. The Fourth Plenary Session of the 19th CPC Central Committee in 2019 reviewed and adopted a decision on some major issues about upholding and improving the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics and advancing modernization of China's system and capacity for governance.

The Sixth Plenary Session

of the 19th CPC Central Committee in 2021 is the newest member in this list thanks to the landmark resolution on the history of the Party. The plenum has affirmed to uphold Comrade Xi Jinping's core position on the Central Committee and in the Party as a whole, and uphold the Central Committee's authority and its centralized, unified leadership. During the plenum, the Political Bureau also discussed holding high the great banner of socialism with Chinese characteristics, following the guidance of Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, the Theory of Three Represents, the Scientific Outlook on Development, and Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, and fully implemented the guiding principles of the 19th National Party Congress and the previous plenary sessions of the 19th CPC Central Committee.

HISTORIC TRIO

Observers have posited that the "Resolution on the Major Achievements and Historical Experience of the Party over the Past Century" represents one of the three most historic resolutions across the 100-year history of the Party: The first in 1945 precluded victory in the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression, and the second in 1981 accelerated the reform and opening-up drive. The previous two resolutions served as stepping



May 20, 2019: Two women filter rose petals with sieves in natural wind, in Hotan, northwestern China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. Planting roses in deserts has generated considerable revenues for local people while helping sand fixation. by Liu Xiaotong

stones to advance the core positions of Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping, respectively, in the Party.

The third resolution is a similarly historic document that will truly herald a new era of Chinese history. The document stressed the significance of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era in advancing the cause of the Party and the country and summarized it as the Marxism of contemporary China and of the 21st century.

The document called on the Party, the military and Chinese people to unite more closely around the Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core, fully implement Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, and champion the great founding spirit of the Party. Late CPC leader Deng Xiaoping

once declared that one cannot rely on leadership without a core. The Party has over 95 million members. China has 56 ethnic groups and a population of 1.4 billion. Only when the Central Committee and the whole Party have a core can the Party gain strength.

During the plenum, the Central Committee unanimously agreed that the external environment has grown increasingly complex and grave over the past year. The world has been increasingly looking to China and its consistent leadership under the CPC as it has withstood the test of time. 📌

The author is a freelance columnist. He received a PhD in Sino-Indian relations from Delhi University and worked as an associate research fellow at the School of International Relations of Sun Yat-sen University from 2018 to 2019.

New Journey Ahead

By Rama Chandran

Reflecting on historical experience sheds light on the Party's values that transcend time.

The much-awaited Sixth Plenary Session of the 19th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) came amid a flurry of international diplomatic activities. Beijing and Washington announced a surprising climate pact at the COP26 summit. Chinese President Xi Jinping warned against a “relapse into the confrontation and division of the Cold War era” in the Asia-Pacific region during a speech on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit. The plenum has attracted worldwide attention as a key venue for the Party to formulate direction for key policies.

GLORIOUS JOURNEY OVER THE PAST CENTURY

The Party has had a glorious journey over the past 100 years. The major tasks of the Party in the

period of the new-democratic revolution were to oppose imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucrat-capitalism, seek national independence and the people's liberation, and create the fundamental social conditions for realizing national rejuvenation. In this period, Chinese communists, with Mao Zedong as their chief representative, put forward a series of important theories for socialist construction. The Third Plenary Session of its 11th Central Committee, the CPC, with Deng Xiaoping at the core, made the historic decision to shift the focus of the Party and the country's work to economic development with the launch of the reform and opening-up drive. After the Fourth Plenary Session of the 13th CPC Central Committee, Chinese communists, with Jiang Zemin as their chief representative, formed the Theory of Three Represents.

After the 16th National Party Congress, with Hu Jintao at the helm, China achieved historic transformations from a highly centralized planned economy into a socialist market economy brimming with vitality, and from extensive isolation to openness to the outside world across the board. It achieved a historic leap from a country with relatively backward productive forces to the world's second-largest economy.

Following the Party's 18th National Congress, Xi Jinping, general secretary of the CPC Central Committee, has set forth a series of original ideas, thoughts, and strategies on national governance. China's economic development has become much more balanced and sustainable. China's economic strength, scientific and technological clout, and composite national strength have reached new

heights. Speakers at the session repeatedly stated that the major tasks of the Party during the new period of reform, opening up, and socialist modernization would continue.

The historical significance of the Party's endeavors over the past century was highlighted at the session: They have fundamentally transformed the future of the Chinese people, opened up the right path for achieving rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, demonstrated the strong vitality of Marxism, produced a profound influence on the course of world history, and made the Party a forerunner of the times.

Over the past century, the Party has accumulated valuable historical experience across 10 aspects: upholding the Party's leadership, putting the people first, advancing theoretical innovation, staying independent, following the Chinese path, maintaining a global vision, breaking new ground, standing up for ourselves, promoting the united front, and remaining committed to self-reform. Reflecting on this experience sheds light on the Party's values that transcend time.

BROADER WORLD AHEAD

A historic document titled "Resolution on the Major Achievements and Historical Experience of the Party over the Past Century" was unveiled at the plenum. The resolution is highly significant



July 1, 2021: Baihetan hydropower station, which contributes to China's green development and carbon-neutrality goals, is in operation in southwestern China. Baihetan hydropower station is located on the Jinsha River and straddles the provinces of Yunnan and Sichuan. by Jiang Wenyao/Xinhua

because only two of that magnitude had ever happened before: "Resolution on Certain Issues in the History of the CPC" led by Mao Zedong in 1945, and "Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of the CPC since the Founding of the People's Republic of China" led by Deng Xiaoping in 1981.

According to Wang Xiaohui, executive deputy head of the Publicity Department of the CPC Central Committee, crucial issues in the Party's history were essentially solved by the first two historic resolutions. The new resolution focuses on summarizing the major achievements and historical experience of the CPC's 100 years of endeavors to address present reality, which is conducive to promoting the wisdom, unity, confidence, and motivation necessary to

embark on a new journey to fully build a great modern socialist country.

The sixth plenum again emphasized Xi Jinping's core position in the Party. The new generation of Chinese leadership with Xi at the core has been highlighted by a relentless anti-corruption campaign, a massive targeted poverty alleviation campaign, and the Belt and Road Initiative, among many other projects and policies. Vijay Nambiar, former Indian Ambassador to China, wrote for an Indian newspaper during the plenum that "China will instead spread its wings to the wider world." 

The author is a reputed Indian writer, editor, columnist, and scholar.

United in Post-COVID-19 Economic Recovery

By He An

In 2022, efforts to increase vaccination rates, accommodate fiscal stimulus and monetary policy, and improve external demand will help boost private consumption and fixed investment.

China's economy has braved big storms and survived major undercurrents in 2021. The Central Economic Work Conference held in December 2021 set the main tone for the 2022 economic work as "maintaining stability while pursuing progress," which contributed to stabilizing industrial growth expectations and boosting market confidence.

Externally, the global economy has pulled off a strong recovery from last year's deep recession caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The expanding coverage of vaccination worldwide, more effective and smarter measures to contain the outbreaks, and continued fiscal support and monetary accommodation have all contributed to the recovery. Despite the fact

that the world maintained a positive economic growth as a whole, the pace of recovery of different countries varied widely. Many countries have seen inflation on the rise, and trade tensions between major economies have also clouded the global economy. Addressing all these challenges requires continued and closer international cooperation.

GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGES

The pandemic will leave lasting scars on social and human development worldwide. It has stalled progress in poverty reduction and increased income inequality because low-income households are more vulnerable to health shocks. It has also led to reduced

spending on education, erosion of human capital resulting from increased unemployment rates, and delayed investment in greening the economy in many countries. All these will significantly slow global progress towards meeting the Sustainable Development Goals and make implementation of the Paris Agreement more challenging.

The International Finance Forum (IFF) is a long-standing, high-level platform for dialogue and communication established by financial leaders from more than 20 countries, regions, and international organizations including China, the United States, the European Union, and the United Nations. According to the Global Finance and Development Report (GFAD) issued at the 18th IFF Annual Meeting, the global economy was forecast

to grow 5.9 percent in 2021 and 4.7 percent in 2022. The strong recovery has caused prices to rise in many countries. Global consumer price inflation was projected to reach 4.5 percent in 2021 and level off to a more moderate 3.8 percent in 2022 as demand-supply gaps narrow.

The forum warned of downside risks to the economic outlook. Slower-than-expected vaccine rollout, especially in the developing world, and more virus mutations could lead to resurgences of outbreaks worldwide, causing governments to re-impose strict containment measures and slowing the pace of recovery. Higher and more persistent inflation could prompt abrupt adjustments in the direction of monetary policy in developed countries, leading to large asset price fluctuations and macroeconomic instability and, in many developing countries, capital outflows and currency market volatility, disrupting the recovery process. Last but not the least, geopolitical tensions, including friction between the United States and China over trade, technology, and on other fronts, continue to be a concern with negative implications for global recovery.

The GFAD pointed out that China remained the largest contributor to global growth at 26.3 percent in 2021, followed by the United States at 16.7 percent and India at 11 percent. India's total fiscal support in 2020 amounted to US\$215 billion or 8.2 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP). The Indian central



December 4, 2021: The International Finance Forum 2021 Annual Meeting is held in Nansha, Guangzhou City. Herman Van Rompuy, former president of the European Council, delivers a speech at the forum via video link. Visual People

government budget for FY2021-22 expanded spending on health and well-being, including a provision for the COVID-19 vaccination program (350 billion rupees). The fiscal deficit in FY2021-22 is estimated to be 6.8 percent of GDP, compared with an estimated 9.5 percent of GDP in FY2020-21. The central government of India also extended a scheme for providing interest-free loans (150 billion rupees) to states for capital expenditure in FY2021-22 and expedited the release of disaster response funds to state governments.

The Indian economy was projected to grow by 9 percent in 2021 and by 7.6 percent in 2022. The economy grew by 9.3 percent year-on-year in the first half of 2021, driven by a low base effect and a strong rebound in industrial

production, despite the heavy hit of the pandemic. Growth momentum likely softened somewhat in the second half as the base effect faded and uncertainty increased due to resurgence of infection cases in much of the world. Fortunately, recent upticks in both manufacturing and services composite Purchase Management Index (PMI) signaled that recovery is on track.

In 2022, efforts to increase vaccination rates (which remained as low as 25 percent in India as of early November 2021), accommodate fiscal stimulus and monetary policy, and improve external demand will help boost private consumption and fixed investment.

The IFF and the Central University of Finance and Economics in China jointly developed the Global Green



October 21, 2021: The Red Fort in New Delhi is lit up in the colors of India's national flag to mark that more than 1 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been administered across the South Asian country. The Paper

Finance Development Index (GGFDI), a quantitative measure of progress and performance in developing green finance at the country level with focus on three areas: policy and strategy, product and market, and international cooperation. The GGFDI showed that India, with an obvious advantage in promoting green finance, ranked seventh in product and market and fifth in international cooperation, but below the median in policy and strategy.

COOPERATION TO PROMOTE GLOBAL ECONOMIC RECOVERY

In recent years, China-India relations have encountered obstacles unseen for decades and remain at a low ebb. Two ancient Eastern civilizations and the largest developing countries and emerging economies, China and India should strengthen

cooperation, jointly fight the pandemic, seek common development, promote economic recovery, maintain Asian unity, and uphold world peace and development.

In 1988, while meeting then Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, Deng Xiaoping, chief architect of China's reform and opening up, said that a real Asia-Pacific century or an Asian century would come only when China, India, and other neighboring countries developed. Multilateral frameworks including BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization have helped foster close China-India ties, and the two countries share similar positions on climate change. The common interests far outweigh the differences between the two countries, and China's development will create opportunities rather than threats to India. As Chinese Ambassador to India Sun Weidong said, China-India

relations are comprehensive and multi-dimensional and cannot be defined by a single issue. It is obviously a bad strategic judgment to deem China as a "major threat" or "strategic adversary" to India because such an opinion is inconsistent with fact and not constructive. China-India relations should be viewed from a long-term perspective rather than short-sighted, with a broad vision rather than a narrow mind, and with cooperative thinking rather than the zero-sum mentality.

To foster an atmosphere of mutual trust, officials, think tanks and media in the two countries should send out more rational and constructive messages. They should strengthen communication and coordination on multi-lateral issues and respond to global challenges such as the pandemic, disaster prevention, poverty eradication, energy security, and climate change together to safeguard the common interests of developing countries. The two countries should meet halfway to move the border situation towards stability and shift it from urgent dispute settlement to regular management and control as part of joint efforts to safeguard peace and tranquility in the border areas. When differences emerge in other areas, the two countries should seek solutions acceptable to both sides through communication. 📱

The author is a senior official at the IFF. He also served as the First Secretary at the Chinese Embassy in India.

High-level Opening Up for China-India Economic Cooperation

By Ning Shengnan

With the introduction and promotion of high-level opening up, the China-India economic and trade cooperation is expected to usher in a new era of development.

The 2021 Central Economic Work Conference was held from December 8 to 10 in Beijing. The meeting proposed “high-level opening up” as a major policy measure for China’s foreign economic activities. It announced that China would deepen institutional opening up and promote larger-scale and higher-quality international economic exchange. With the introduction and promotion of high-level opening up, the China-India

economic and trade cooperation is expected to usher in a new era of development.

CHINA CONTINUES TO PROMOTE HIGH-LEVEL OPENING UP

The Central Economic Work Conference is the highest-level annual economic meeting held by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the State Council of China. This meeting is a major institutional arrangement for the CPC to govern the country

and an important window for the world to understand China’s economic policies.

In terms of further opening up, the 2021 Central Economic Work Conference announced that China would uphold multilateralism and align with international economic and trade rules. China will promote higher-level opening up, strengthen institutional and structural arrangements, and ensure national treatment of foreign-funded enterprises with the aim to attract more investments from



December 1, 2021: Unmanned trucks are unloading at the bustling Rizhao Port, eastern China's Shandong Province. Automation technology brings profound changes to the operation and management of Chinese ports. IC

multinational companies and accelerate implementation of major foreign-funded projects. Multiple measures will stabilize foreign trade to ensure the stability of industrial and supply chains and attract more foreign investment. Essentially, China will implement higher-level opening up to drive its reform to a deeper level and promote stable, long-term, and high-quality economic development.

What does “high-level opening up” mean exactly? What does it include? The Central Economic Work Conference has shown that high-level opening up should be understood from two aspects.

The first is the institutional arrangement level. China will promote higher-level opening up through strengthening institutional arrangements,

create a better domestic market environment, and align with international economic and trade rules. “We will promote institutional opening up that covers rules, regulations, management and standards, and step up protection of intellectual property rights,” said Chinese President Xi Jinping in his remarks at the 16th G20 Leaders’ Summit in October 2021. “We will continue to foster a business environment based on market principles, governed by law, and on par with international standards and ensure a fair and equitable market order for both domestic and foreign companies.” Experts predict that institutional opening up will promote trade and investment liberalization and facilitation and help China’s economic

policies become more fair, transparent, and predictable.

The second is the real economy level. China will optimize the advantages of its massive market and huge domestic demand, strengthen the lead role of domestic demand in promoting high-level opening up, expand imports, accelerate opening of the service market, and strengthen institutional arrangements for free and convenient trade in services to realize larger-scale and higher-quality cross-border flow of goods, services, and production factors.

NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHINA-INDIA COOPERATION

As China enters a new stage of development and pursues higher-level opening up, the room for China-India economic and trade cooperation is expected to expand. The economies of China and India are highly complementary to each other. Despite tensions between the two sides in 2021 and supply chain disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, bilateral trade volume between China and India continued to rise and exceeded US\$114.2 billion in the first 11 months of 2021. Despite various adverse conditions, bilateral trade volume surpassed the US\$100 billion mark, a milestone event in China-India economic and trade relations.

China and India need each other’s products, which is the most solid foundation for the bilateral economic and

trade cooperation. China needs India's minerals, chemical products, textiles, and raw materials. When China reopened its economy in the second half of 2020 after the outbreak of coronavirus, the country's demand for raw materials from India such as iron ore and cotton increased. China's imports of engineering products from India have increased significantly as well. By November 2021, the volume of engineering products exported to China from India had doubled. China has also continued to tap the potential of its domestic demand and increase imports from India. In the first 11 months of 2021, China's import volume from India grew 38.5 percent year-on-year to more than US\$26.3 billion, evidencing the strong demand for Indian products in the Chinese market. Conversely, China's exports of manufactured goods to India such as mechanical and electric products as well as chemical products are affordable and high-quality. The supply is always stable. These products can effectively reduce costs for Indian manufacturers and consumers, guarantee India's domestic production, and stabilize prices in India.

China seeks to further open its service sector. The Central Economic Work Conference declared that China would accelerate opening up of the service sector and strengthen institutional arrangements to facilitate free trade in services. In July 2021, China released a negative list for



November 20, 2021: The 40th India International Trade Fair is held in New Delhi, India. The achievements of China-India economic cooperation and trade are hard-won and serve the common interests of the two peoples. VCG

cross-border trade in services in its southern island province of Hainan, the first negative list for services trade in the country. In President Xi's September 2021 remarks at the Global Trade in Services Summit of the 2021 China International Fair for Trade in Services, he mentioned that China would open up at a higher level by implementing a negative list for cross-border services trade and exploring development of national demonstration zones for the innovative development of trade in services.

So far, China has designated 12 key service industries such as technology and finance for further opening up. The country earnestly welcomes foreign capital. India has long maintained strengths in computers, information

technology, and business services. China and India can carry out cooperation in emerging technologies such as digitalization, artificial intelligence, Internet of Things, and analytical services.

Alongside bilateral economic and trade cooperation, plenty of room exists for China-India cooperation under multilateral frameworks in the international arena. Great uncertainty about economic recovery continues to plague the world. As the world's two largest developing countries and emerging economies, China and India share extensive common interests in terms of promoting economic recovery and maintaining economic stability. For example, global crude oil prices continued to rise in the second half of 2021



November 28, 2021: The iron ore loading and unloading operation site at a port in Rizhao City, Shandong Province. When China reopened its economy in the second half of 2020 after the COVID-19 outbreak, the country's demand for raw materials from India such as iron ore and cotton increased. IC

alongside bulk commodity prices and production costs, which together resulted in rising consumer prices. This increased the burden on people of both countries and threatened the recovery of the macro economy. Thus, China's 2021 Central Economic Work Conference set primary objectives of maintaining stability of the macro economy. India's economic recovery has been fragile, and the public is very sensitive to inflation, which requires the government to take more action. As two big consumers of bulk commodities such as crude oil, natural gas, and metals, China and India can strengthen communication and coordination in the field of bulk commodity

trade and work together to maintain the stability of the international market.

In terms of international mechanisms, developed countries have attempted to change existing multilateral rules and reduce special and differential treatment for developing countries in recent years. In face of this situation, China and India should strengthen communication on issues such as climate change and reform of the international trade system, promote multilateral mechanisms such as BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and jointly safeguard the rights and interests of developing countries.

COOPERATION IS THE WAY

Economic cooperation is the field of China-India relations with the largest coverage and strongest momentum. Economic and trade exchange between the two countries influences the production and operation of a great number of companies and exerts a huge impact on the work and lives of both peoples. Over the past few years, bilateral economic cooperation seems to have been downgraded by some politicians and media to a tangential topic behind border disputes and geopolitics. Some so-called Indian strategists have worked hard to reduce China-India economic and trade

exchange and drive Chinese investment out of India in the name of self-reliance. These people don't seem to realize that economic and trade exchange and investment are conscious choices by people of both countries and an inevitable result of market rules, business choices, and people's needs. Such exchange is not easily hindered by political friction.

Indian Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla has commented on China-India economic relations. He said that China, as the second-largest economy in the world, has a very important trade relationship with India. India must strive to develop India-China economic relations. Furthermore, as the two biggest emerging economies

people-to-people and cultural communication because of some certain issues.

India often complains about the trade deficit with China. However, trade status is the result of economic laws, and China has never deliberately pursued a trade surplus with India. Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, India has made moves not conducive to bilateral economic and trade relations such as raising tariffs on imports from China, banning apps with a Chinese background, and shutting the door on Chinese investment. China never took tit-for-tat actions but instead maintained an open and friendly attitude and continued to expand imports from India. It granted more certificates to Indian rice

common prosperity.

China and India are large developing countries, each with a population of more than one billion. The two countries need to explore their own development paths to optimally develop their economies and improve the people's livelihood. In recent years, China and India have introduced economic policies of "domestic market as the mainstay" and "self-reliant India," respectively. Both embody their development goals. "Domestic market as the mainstay" doesn't mean self-seclusion, and "self-reliant India" is not about shutting doors to the outside world.

On the contrary, China proposed high-level opening up and aimed to create a new development paradigm in which domestic and foreign markets boost each other. Indian leaders have also reiterated that self-reliance doesn't mean returning to a closed country and that India welcomes foreign investment. Considerable room for economic and trade cooperation between the two sides remains. Many hope that India can get past geopolitical games. The two countries should promote economic and trade ties as well as bilateral investment and do more in the interests of the two peoples. ■

As China enters a new stage of development and pursues higher-level opening up, the room for China-India economic and trade cooperation is expected to expand. The economies of China and India are highly complementary to each other.

and most populous developing countries in the world, the relationship between the two neighbors should stand on a broad base and have multiple aspects. It would be unwise and unrealistic to make any specific issue a prerequisite for development of China-India ties. It is wrong to reduce bilateral economic and trade exchange and

suppliers seeking to export to China, provided wider market access to Indian pharmaceutical companies, and permitted Dr. Reddy's Laboratories Ltd., a renowned Indian pharmaceutical company, to bring its cancer drugs to the Chinese market. China hopes to work with India to solve problems through mutually beneficial cooperation and achieve

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Digitalization Driving Global Services Trade

By Rajesh Purohit

Leapfrogging digital growth in China has become a key driving force for high-quality development. China's endeavors will also, on a global scale, boost post-pandemic economic recovery.

Global business and industry leaders gathered in Beijing in September for the 2021 China International Fair for Trade in Services (CIFTIS).

The CIFTIS is a major exhibition platform for China's opening up alongside the Canton Fair and the China International Import Expo. It provides a first-class platform for international exhibitors to exchange ideas, dock business, and share business opportunities to achieve common development.

Trade in services is the most dynamic piece of contemporary global trade and a key new source of potential economic growth. Currently, services trade accounts for

nearly 20 percent of world trade, and even represents nearly half of global trade when considered on a value-added basis.

A total of 4,357 enterprises registered for virtual exhibitions at the CIFTIS in 2021, a 40-percent increase over last year. A record number of international organizations and countries have participated in the CIFTIS, with Germany, Serbia, the Philippines, Vietnam, and Cambodia appearing for the first time. The fair's digital platform allowed exhibitors to showcase products, hold online meetings, and ink deals without face-to-face meetings.

As the world economy seeks to avoid a possible depression,

the CIFTIS, with the theme "Towards Digital Future and Service-Driven Development," further demonstrated China's resolution to open wider and displayed the country's higher-level opening up aimed at achieving common development with other countries in the world.

"Digitization" of the global economy emerged as a buzzword at the 2021 CIFTIS. Digital services, one of the main focuses of the six-day fair, are set to expand cooperation through the creation of abundant opportunities.

Digital services have become a new engine of global trade. The 2020 World Trade Report published by the World Trade Organization showed that about 115 countries

have unveiled policies to promote digital production and innovation from different perspectives.

Digital industrialization is developing steadily in China. Reports show that in 2019, the penetration rate of the digital economy in the service industry, industrial engineering, and agricultural industry reached 37.8 percent, 19.5 percent, and 8.2 percent, respectively, and the value added of digital industrialization in China reached 7.1 trillion yuan (US\$1.09 trillion), a year-on-year increase of 11.1 percent.

The proportion of digitalization in software and internet industries continues to grow and data integration is becoming key to promoting industrial digitalization. The thematic

scale, boost post-pandemic economic recovery that is seeing some positive signs.

Developing the digital economy has become a clear priority in Chinese society. Accelerating digital development and building a “digital China” are official objectives in the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-2025) and Long-Range Objectives Through the Year 2035.

Trade in services has made a leap due to China’s push for high-level opening up and comprehensive innovation. The country’s imports and exports of services totaled 2.37 trillion yuan (US\$365.4 billion) in the first half of this year, up 6.7 percent year-on-year.

In 2020, China’s digitally deliverable trade in services

Digital services are gradually shifting from an alternative to a necessity as traditional segments of the services sector such as tourism and transportation continue to navigate decimation due to the COVID-19 pandemic. With services trade being a pillar of China’s vibrant economic activities, China’s economic resilience will provide promising prospects for international cooperation amid the pandemic.

The story “towards a digital future and service-driven development” showcases China’s continuous practice of opening up. China is constantly deepening cooperation on services trade investment with other countries and regions to promote trade liberalization and investment facilitation. The CIFTIS is the world’s largest comprehensive exhibition regarding services trade and an important window for China’s service industry.

Thanks in large part to the 2021 CIFTIS, the world is expecting more consensus and practical methods to safeguard the multilateral trading system and promote global trade development. Many agree that China’s further opening up will powerfully drive construction of an open global economy and benefit people all over the world. 📌

The story “towards a digital future and service-driven development” showcases China’s continuous practice of opening up. China is constantly deepening cooperation on services trade investment with other countries and regions to promote trade liberalization and investment facilitation.

exhibition of financial services at the 2021 CIFTIS was highlighted by digital RMB application scenarios, a major step forward in the broader deployment of digital currency.

Leapfrogging digital growth in China in recent years has become a key driving force for the high-quality development the country pursues. China’s endeavors will also, on a global

rose by 8.4 percent year-on-year and accounted for 44.5 percent of the total services trade, according to official data. While livestreaming, e-commerce, unmanned logistics and other forms of digital services are booming, China has also been strengthening its regulation of the digital industry to ensure fertile soil for high-quality development.

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The author is a Guangzhou-based Indian businessman and CEO of Care International Limited, a lighting manufacturing company. He has lived in China for seven years.

CIFTIS and China's Determination to Further Opening Up

By Sophia Chatterjee

Trade fairs such as the CIFTIS provide great opportunities to catch a glimpse of the world's digital future alongside China's fast-growing service industry.

All eyes are on the China International Fair for Trade in Services (CIFTIS) thanks to its potential impact on a rebound of services trade and the recovery of the world economy. Themed "Towards a Digital Future and Service-Driven Development," the CIFTIS 2021 introduced a special section for digital services featuring participation from more than 30

well-known enterprises and institutions.

In a video address to the opening ceremony of the event, Chinese President Xi Jinping unveiled a slew of measures to facilitate greater trade in services as part of China's latest efforts to share its development opportunities and boost global economic recovery. According to President Xi, China is working to create more possibilities

for cooperation by increasing support for the growth of the services sector in Belt and Road partner countries and by sharing its technological achievements with the rest of the world. He also noted that China would continue to support innovation-driven development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

In recent years, China has been accelerating the pace

of deepening the reform and opening up of the service sector. The recently announced Beijing Stock Exchange is expected to help deepen financial supply-side structural reform and improve capital market systems. The new stock exchange will hopefully become the primary platform serving innovation-oriented SMEs and a link to the multi-level capital market.

Deemed as the most active sector of international trade, services have broad development prospects and are poised to exert a far-reaching influence on the global economy as it undergoes a new round of major development and changes. China will ease market access for service industries and actively expand imports of high-quality services. It's



“Kaiwu,” a new industrial internet platform developed by Baidu AI Cloud, is presented at the China International Fair for Trade in Services, which was held in Beijing from September 2 to 7, 2021. by Qin Bin/China Pictorial

China will ease market access for service industries and actively expand imports of high-quality services.

no exaggeration to say that China is growing faster in the service sector than any other country.

As the first major economy worldwide to recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, China is ideal for business, especially the service industry which represents the future of the world economy. Trade fairs such as the CIFTIS provide great opportunities to get a sense of the world's digital

future alongside China's fast-growing service industry.

A new round of technological revolution and industrial transformation has boosted digital technologies and accelerated integration of various industries, driving the service economy to flourish. Trade in services has become a new engine of the world economy. The service economy, supported by new infrastructure and represented by online services, is

becoming the most dynamic part of economic growth.

As a massive exhibition and platform dedicated to trade in services, the CIFTIS is playing a critical role in boosting global trade after it was disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The event shines light on China's confidence and determination to unswervingly continue its opening up and contributing to the global economy through international cooperation. 📸

The author is a professor at Delhi University in India.

Navigating Headwinds

By Hu Juan

When relations between China and India tense up, even more courage and patience is required to promote their economic ties.

From December 8 to 10, 2021, China's annual Central Economic Work Conference was held in Beijing. The conference served as an indicator for China's current economic situation and set the tone for the country's macroeconomic policy in 2022. Drawing on the experience and achievements of economic work in the past year and laying out the roadmap for the coming year, this annual conference has become an important governance institution of China.

The 2021 Central Economic Work Conference called for efforts to "uphold multilateralism, align with the high standards of international economic and trade rules, deepen reform, and promote high-quality development through high-standard

opening up." The conference also stressed the importance of "attracting more international investment and promoting the implementation of major foreign investment projects." "China will continue to achieve development through further opening up while injecting new vitality into the world economy," it said. These statements evidence China's determination to uphold multilateralism and promote continued high-level opening up.

China-India economic and trade cooperation produces mutual benefits and win-win results. Although uncertainty exists in current China-India relations, both sides need to view future development of bilateral ties from a dialectical and long-term perspective. The more difficult and complicated the current situation is, the more crucial

abandoning prejudice and the zero-sum game mentality becomes. As the two largest developing countries in the world, China and India have massive room for economic cooperation. The 2021 Central Economic Work Conference kindled public attention on the hopes, prospects, and strengths of China-India economic and trade relations in 2022.

INHERENT ADVANTAGES OF CHINA-INDIA ECONOMIC AND TRADE RELATIONS

The situation that the two economies are strongly complementary remains unchanged. China and India are drastically different in terms of resource endowment, development path, and economic structure. Their differences in development

patterns and levels make the two economies strongly complementary. When political factors negatively affect bilateral economic ties, it doesn't change such complementarities. Even when bilateral relations are not good, economic exchange between the two countries remains frequent and productive.

After the border clashes between China and India in June 2020, bilateral relations plunged to a low ebb. However, the 2020 trade volume between the two countries reached around US\$77.7 billion. Although the figure was lower than the US\$85.5 billion in 2019, China still replaced the United States as India's largest trading partner. In 2021, bilateral trade reached a record high, which was quite unexpected. From January to October, bilateral trade volume exceeded US\$100 billion, a significant year-on-year increase of 47.8 percent. Although the Indian government has looked to build its own industrial and supply chains that largely decouple from China, it still depends highly on Chinese products. For a long time to come, Chinese companies and products will still have opportunities and room for development in India.

Both China and India uphold multilateralism and support a multi-polar world. From the meeting between Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Indian External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam



December 24, 2021: A night view of a busy street in Kolkata, India. Although the COVID-19 pandemic has an adverse and severe impact on India, international institutions are generally optimistic about its economic prospects. IC

Jaishankar in 2021 to the joint declaration by China, Russia, and India in November 2021, India's stance and support for multilateralism and world multi-polarization has been clear and consistent. Consensus between China and India on changing the world's current and future political and economic landscape demonstrates that the two countries share broad interests on many global issues. The trend has also been an optimistic sign for China-India relations. China and India could leverage cooperation mechanisms and platforms such as the BRICS, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and the G20 to carry out dialogue and communication. Doing so would bring China-India

relations back to a normal track and create a more relaxed and favorable political environment to facilitate economic exchange.

Collaboration in biopharmaceuticals is expected to be a breakthrough for China-India industrial cooperation. While India has sought to decouple with China in manufacturing, it has continued to seek access to the Chinese market for its advantageous industries such as information technology and pharmaceuticals. India is the world's largest producer and exporter of generic drugs. Thanks to the country's loose legal and policy environment concerning generic drugs, the industry has witnessed rapid development in India. The rise of generic drugs has boosted the development of the entire Indian



November 9, 2021: A robotic arm learns the physical movement trajectory of a tea master through the green line on the screen at the 4th China International Import Expo held in Shanghai. by Xu Xun/China Pictorial

pharmaceutical industry. With highly internationalized operation, scientific management system, good product quality and strong R&D ability for new drugs, the Indian pharmaceutical industry occupies an important position in the global market. China is a big consumer of generic drugs but not a powerhouse producer. Cooperation with India in the field of generic drugs would help China learn from India's strengths and experiences. India would get greater market access, increased commodity exports, and a reduction in its trade deficit with China. The situation is complementary in this field.

More than 70 percent of India's Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs) come from China. Despite the adverse impact of the COVID-19

pandemic and the Indian government's restrictions on Chinese products, India's imports of APIs from China didn't decrease significantly from 2020 to 2021. Relevant Chinese government departments, the Chinese embassy and consulates in India, industrial parks, commerce and trade associations, intermediary agents, and pharmaceutical companies should organize investment promotion meetings and policy seminars to attract more Indian pharmaceutical companies to invest in China.

BROAD PROSPECTS FOR COOPERATION

The 2021 Central Economic Work Conference noted the necessity of enhancing the core competitiveness of the manufacturing industry,

launching reengineering projects, and promoting the development of specialized, high-quality, and innovative enterprises. It would be unrealistic for Beijing and New Delhi to decouple from each other. Chinese products are upgrading from "Made in China" to "Created in China." As the country increases support for independent innovation as well as technology research and development, Chinese products from industries including electronics, automobiles, communications, and machinery manufacturing cannot be easily replaced. They are gradually moving up the international industrial chain and value chain.

China should closely listen to the words and watch the actions of those advocating decoupling India from China, but most importantly, look at the data. At least in the short term, it would be impossible for India to decouple from China economically. Bilateral trade volume rebounded in 2021 from low levels, against adverse and severe impact from various factors. In fact, before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, India's economy had already slid into a downward path and was suffering from many problems such as shrinking demand and a worsening balance sheet. Facing great downward pressure, India's boycott of Chinese goods and restrictions on Chinese investments let many vent their frustration through nationalism. However, Indian political parties, enterprises,

and individuals eventually need to face the reality: The economies of both countries are highly complementary. China-India economic and trade cooperation is mutually beneficial and produces win-win results. China's investment and technologies have contributed greatly to the development of India. India has emerged as the biggest beneficiary and borrower of the China-initiated AIIB.

At present, China and India still don't engage much in financial cooperation, but in the long run, bilateral financial cooperation will become a tremendously significant trend. In general, financial cooperation reduces the costs of bilateral trade and investment, enhances the transparency of asset prices, and strengthens financial policy coordination. China-India financial cooperation will promote integration of Asian financial markets and exert a major impact on the future world economic landscape. Establishment and operation of the AIIB, the New Development Bank, and the Silk Road Fund have provided promising platforms for China-India financial cooperation under multilateral frameworks. Such platforms will promote collaboration between financial institutions from both countries, facilitate capital flow and trade exchange, and expand the scale of local currency settlement and loan servicing, which will improve both countries' ability to resist risk.

MORE COURAGE AND PATIENCE TO PROMOTE COOPERATION

We should be optimistic yet not over-confident about China-India economic cooperation. India's nationalist sentiment is still on the rise, and Hindu nationalism is now mainstream. India's economic slowdown has sparked widespread concern. The Indian government, enterprises, and chambers of commerce have moved towards implementing protectionist trade policies. The "boycott China" mentality still exists. Whenever China-India relations fluctuate, India usually introduces discriminatory business policies against China. At this point, China should argue with reason and protect the interests of overseas Chinese enterprises. Indian laws and regulations are often amended, and the differences between the various investment environments in Indian states are vast. Chinese companies investing in India must strengthen research on the Indian market and work better to avoid legal risks.

The Sixth Plenary Session of the 19th CPC Central Committee declared that it is essential for China to follow the tide of economic globalization, leverage the strengths of its massive market, and pursue a more proactive opening-up strategy if the country's development is to gain the upper hand, seize the initiative, and ensure a solid future. China also needs to be more proactive on China-India economic cooperation. When relations between the

two countries tense up, even more courage and patience is required to promote bilateral economic ties.

Facing profound changes unseen in a century, China and India have similar missions. Both countries seek to develop the domestic economy, achieve economic recovery, and enhance comprehensive national strength. Each country shoulders the responsibility of creating a better life for a one-billion-plus population. This is the core and most fundamental driving force to deepen the trade cooperation between the two countries. If China and India can strengthen strategic consultation and policy coordination while focusing on building a new type of bilateral economic relationship, they can lift bilateral trade to a new level, better promote robust economic development, and provide strong impetus for stability of the world economy. The world has entered a period of new turbulence and transformation. Relentlessly increasing instability and uncertainty continue to foster protectionism and anti-globalization sentiments. Against this backdrop, China and India need to show the dauntless spirit of major countries ready to shoulder responsibility. ■

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Tracing Roots: The Curious Case of Portuguese-Chinese Fishing Nets in India

By Vishnu Karuthodi

Withstanding the currents of time, the Chinese fishing nets of Kochi remain firm as a fossil of an era of decades-long voyages, bustling global commerce, ambitious empires, and circulation of diverse people, knowledge, and objects across the sea.

If you ever visit the coastal city of Kochi in the southern Indian state of Kerala, the thing to see is a rather exceptional fishing mechanism placed near its backwaters. The device is so captivating that tourists flock to see these “shore-operated lift nets” and clamor to see its intriguing operation. For residents, the constantly functioning cantilevered fishing mechanism remains a convenient method to acquire fresh seafood for their kitchens.

Over the years, the large structures with fishing nets have become an icon of Kochi, flaunting its charm everywhere from travel brochures to pop culture. Acclaimed as the Queen of the Arabian Sea, the port city has long captured the imagination of traders and explorers and remains a place of foreign influence and cultural amalgamation.

In the native Malayalam language, people refer to the net as “Cheena Vala,” which means “Chinese (fishing) net.”

The name implies that these fishing nets came to Kochi (previously known as Cochin) from China. However, identifying precisely who was responsible for introducing the technology remains a hot topic for speculation.

Two main arguments prevail regarding the Chinese origin of the fishing nets. Some believe that the nets were introduced during the reign of Kublai Khan of the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368) in the mid-13th century. Others steadfastly point to Zheng He

from the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) in the 15th century.

But which hypothesis does the available data support the most?

THE CHINESE CONNECTION

Since ancient times, present-day Kerala, a state on the Malabar Coast of the Indian Peninsula, has been known for its alluring spice markets that attracted traders from coastal areas ranging from China to eastern Africa. When Kerala rose to prominence as a major destination in the Indian Ocean region, its ports bustled with foreign traders and vessels. China had a long and flourishing relationship with these trade centers centuries ago. Archaeological and textual evidence substantiates maritime trade contact through the reigns of four major dynasties, namely Tang (618-907), Song (960-1279), Yuan, and early Ming.

However, 10th and 11th-century records show no mention of Cochin. Ptolemy, Marco Polo, and Ibn Battuta, who visited India before the 14th century, did not mention the port in their writings. Historians believe that Cochin rose to fame as a major port after the great flooding in the Periyar River in 1341. The newly emerged port of Cochin contrasted older ports of Calicut and Quilon, which evidence shows were engaged in prolonged and flourishing trade with the outside world.

The first half of the 15th century is known for the



Local residents have been using “Chinese fishing nets” to acquire seafood for their kitchens for more than 500 years in the city of Kochi in the southern Indian state of Kerala. VCG

significant influence of China in the Indian Ocean region via the epic treasure fleet voyages (1405-1433) commanded by Zheng He during the Ming Dynasty. The Malabar Coast had considerable importance in all these voyages. In fact, the destination of Zheng’s first three voyages was Calicut, a leading intra-ocean trade center where the Chinese envoys had previously erected a stone tablet and pavilion to commemorate their warm relationship. During the fifth mission in 1417, Zheng was ordered by the Ming court to confer a seal upon the King of Cochin and carry a stone tablet inscribed with a proclamation composed by the

Yongle Emperor. All seven maritime expeditions undertaken by the treasure fleet visited the Malabar Coast, and it is said that during his seventh voyage, Zheng died while resuming his journey from Calicut.

A bit of historical context on the maritime relationship between China and the Malabar Coast is necessary to even begin to address the question of who brought the fishing nets to Cochin.

Although many travelers have documented Cochin in centuries between the Yuan Dynasty and Zhang He’s voyages, none mentioned seeing peculiar or captivating fishing nets in Cochin or anywhere else during their travels.

CASE STUDY

There is no mention of fishing nets before Zheng He, and there is no record of him bringing any nets to Cochin during his voyages in the 15th century.

After the demise of Zheng He, the Ming court's active engagement with the Indian Ocean region ended abruptly when the Yongle Emperor decided to terminate further maritime expeditions. This resulted in a massive decline in the trade relations between China and the Malabar Coast.

So, if it was during neither the period of Kublai Khan nor the period of Zheng He, when was it?

PORTUGUESE PLAYERS

A more widely accepted but less romantic explanation is that it was the Portuguese who brought the fishing nets to Cochin. Deepa Leslie, a lecturer from Kochi, has noted that various parts of the fishing net derive their names from Portuguese: *rede* (the net used to catch fish), *borda* (edge of the net), *brasao* (hold the widespread net), *corda*, and *pedra* (use to balance the movement of the net) are all Portuguese words. In addition, after the catch from the net is dried, it is known as *bakkal*, which is derived from the Portuguese term “*bacalhau*.”

The etymological evidence is strong, but if the fishing nets are of Portuguese origin, why are they called Chinese fishing nets instead of Portuguese fishing nets?

To delve into this matter, we need to look again at



Copy of Zhao Bosu's Second Ode to the Red Cliff (part), ink and color on silk scroll, by Wen Zhengming, 1548.

history and resume from the period the Chinese decided to shut down their Indian Ocean maritime activities.

The arrival of Portugal's Vasco De Gama and his fleet in 1498 at Calicut changed the course of Indian Ocean trade forever. The Portuguese always wanted to map the spice route that the Arabs were leveraging. Once they made it, they were amazed to see the flourishing cities, massive trade networks, and abundance of wealth flowing through the Indian Ocean. Using a combination of audacity and artillery, the Portuguese aggressively pushed into maritime trade networks. In 1503, the Portuguese established a fort at Cochin and later declared Cochin the capital of a Portuguese state in India. From this foothold, they conquered Goa and Malacca and captured Hormuz in the

Persian Gulf. The Portuguese also reached Guangzhou in China. They first settled in Macao in the 1550s, and made it a Portuguese colony in 1887. In a short period, Portugal established a permanent presence in Asia from which it would not be totally dislodged until Macao returned to its motherland in 1999.

Given the far-reaching network of Portuguese settlements, is it possible to connect the dots to produce any logical explanations? The fishing nets could have been brought to the Portuguese settlement in Cochin from the southern Chinese mainland considering their expansion of influence. This would explain the supposed Chinese origins of the fishing nets and Portuguese terms for its various parts.

But, did anyone in China ever practice such fishing traditions?

LIFTING THE VEIL

A scroll painting by Ming Dynasty artist Wen Zhengming (1470-1559) provides substantial evidence regarding the pursuit of similar fishing techniques in China. This work, an example of Chinese narrative painting, illustrates the celebrated poem *Second Ode on the Red Cliff* by Song Dynasty scholar-artist Su Shi (1036-1101) in which the poet describes visiting the Red Cliff with his friends.

This painting is a copy of an original by Zhao Bosu (1123-1182), which was imitated by Wen in 1548 at the request of a friend who wanted to give a copy to a powerful official.

This exquisitely beautiful scroll painting points to the existence of a similar fishing technique practiced in China as early as the Song Dynasty.

Records from the 19th century also provide evidence of the extended use of this practice. While exploring the Chinese fishing nets in the 1890s, Ullattil Manmadhan, a popular writer, found a photograph of a Chinese fishing net in use at “Wen Chow” in China. It was published in *The Wide World Magazine*, in an article titled “Peculiar Fishermen” by Louis G. Mulhouse. If Wen Chow is indeed Wenzhou, the map shows it is located at the extreme southeast of Zhejiang Province, once a prosperous foreign treaty port.

This is even more evident that this type of fishing technique was indeed used in China and that the

Portuguese could have brought it to Cochin. The biggest and most picturesque nets now adorn the shores of Kochi where the Portuguese built their first fort in India, Fort Immanuel, named after the Portuguese monarch.

LONG-LASTING IMPRINT

The Portuguese certainly exerted a deep socio-cultural impact on Kerala. Many terms borrowed from Portuguese later became a part of the local daily vocabulary. They also introduced many new products, organizations, and technologies which eventually became an essential part of everyday life.

If their intention was trade, how did the Portuguese leave such a lasting impact on society?

To localize and solidify their influence, the Portuguese insisted on a policy of promoting inter-marriage with local women. These Casados (married settlers) were given the right to conduct petty trade and set up alternative means of earnings to sustain the settlements. With their entry into the vacuum created by the relative ousting of traditional Muslim merchants, Casados found rapid momentum and engaged in trade with foreign lands including the Ming Empire.

Along with trade, the propagation of religion was also considered important by the Portuguese. Mass conversion to Christianity took place in the Portuguese settlements which insulated people from

religious conflict and social discrimination. It is possible that these newly emerged social segments could have desired greater upward mobility and prosperity. Thus, the Portuguese Casado traders could have adopted and assimilated knowledge and techniques which they found useful during their frequent journeys. Sophisticated fishing techniques could have caught their attention and they must have found the devices useful enough to help them sustain as a modernizing and enterprising force in their settlement. Conversely, each ship leaving for home carried an abundance of goods and knowledge that would later mold lives and society in faraway lands.

Tracing history is an interesting but arduous journey with ample scope for further discussion. Every new piece of evidence and information can be crucial in reconstructing the fascinating stories of a bygone era.

Withstanding the currents of time, the Chinese fishing nets of Kochi remain firm as a fossil of an era of decades-long voyages, bustling global commerce, ambitious empires, and circulation of diverse people, knowledge, and objects across the sea. ■

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Together through Arts and Culture

By Siddharth Sinha

China and India harbor a wealth of arts and culture. Now is an opportune time for efforts to help arts and culture play a bigger role in creating community cohesion and instilling mutual respect.

Culture is the heart and binding force of a society. It includes languages, traditions, beliefs, religions, and so on. It is a heritage transmitted from generation to generation. We live in a unified world of more than 200 countries and regions divided by boundaries and further divided by thousands of cultures. Some cultures have captured our minds and some teeter on the brink of extinction.

In a connected and interdependent world, sharing, exchanging, collaborating, and conserving cultural heritage is extremely important.

Exchanges of cultural activities and collaborative cultural projects can help bring peoples and cultures of different countries closer.

POPULARITY OF CLASSICAL INDIAN MUSIC IN CHINA

“Music fills the infinite void between two souls,” said Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore. “It is the purest form of art.” The pulse of India throbs with its culture, heritage, philosophy, music, and dance. In this realm of living, India exposes itself without consciousness. The thing that most enthralled those who ventured in the country

without any familiarity about its peculiarities was classical Indian music and dance. After surviving many storms, Indian art has evolved and adapted as it continues venturing through time. “Compared to developed countries of the world, India lags behind in many ways,” goes a popular saying in the country. “But India is way ahead in two aspects, one is philosophy and the other classical music.” To this day, India remains far richer than many countries in the world in terms of these two subjects.

The Chaiti Art Festival is an effort to keep classical Indian music alive by showcasing the beautiful art in a landscape



June 15, 2019: Indian music maestro Ustad Amjad Ali Khan (middle), along with his sons Amaan Ali Bangash (left) and Ayaan Ali Bangash (right), plays the Indian classical musical instrument of Sarod at Shanghai Center Theater during the Chaiti Art Festival 2019. courtesy of the Chaiti Arts Foundation

that has never been exposed before to the great musical heritage of the South Asian country. Seldom does anyone see classical Indian music performed live in China. Other forms of Indian entertainment are already popular in China, so you can find auditoriums full of music lovers appreciating every beat and flow of Indian classical music, which becomes a source of pride, achievement, and satisfaction for many Indians. What started off as a nostalgic craving for serious classical music has grown to become an important segment of Indian cultural activities in China, and more importantly, of China's cultural calendar. From a handful of Indians' standalone event in 2013 at the very first to a near-sellout

crowd in 2019, the musical dream snowballed into a musical journey culminating in a proper festival that has charmed all hues of music lovers along the way. In barely over seven years, the festival has managed to reach out to millions of art-loving people by showcasing traditional Indian art forms such as classical music, classical dance, and folk arts, and bringing Chinese and Indian artists together for workshops and performances.

Accompanying the classical music, Chaiti dared to be different by introducing various dance forms from India to the Chinese audience. Word spread and the crowds continued to grow. These efforts helped to a large extent dispel the notion that

classical Indian music and dance are followed only by the elite. The idea of creating a platform for classical Indian music was kindled by a strong will to promote Indian culture and heritage in China, desire to foster understanding, and passion for extending the reach of classical Indian music throughout Asia.

Classical music and dance have touched on the soft power of Indian culture and changed the way people perceive India. The Chaiti Art Festival has become a subtle reminder of how India has been able to spread its culture in a land with which it shares so much in common. The cultural greatness of India has been exhibited to China in its full magnitude. Arts and cultural events are

a brilliant way of bringing people from different backgrounds together. One can expect great and creative things to emerge from such gatherings. Whatever Chaiti chooses to stage in China, whether organizing classical music events, workshops, and training sessions, opening new spaces to show arts, or offering classes and talks, it will always involve top-shelf budding talents from India and attract local people to get involved with arts. China and India are both gold mines of arts and culture. Now is a great time for us to make efforts to give arts and culture a bigger role to play in creating community cohesion and instilling mutual respect.

GREAT EFFORTS IN CULTURAL EXCHANGE

Great efforts to facilitate cultural exchange between countries have continued since the mid-20th century. Most have been more celebratory events than meaningful long-term educational institutions. In recent decades, many organizations including the United Nations and BRICS have encouraged cultural exchange between countries and regions. A 2015 agreement on cooperation in the field of culture among the BRICS countries clearly outlined mutual assistance in developing and facilitating cultural expressions such as festivals and performances.

Unfortunately, most countries have not fully explored the potential due to many reasons including complicated

political situations and more recently the COVID-19 pandemic. If the power of the arts is fully explored, peoples of different countries will develop a profound understanding of each other's culture in a true sense across the coming decades. A better understanding of each other can eventually result in mutual trust and bring many benefits in fields like tourism and trade.

The need to support grassroots arts initiatives and projects that will bring communities closer together is greater now than ever. Some profound symbiosis must exist between China and India—two ancient civilizations that have survived over 5,000 years, and it should be celebrated in unison. The potential for China-India cooperation in arts and culture is immense. Dialogue between artists from the two countries enables deeper understanding of each other's history and values. It creates a respectful partnership. Learning from each other's customs and understanding each other's values can make people remain respectful even in stressful situations. We need a new tone for mankind characterized by respect towards each other and a drive to coexist in harmony.

While embracing different cultures, we must also encourage youth to join the journey. It is important to guide them towards mutual respect for different cultures. It is our duty to teach the value of representing one's culture while acknowledging

the powers of other cultures.

Investing in local cultural resources including intangible cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and skills, music, dance, theater, and festivals can develop sustainable and creative economies, create more opportunities for youth, and help strengthen identity and social cohesion. When investment and training programs happen, many young people can find gainful employment in creative industries including entertainment and museums.

Young people around the world have become increasingly involved in cultural heritage protection and promotion, recognizing that cultural heritage does not only belong to the past, but remains a key component of contemporary identity. Transmitting heritage values to young people fosters intercultural understanding, respect for cultural diversity, and an environment favorable to a culture of peace. Youth is the agent and incubator of a society. Promoting creativity among young people and harnessing their creative potential and energy needs to be a priority if we are to find creative solutions to today's challenges. 📌

The author is co-founder of the Chaiti Arts Foundation.



The Sooner the Vaccination The Better the Protection



The Cultural Glue Binding BRICS

By Mohammed Saqib

Cultural contact is a unique method of keeping channels of dialogue and cooperation open in challenging times.

From reciprocal gifts exchanged by ancient rulers to modern-day expositions, culture has long been a carrier for countries to build identities and lasting relationships. Cultural exchange has been the most effective way for different nations and countries to share different ideas, traditions, and knowledge. It influences how people view and understand others who may hail from a completely different background. People can experience a new culture through learning its languages, customs, traditions and lifestyles, observing its social structure, and even sampling its authentic food. The most direct way to

engage in cultural exchange is people-to-people contact. When people travel, study, or do business in another country, they gain a deeper understanding of that country's culture, language, and society, which helps build trust, a sense of empathy, and connection to that country which works to stabilize the overall relationship. As J. William Fulbright, a 20th century U.S. statesman, said, "In the long course of history, having people understand your thought is much greater security than another submarine." Building mutual trust, understanding and cooperation through cultural programs helps win stronger public support for closer relationships among countries.

The world today is undergoing profound changes with a restructuring international order and shifting international landscape, causing tensions between countries to be more frequent. The need for cultural exchange has become even more vital than general dialogue among countries when political or diplomatic connections are in jeopardy. Cultural contact is in a unique position to help keep channels of dialogue and cooperation open among countries in challenging times.

Culture is a particularly opportune area because most BRICS countries have historical or even ancient ties with one another. For example, Xuanzang, a Chinese Buddhist monk, scholar, and translator,

journeyed through India for 17 years between the 7th and 8th centuries. Many other BRICS members also boast traditional and historical links. India, China, and Russia were all connected by the ancient Silk Road, which was a corridor not only for trade, but also for religion and philosophy. Brazil and India were linked 500 years ago by Portuguese marine expansion. India's relationship with South Africa is both fundamental and unique, dating back several centuries and anchored in common ideals, ideas, interests, and icons—like Mahatma Gandhi and Nelson Mandela. Despite tremendous opportunities and trade potential, much room for improvement in people-to-people contact among the five BRICS countries remains.

In recent years, BRICS countries have frequently participated in cultural exchange programs through reciprocal visits by performing artists or art shows. Often, however, these exchanges are burdened by an “exotic” tag and tend to target only elites. Sometimes, they even get lost in the procession of routine exchange. In other words, there is no special focus or flavor to cultural exchange, specifically between BRICS countries.

In his speech at the 13th BRICS Summit in September 2021, Chinese President Xi Jinping emphasized the importance of strengthening people-to-people exchange in the spirit of mutual learning. He suggested setting up a BRICS alliance for vocational education and offered to host



September 15, 2017: A moviegoer stands in front of the poster for the 2017 BRICS Film Exhibition at a Polybona Cinema in Xiamen, southeastern China's Fujian Province. The movie *Where Has Time Gone*, co-produced by five directors from China, Russia, India, Brazil and South Africa, was scheduled to play at this theater. VCG

the BRICS seminar on governance and the BRICS forum on people-to-people and cultural exchanges, and open an online training course for media professionals of the five countries. These initiatives would certainly help advance cultural cooperation, and the BRICS community should embrace them wholeheartedly. Currently, cultural institutions in BRICS countries are underfunded, and a formal mechanism to engage cultural organizations of BRICS countries in relevant cultural exchange programs is lacking.

Recognizing the need to cooperate on culture, BRICS countries can make efforts in several areas. First, they should make concerted efforts to put greater emphasis on

increasing people-to-people exchange. Second, they must outline a strategy on cooperation in inclusive cultural programs to enhance people-to-people contact starting by easing movement of people or introducing a single BRICS visa system for citizens. Third, NGOs, individuals, and the private sector in BRICS countries should be encouraged to play a bigger role in people-to-people exchange and cooperation. 

The author is an Indian economist and secretary-general of the India China Economic and Cultural Council.

Governance of China

By Qi Fanhua

The key to the success of China's governance is its core traits and logic that differ from the Western model of governance.

Governance has become a buzzword today after the traditional governance model could not cope with public affairs in a changeable, fragmented, and complex international landscape, prompting the emergence of a new governance model. Despite different roles the government has played in society based on different theories, a decentralized government has been a common pursuit in Western governance.

Exchange and mutual learning in the realm of public policy between countries facing similar challenges has been easier and more frequent in the era of globalization. China's governance also features some philosophies shared by the Western governance model. For example, China's social governance system is based on collaboration, participation,

and common interests. It advocates pluralistic participation in international affairs. The country has also been committed to streamlining administration and delegating power, upgrading public services, and improving the business environment. These practices align with the philosophy of Western governance, but they are not enough to explain why China's governance works so well. The success of China's governance model can be attributed to two core features that differ from its Western counterpart.

CPC LEADERSHIP AND PEOPLE-CENTERED APPROACH

The governance system in China has been implemented by the government under the overall leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC). If you decode China's growth miracle, it is clear that the CPC was the founder of

the People's Republic of China, the driver of the country's reform and opening up, and the propeller of the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation. The country could not have made such impressive achievements without the leadership of the CPC. The CPC's leadership is the core feature of China's state governance and represents an institutional strength of China's unique model.

China has undergone a process of experimentation, practice, and finalization in the Party-state relationship. At the early stage when China launched the reform and opening-up policy in 1978, the country followed the Western model of separating Party and government institutions. The resulting overlap of institutions increased costs and complicated management. Since the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012, the functions of Party and

government institutions have been coordinated, with Party building leveraged to promote government administration. In 2018, the decision and plan to deepen reform of Party and government institutions reviewed and adopted at the Third Plenary Session of the 19th CPC Central Committee marked a large-scale institutional reform. Documents clarified the powers and responsibilities of Party and government institutions, aiming to address problems like overlapping organizations and responsibilities and to improve overall management.

The governance of China features a people-centered approach. Under the multi-party system, each party represents a specific class or interest group. For example, in the United States, the Republican Party's base mainly consists of white people and capitalists, while the Democratic Party has been successful at attracting widespread support from middle and lower classes, black Americans, and immigrant groups. Western democracy is election-driven politics that does not truly take their people into consideration, with each party only representing the interests of a small fraction of voters. The CPC, unlike Western parties, represents the overall interests of the Chinese people. Improving the wellbeing of the people and promoting well-rounded human development are essential to the Party's commitment to serving the public good and exercising



September 28, 2016: A primary school teacher escorts students back home in Gongshan Dulong and Nu Autonomous County, southwestern China's Yunnan Province. China has invested huge amounts of funds to improve rural education in poor areas. by Guo Shasha/*China Pictorial*

power in the interests of the people.

China's administrative organs serve the people, and they are responsible to the people and subject to their oversight. China will continue to ensure the position of the people as masters of the country as it develops socialist democracy. The people-centered approach, reflected in the whole process of China's governance, starkly contrasts so-called Western democracy delivered through election slogans and campaign promises to coax more votes. The people-centered approach is the most prominent feature of China's governance.

WORLDVIEW AND METHODOLOGY OF CHINA'S GOVERNANCE

Successful practice of China's governance has proved

that adhering to a healthy worldview and methodology serves as a guarantee for realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. China's system of governance has been modernized and improved under the guidance of Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, the Theory of Three Represents, the Scientific Outlook on Development, and Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era.

Modernizing China's governance system and capacity depends on the lasting stability and vigor of the Party. Since the day of its founding, the CPC has kept seeking happiness for the Chinese people and rejuvenation for the Chinese nation as its aspiration and mission. It has gained

historical experience along its century-long journey: uphold the Party's leadership, put the people first, advance theoretical innovation, stay independent, follow the Chinese path, maintain a global vision, break new ground, stand up for ourselves, promote the united front, and remain committed to self-reform. These ten points are intellectual treasures created through the joint efforts of the Party and the people.

The secret behind China's development lies in the following four aspects apparent from history.

First, officials are urged to strictly follow discipline and rules. Especially since the 18th CPC National Congress, the CPC Central Committee with Xi Jinping at the core has ensured the Party practices strict self-governance in every respect. The resolute anti-corruption campaign has upheld clean government, enhanced Party conduct, and paved the way for deepening Party building.

Second, the CPC has always concentrated on the principal contradiction facing Chinese society. The Eighth CPC National Congress in 1956 identified the principal contradictions within the country as the contradiction between the need to build an advanced industrial country and the reality of a backward agricultural country, and the contradiction resulted from people's demand for rapid economic and cultural development which fell short of their requirements. The Sixth Plenary Session of the

11th CPC Central Committee in 1981 stated that China should cope with the principal contradiction between the ever-growing material and cultural needs of the people and the backward social production. The 19th CPC National Congress in 2017 made clear that the principal contradiction facing Chinese society in the new era was that between unbalanced and inadequate development and the people's ever-growing needs for a better life. Acting in response to the evolution of the principal contradiction is a rule of thumb for China's governance.

Third, organizing pilot free trade zones (FTZs) has been a strategic move to press ahead with reform and opening up. To start, China set up Special Economic Zones (SEZs) in four cities: Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Shantou, and Xiamen. In 1984, it further opened up 14 coastal port cities including Tianjin and Shanghai. In 1985, the Yangtze River Delta, the Pearl River Delta, and the Xiamen-Zhangzhou-Quanzhou Triangle were listed as the economic open areas. In 1988, Hainan was established as a province and approved as a SEZ. Since the 18th CPC National Congress, China has promoted innovative practice with FTZs given the policy's success. In 2013, the China (Shanghai) FTZ, the first of its kind in the country, was established. Two years later, three new FTZs in Guangdong, Fujian, and Tianjin were launched. Seven more were established in 2016 in Liaoning, Zhejiang, Henan,

Hubei, Chongqing, Sichuan, and Shaanxi. In 2018, the entire Hainan Island became China's largest FTZ. Piloting, exploration, and scaling have come to represent the paradigm of China's gradual reform.

Fourth, the Party considers economic development its central task and stands by the conviction that development is of paramount importance. China has made remarkable economic achievements since the introduction of the reform and opening-up policy. China's gross domestic product (GDP) exceeded 100 trillion yuan (US\$15.42 trillion) and per capita GDP surpassed US\$10,000 in 2020. China has ensured that the people have benefited from the "bigger and better cake" by upholding and improving the livelihood guarantee system for both urban and rural residents. Since the 18th CPC National Congress, China has made great efforts to alleviate poverty and improve the livelihood of impoverished people. By the end of 2020, China had eradicated absolute poverty and made great contributions to global poverty reduction.

Building an everlasting cause in the interests of the people is the formula for China's governance practice. It has contributed a new model to the international political spectrum. 

The author is director of the Center for Research on State Governance under the National Academy of Development and Strategy, Renmin University of China.



Plant Trees Love Trees

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

Key Takeaways for a Better Future

By Shubham Swaroop

A lingering call asks the rest of the world to readjust and realign to the new trends, seek global collaboration, and jointly promote greater contribution to mankind.

The historic resolution adopted at the Sixth Plenary Session of the 19th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) in November 2021 attracted attention from foreign policy experts worldwide. The four-day meeting was marked by discussions on historical experience and significant achievements over the 100 years of the CPC's development. The doctrines set at the top level in China's politics featured some key expressions:

- Upholding the Party's leadership;
- Putting the people first;
- Advancing theoretical innovation;

Staying independent;
Following the Chinese path;
Maintaining a global vision;
Breaking new ground;
Standing up for ourselves;
Promoting the united front;
Remaining committed to self-reform.

These ten points are regarded as the spiritual wealth created by the CPC and the Chinese people especially in terms of guiding the nation's future.

PEOPLE-CENTERED DEVELOPMENT

In 2021, in particular, numerous investors from Western countries started closely monitoring the changing dynamics in China's

financial landscape, recognizing opportunities in Chinese President Xi Jinping's call for "common prosperity." Drawing from the earlier notion of "a moderately prosperous society in all respects," the trend is carefully aligned with the future vision of the CPC. Is the people-centered approach without precedent? China watchers would argue otherwise, noting many visible signs since 2012.

That year, the CPC vowed to eliminate extreme poverty in China. Towards the end of the previous decade, the CPC successfully achieved the poverty alleviation targets by 2020 despite domestic struggles with the COVID-19 pandemic. The Sixth Plenary

Session of the 19th CPC Central Committee declared that China had achieved the historic transformation from a country with relatively backward productive forces to the world's second-largest economy. The CPC has been credited with raising the living standards of Chinese people and lifting more than 800 million out of extreme poverty.

According to the communiqué of the Sixth Plenary Session of the 19th CPC Central Committee, the reform and opening up has been a “crucial move in making China what it is today,” and “socialism with Chinese characteristics is the correct road that has led the country toward development and prosperity.” In his speech delivered at a ceremony marking the centenary of the CPC on July 1, 2021, President Xi also emphasized China's modernization and contribution to human civilization. In that sense, the CPC envisions continual development of socialism with Chinese characteristics and pursuit of practical exploration in that direction.

POLITICAL VALUES: THE WEST AND CHINA

To a large extent, India has been pulled into the anti-China narratives of the West led by Washington. This notion has been reiterated by many foreign policy experts including a former director of India's Intelligence Bureau and former National Security Advisor M.K. Narayanan. Noting the outcomes of the



February 11, 2021: A medical worker and her son, separated by a glass door, share affection by making a heart shape with hands at a quarantine station in Harbin, northeastern China's Heilongjiang Province. by Xie Jianfei/Xinhua

recently concluded Sixth Plenary Session of the 19th CPC Central Committee, he wrote for *The Hindu* on India's future relations with China that it “involves opening a debate on whether to effect a change in strategy or continue with the present policy of confrontation based to a large extent on Western attitudes and beliefs.”

The handling of the COVID-19 pandemic by China's top leadership and its wider political body has undoubtedly shaken the belief in superiority of Western political systems and values. China's model of governance holds valuable lessons for the rest of the world.

China's strong civilizational foundations have enabled it to learn from the West and its experiences, especially those from the modern era when Western civilizations contributed significantly to

the development of mankind. However, in the 21st century, the need for reform after the 2008 financial crisis and ineffective handling of the pandemic have inspired debate on how far Western ideas are functional in satisfying the evolving needs of the world.

The conclusion of the Sixth Plenary Session of the 19th CPC Central Committee this year in China left a lingering call for the rest of the world to readjust and realign to the new trends, seek global collaboration, and jointly promote greater contributions to mankind. The urgent global need to move forward together could never be more apparent than in the face of a devastating pandemic. 

The author is an editor of China BIG Idea Weekly and former research officer at the Chennai Centre for China Studies.

Global Survey: Democratic Practices and Governance Effectiveness in China

Edited by **Bian Xiuhong**

Democracy is a common value of humanity and an ideal that has always been cherished by the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the Chinese people. Whether a country is democratic should be acknowledged by the international community, not arbitrarily decided by a few self-appointed

judges. The Academy of Contemporary China and World Studies, a Chinese think tank, published a report titled *Global Survey: Democratic Practices and Governance Effectiveness in China* in December 2021 after interviewing around 10,000 people in 23 countries on their perception and evaluation of the effectiveness of democracy

in China's economic, social and cultural development. The survey finds that the leadership of the CPC is highly regarded, China's democratic practices are highly acclaimed by the global community and Chinese people, and the socialist democracy with Chinese characteristics displays enormous vitality.

23
countries

9,598
samples

Over
400
samples
from each
country



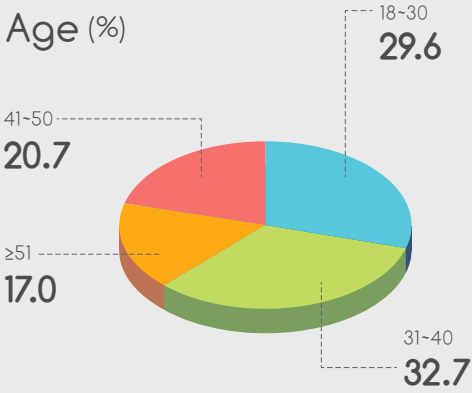
Gender (%)

Male 52.2

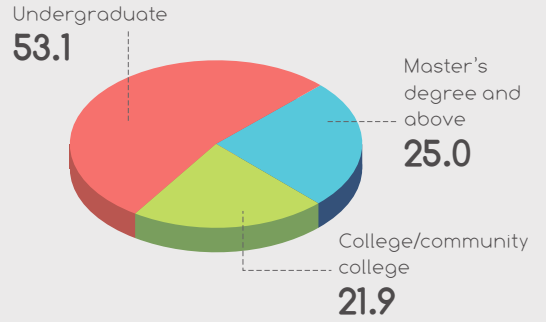


47.8 Female

Age (%)



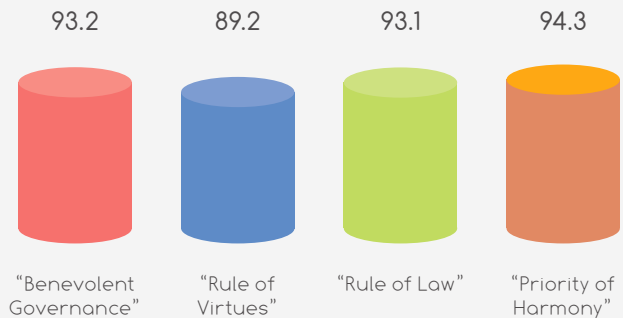
Education Level (%)



Recognition of the Role of the CPC, by Area (%)

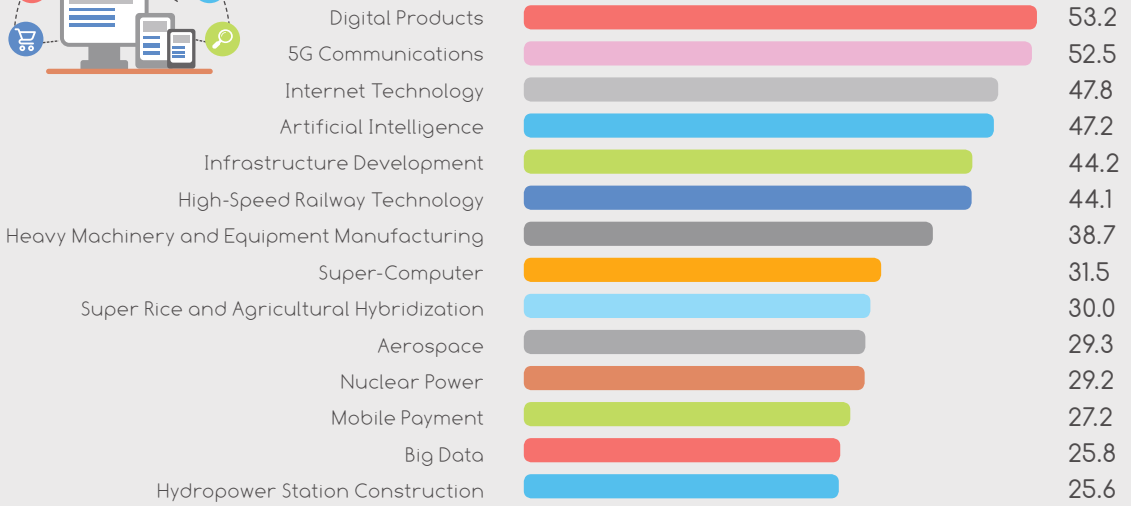


Recognition of Traditional Chinese Governance Principles (%)

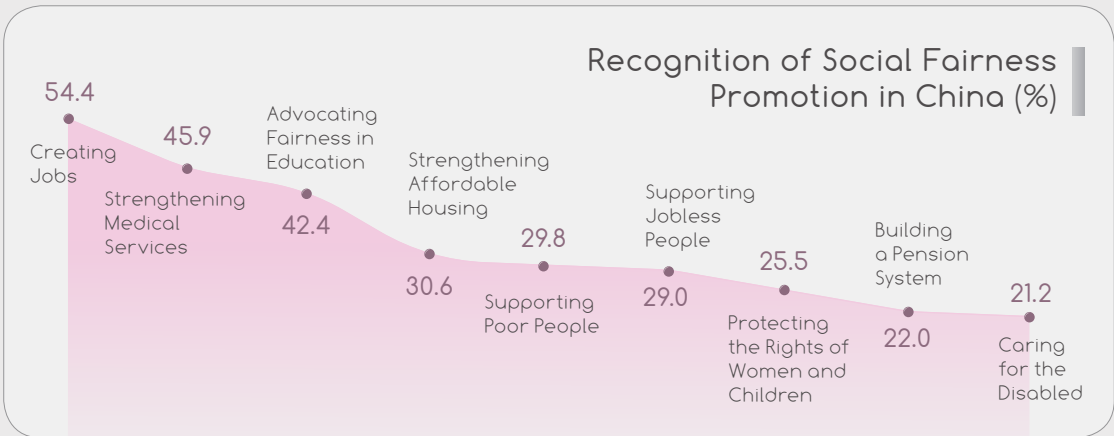




Recognition of World-Leading Chinese Industries (%)



Recognition of Social Fairness Promotion in China (%)



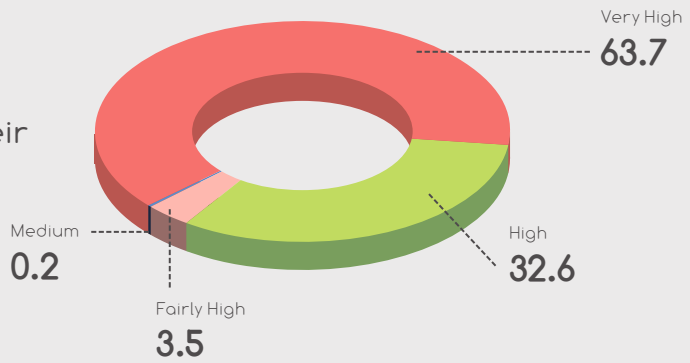
Recognition of Major Environmental Protection Measures in China (%)



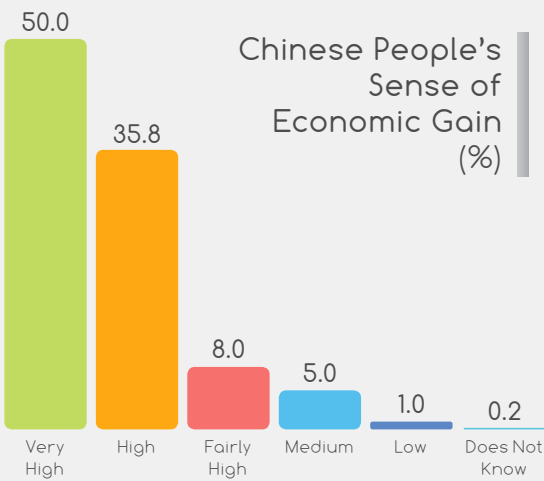
Recognition of China's Role in Areas of Global Governance (%)



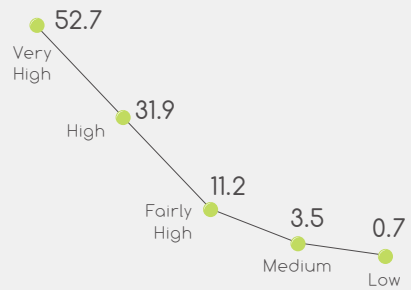
Chinese People's Trust in and Identification with Their Government (%)



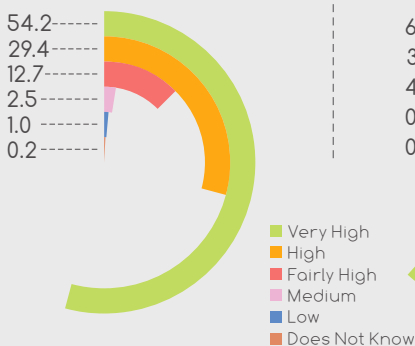
Chinese People's Sense of Economic Gain (%)



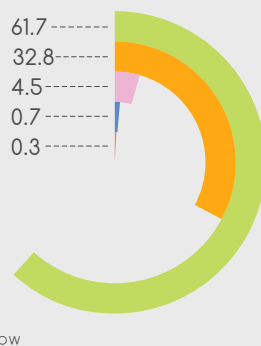
Chinese People's Perception of Social Fairness (%)



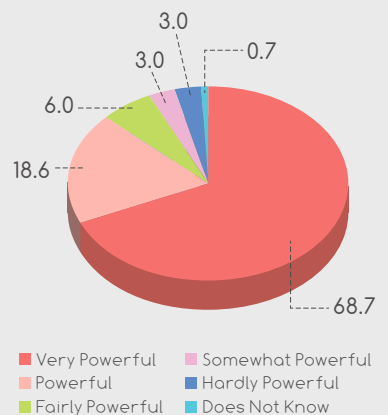
Chinese People's Satisfaction with the Environment (%)



Chinese People's Appreciation of Their Own Culture (%)



Chinese People's Recognition of the Fight Against Corruption by Their Government (%)



Source: Global Survey: Democratic Practices and Governance Effectiveness in China

Youth Power in Cross-Cultural Exchange

Concept by *China-India Dialogue*

Missing My Indian Friends

Zhang Yifan

Occupation: Ph.D. student at the School of Philosophy, Renmin University of China

Birth place: Panzhihua, Sichuan Province

Current residence: Lijiang, Yunnan Province



While living in the countryside of northwestern Yunnan Province for more than four months, I started to miss my days in India.

There is a big day-night temperature difference in winters in the city where I live, so every morning, the first thing I do is to make a cup of warm Indian-styled milk tea to drive away the chills.

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has prevented me from traveling back and forth between China and India over the past two years. However, my cosmopolitan heart and staunch belief in the Asian commonalities shared by China and India have not changed.

My lingering childhood memories are serenaded by the melodious tunes of the old Indian movie *Awaara*, also known as *The Vagabond*, and

the Indian subcontinent always seemed within reach on the world map. Contrasting my peers who majored in the Hindi language and yoga at Chinese colleges and universities, I developed a lasting connection with India based more on curiosity and interest.

From my first visit to India in 2012, I made more than 10 trips both long and short to the South Asian country. My experience of living and studying in India has become an important part of my soul.

From the theory of “unity of knowledge and action” proposed by Chinese philosopher Wang Shouren in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) to interpretation of Karma Yoga in the Indian classic *Bhagavad Gita* (also known as *The Song of God*), we can see that both traditional Chinese and Indian

cultures attach great importance to action.

I attribute the recent backsliding of people-to-people bonds between China and India from centuries of rich exchange to the current “most familiar strangers” situation largely to the decline of communication.

No matter how the surrounding environment changes or how others understand and interpret China-India relations, I am constantly fascinated by the real and visible cross-cultural exchange between the two countries.

I still clearly remember the first time I set foot on India’s land in 2012. As I was wandering the winding streets of Kolkata, West Bengal, I met Chandra, a girl who specialized in sculpture.

On a hot summer afternoon, Chandra and I feasted on sweet sugarcane juice and chatted freely by Rabindra Lake on the southern outskirts of the city.

On a bench at the Ramakrishna Monastery near the lake, Chandra told me the legendary story of Ramakrishna and Bhaghi, and I listened intently.

Before bidding farewell to each other, Chandra and I competed to see who could eat more pani puri on the street. The guy making the snack didn’t mind ramping up production, and our hearty laughs echoed through the alleys of South Kolkata. Though long ago, that memory remains fresh, as if it happened yesterday.

Serendipity could be one of the most precious things

in the world. Later, in the autumn before the outbreak of COVID-19 in 2019, I met Lunle from the Naga ethnic group in Chaukori, a small town deep in the Himalayas.

On a clear night with a bright moon, I met Lunle while walking towards her on a trail under the snowy mountains. Lunle and her family initially mistook me for a member of their ethnic group. Our interest in nature and the wild brought us together to establish a sincere friendship.

Later, I visited her home in North Delhi many times. In her community surrounded by trees, the sounds of peacocks intersected perfectly with the bustling streets and the natural atmosphere.

At her home, she always treated me to delicious Naga dishes like chicken with super spicy peppers. We promised to meet again after the pandemic, and I look forward to seeing her in the Himalayas again.

Since my first trip to India in 2012, a decade had flown by. In my heart, such stories of people-to-people exchanges between China and India are full of charm and warmth.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to hinder international travel to this day. We must maintain patience and confidence and do whatever we can in the current circumstances to improve the people-to-people bonds between the two countries. I firmly believe that the flower of hope will finally bloom, bear fruit, and reap friendship.

The Power of Youth

Bikash Kali Das

Occupation: Deputy director of Xu Fancheng Culture Study Center and founder of Pondicherry India-China Friendship Association

Birth place: Kolkata, India

Current residence: Puducherry, India



Xu Fancheng Culture Study Center is an interdisciplinary cultural and educational center with focus on promoting cultural exchange between India, China, and Eurasian countries. The center recently launched a video production project aiming to enhance mutual understanding and recognition of each other’s culture by engaging the youth of India and China in creating short videos on various cultural topics. Young Chinese and Indian people face similar pressures from academic studies, employment, and life regardless of differences in language, culture, and educational background. Closer and deeper communication

and cooperation will help them share ideas and find solutions to their challenges. Millennials in China (415 million) and India (440 million) make up 47 percent of the world's millennial population. Together, they'll be the lead authors of the 21st-century narrative.

The two Asian cohorts seem to have a lot in common. They are more dynamic and open to new ideas and thinking, and their interaction and understanding influences public opinion of the other country and its people. Xu Fancheng Culture Study Center seeks to build a long-term cooperation mechanism with youth exchange centers in China to promote cross-cultural research in wider fields.

Both China and India are multiethnic, multicultural, and multilingual countries and our long history of cultural exchange and people-to-people contact constitutes the foundation of bilateral cooperation. Since ancient times, cultural collaboration and people-to-people exchange have greatly enhanced understanding between the two countries while improving their economic relationship and people's quality of life. China and India are great civilizations connected through exchange of culture and wisdom. The Silk Road was a witness to our cultural and trade exchange in history. China gave the world paper-making, printing, tea, silk, and the compass. India produced the numeral system, Ayurveda, Yoga, and Sanatana Dharma. Recent years have witnessed extensive cooperation between the two countries in fields

like education, science and technology, movies, and agriculture, but the COVID-19 pandemic weakened that momentum. Nevertheless, the pandemic will end one day, and we should prepare to shape the direction of post-pandemic cultural relations.

The challenges the world now faces include climate change, biodiversity and ecosystem loss, pollution, and many more. The two fast-growing economies, which are also the world's most populous, will play a big, dominant role in shaping the environmental outcomes for Asia and even the world. In October 2021, Pondicherry India-China Friendship Association was honored to participate in the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP15) in Kunming, China, online with observer status provided by the United Nations. Great power carries great responsibility. As two big countries with rich biodiversity, cooperation between China and India is significant for curtailing biodiversity loss and mitigating global climate change.

Our challenges are transnational in nature and trans-institutional in solution. They cannot be addressed by any government or institution acting alone. They require collaborative action among governments, international organizations, corporations, universities, non-governmental organizations, and creative individuals from the two countries. Youth exchange programs could be essential to bringing the countries together and facilitating such

cooperation. If policy makers can help build cooperation platforms dedicated to youth, young people could amaze us with their potential and creativity in addressing common challenges and building a community of shared future.

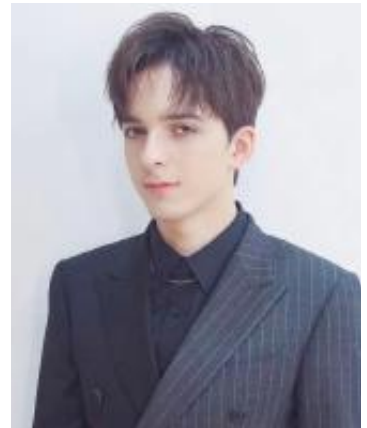
Cultural Exchange through Media

David Kolosov

Occupation: Beijing Tourism Promotion Ambassador

Birth place: Vladikavkaz, Russia

Current residence: Shenzhen, China



I was born in Vladikavkaz, a city located in southern Russia. I was attracted to Chinese culture at a very young age. This distant country radiated some kind of magic appeal for me, and I started learning Chinese myself in high school. I finally came to China to pursue my undergraduate studies in 2011. The rich culture, deep-rooted history, and friendly people made me determined to pursue

further studies in the ancient Eastern country.

China has been very open and inclusive to the diverse cultures of the world since ancient times. Also committed to the principle of openness and inclusiveness, the media in China provides a wonderful platform for dialogue and presentations involving different countries and cultures. As a young student from Russia, I was fortunate to participate in China-Russia cultural exchange and contribute to promoting the Chinese language through various media platforms and programs during my 10 years in China.

In 2014, I won the global championship of the "Chinese Bridge" Chinese Proficiency Competition for Foreigners across the Globe, during which I presented to the world the enchantment of Chinese language and culture. I also introduced Russian culture to the Chinese audience in several Chinese TV programs including *China Poetry Conference* and *A Bright World*. In 2019, Russian singer Polina Gagarina became a contestant on a Chinese vocal contest, and I was her music partner. I also served as one of the judges of the "Chinese Bridge" Chinese Proficiency Competition for Foreigners.

These media platforms have made my name known by many young Chinese and Russians and helped ignite their interest in each other's culture. I received letters from many young Russians who said they started learning Chinese and even went to study in China after hearing about my experience through TV programs. Similarly, some Chinese fans also told me that they were learning the Russian language because

they wanted to learn more about Russian culture.

Culture passes on from generation to generation. The history of China-Russia cultural exchange dates back centuries. Many eminent cultural figures have made contributions to the dissemination of the two cultures and have helped carry on the good traditions of China-Russia cultural exchange. More than 100 years ago, Russian writer Leo Tolstoy attempted to translate Lao Tzu's *Tao Te Ching*, and traces of Lao Tzu's thoughts can be seen in many of his literary works. At the beginning of the 20th century, Russian poet Anna Akhmatova and sinologist Nikolai Trofimovich Fedorenko jointly translated *Sorrow after Departure*, an ancient romantic poem by Qu Yuan from the Warring States Period (475-221 B.C.) of China. By the middle of the 20th century, Russian readers could access Chinese classical literature translated to Russian including *The Book of Songs*, *The Analects of Confucius*, Tang and Song poetry, and the Four Great Classical Novels, namely *Water Margin*, *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, *Journey to the West*, and *Dream of the Red Chamber*. Despite the span of time and space, Chinese classical literature gained great popularity in Russia. At the same time, many Russian literary works also found their way into China thanks to the efforts of Chinese literati. For example, Lu Xun, a renowned Chinese writer, translated many Russian works and helped the popularization of Russian literature in China.

Cultural exchange is dynamic, constant, and future-oriented. During my decade-long stay in

China, I have visited many places and made many friends. I found that many Chinese people, especially the older generation, have a special affinity for Russian culture. *The Night on Moscow's Outskirts* and *Katyusha* are among the most popular old Russian songs in China. Cultural exchange and cooperation between the two countries has entered a new era with the development of economics, culture, and education in the globalized world. Interaction and cooperation between various new media in the two countries like online TV, short-video platforms, and social media is making people-to-people contact more convenient, efficient, and interesting. "What songs do young Russians sing? What books do they read? And what movies do they watch?" These are questions I am often asked by Chinese friends around my age. New media has facilitated the popularity of Chinese sci-fi literature, movies, and songs among young Russians. The young generation is taking advantage of the cultural bridge built by the media, and they are poised to become the best ambassadors for friendly China-Russia relations.

When I was a child, I was obsessed with Chinese Kung Fu movies, which began my story with this mysterious Eastern country. My love for the country has persisted ever since. Years ago, I earned a master's degree from Tsinghua University, and now I am dedicated to China-Russia cultural exchange by promoting the interaction and dialogue between young people of the two countries through multiple media platforms. 📺

Never-Ending Legend

In Memory of Indian Sanskrit Scholar Prof. Satya Vrat Shastri

By Yu Longyu

Prof. Shastri has passed away, but his academic and spiritual wealth will never die. His persistent advocacy of truth will be passed on by later generations, and the tree of China-India friendship he planted will continue growing even stronger.

I heard the sad news that renowned Indian Sanskrit scholar Prof. Satya Vrat Shastri had died in New Delhi on November 14, 2021, at the age of 91, from Mr. Wang Shaodong, manager of the WeChat group “Sanskrit Classics.”

Prof. Shastri was venerated for his knowledge and moral qualities. His death was a great loss not only for Indian academia but also for international academia. His legendary life demonstrated remarkable perseverance

in the face of difficulty. He devoted all of his energy to academic studies and showed no interest in fame or wealth. And he made great contributions to strengthening China-India friendship. His spirit and deeds both remain worth learning.

In February 2011, at the invitation of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), I visited India. The day after I arrived in the South Asian country, I was lucky enough to meet Prof. Lokesh Chandra and Prof. Shastri, both nationally

venerated scholars in India. Later, I wrote in *Academic Duet of Indology*: “Shastri, meaning ‘a man of knowledge,’ is a noble surname in India. Prof. Shastri has served as chancellor of Shri Jagannath Sanskrit University, head of the Department of Sanskrit at the University of Delhi, and an honorary professor of the Special Centre for Sanskrit Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University. He has won prizes from many countries and published numerous works, earning him global fame. In 2010, a book titled *A Living*

Legend was published, which records his legendary life—tutoring students, writing books, and winning honors and prizes. However, he expressed regret that he never visited China, where Sanskrit was spread the most beyond India in history. In ancient times, a number of Chinese Sanskrit masters including Faxian, Xuanzang, and Yijing translated countless Buddhist scriptures. In modern times, eminent Sanskrit scholars such as Ji Xianlin, Jin Kemu, Xu Fancheng, and Huang Baosheng translated many Sanskrit literary classics from India including *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*. Indeed, it's a pity that this most famous contemporary Indian Sanskrit master has never visited China. He knew the importance of Sanskrit in China. His words indicated that he looked forward to visiting China.

After I returned from India, I did everything I could to create an opportunity for Prof. Shastri to visit China. "Thanks to an invitation from the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, from May 8 to 22, 2011, Prof. Shastri came to China to attend a seminar marking the 150th anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore's birth and visit Peking University, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), and Shenzhen University. During his visit to the CASS, Prof. Shastri met Chinese Sanskrit scholar Huang Baosheng. The two expressed regret for not having met earlier. Prof. Shastri was delighted



Prof. Satya Vrat Shastri (second right) poses for a photo with Prof. Yu Longyu (second left), Prof. Meng Zhaoyi (first right), and Dr. Zhu Xuan, 2011.

that Huang gave his many Sanskrit works as gifts. India has an award presented by the country's president to a foreign Sanskrit scholar over age 65 who had made remarkable achievements in Sanskrit studies. Prof. Shastri was chairman of the Award Committee. He said privately that he would like to recommend Huang for the award because he regarded Huang as one of the world's top Sanskrit scholars. On August 15, 2012, India's 61st Independence Day, the Indian government granted the presidential award to Huang. Three years later, the Indian government granted Huang the Padma Shri award, making him the second Chinese to win this honor after Ji Xianlin" (*Huang Baosheng and His Poetry Studies*, published in *Chinese and Foreign Cultural*

and Literary Theory, vol. 48, Sichuan University Press, 2021). Prof. Shastri knew that China is the second home of Sanskrit, so he was always tremendously interested in Chinese Sanskrit and Indology scholars. On May 20, 2011, he visited Shenzhen University after his trip to Beijing. He delivered a speech titled "My Life with Sanskrit" and presented an exquisite Indian embroidery work as a gift to the university. The embroidery work was adorned with a famous line from *Mahabharata*: "Whenever and wherever there is a decline in religion, a predominant rise of irreligion occurs." In his eyes, love and study of Indian classics and promoting China-India friendship are the true "religions" to be followed.

On December 1, 2016,



Prof. Shastri (third left, front row) poses for a photo with Prof. Huang Baosheng (fourth left, front row) and others.

the ICCR held a grand ceremony at Rashtrapati Bhavan, and then Indian President Pranab Mukherjee personally granted me the “Distinguished Indologist” award. At noon that day, ICCR officials took me, my daughter Yu Xiu, and Prof. B. R. Deepak from Jawaharlal Nehru University to Rashtrapati Bhavan. When we reached the central hall along an aisle decorated with colored drawings, it was already packed with people. Prof. Shastri, in his 90s, and his wheelchair-bound wife waited for us there. They looked excited when we arrived. Prof. Shastri stood up to hug me. In fact, at a reception hosted by ICCR President Prof. Lokesh Chandra the day before, he had already given me a warm hug. He invited my daughter and me to his home.

Through participating in

this awards ceremony, Yu Xiu developed a strong interest in Indian culture and established friendship with some famous Indian scholars, including Prof. Shastri. Later, she wrote an essay on Prof. Shastri, titled “There Is Only Sanskrit in His World,” which was included in her essay collection *Stories in India*. The essay evokes readers’ respect for this eminent Indian scholar. She and Prof. Shastri became friends and often communicated with each other face-to-face and through emails.

Alongside Yu Xiu, Prof. Shastri worked with many Chinese scholars from the younger generation. After attending a China-India cultural exchange event at Visva-Bharati University on November 7, 2017, Dr. Zhu Xuan and Dr. Wu Weilin from Shenzhen University flew to New Delhi, where

they visited several distinguished Indian scholars including Prof. Shastri. He was glad to welcome the two Chinese guests, who planned to translate his autobiography *Bhavitavyanam Dvaranii Bhavanti Sarvatra* from Sanskrit into Chinese. “Prof. Shastri recited a story about Shiva and Parvati in Sanskrit and sang a Sanskrit ballad with his wife,” Dr. Zhu Xuan later recounted in *Visit to India: An Academic Journey to New Delhi*. “He was happy to provide the recorded audio of his early recitations in Sanskrit for our Centre for Indian Studies to make MOOCs. He was also enthusiastic about reciting and chanting Sanskrit texts for our MOOCs.”

Although Prof. Shastri only began to intersect with Chinese academia 10 years ago, the decade brought some of the most fruitful and exciting achievements of his career. Many unforgettable stories happened between him and Chinese scholars.

Prof. Shastri has passed away, but his academic and spiritual wealth will never die. His persistent advocacy of truth will be passed on by later generations, and the tree of China-India friendship he planted will continue growing even stronger. ☞

The author is director and professor of the Centre for Indian Studies at Shenzhen University.



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India's Political System

Compiled by Xie Chao, etc.

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“Water and Mud” of Indian Studies

By Jiang Jingkui

In recent years, international and regional studies have become more important, and greater numbers of scholars have become devoted to the field. Still, academic circles have not yet reached consensus on which discipline to assign the subject.

Some think the field should be included in the discipline of foreign languages and literature, some argue it is closer to international politics, and others even consider it a new discipline and advocate making it a first-level discipline. All sides seem reasonable, so the debate will continue for a while before related authorities make a final decision. But I am not focused on categorizing it. In my opinion, the increased focus on international and regional studies is a result of the development of China. Since the turn of the 21st century, especially its second decade, the world has undergone profound changes unseen in the century. Many of the most developed

countries, the U.K. for example, have a history of placing more attention on international and regional studies during their prime. After World War II, the U.S. and the Soviet Union also placed considerable effort in the field to meet the demands of their own development. In more recent days, China's growth has resulted in more accurate studies of international and regional affairs in this era. The U.K., the U.S., and the Soviet Union essentially conducted such studies with a one-party goal in mind, and sought to serve their own interests. However, China launches such studies seeking to more optimally share benefits through joint consultation and collaboration.

I think that China-based international and regional studies have two distinctive features: The first is the choice of language used by researchers. Researchers of the U.K., the U.S., and the Soviet Union often used their own native languages—English or Russian. But

Chinese researchers tend to use the languages of targeted nations rather than Chinese or English (except for English-speaking countries and regions). For example, Hindi is the official language at India's federal level, and English is a supportive official language. So, Hindi and English are the working languages for Chinese researchers studying India. Hindi is actually more important but the two languages are highly complementary.

The second feature is about the content of research. I prefer comprehensive content covering language, literature, history, culture, religion, philosophy, education, arts, politics, economics, security, diplomacy, military affairs, and defense. But, of course, the content depends on the real situation. A slightly off-the-wall metaphor often comes to mind: If you compare a nation or a region to a lotus pond, you find three levels of existence in the pond: the lotus flowers and

leaves on the water, water and mud in the middle, and the lotus roots at the bottom. I believe the “water and mud” should be the main targets of studies because they determine the quality of the lotus flowers and leaves as well as the size of the lotus roots. Through studying the water and mud, you can learn and even predict how the lotus flowers and leaves grow and even the situation of the whole pond. Accordingly, we will know how to invest in the pond and predict returns. To study the water and mud, we have to dive into the pond to comprehensively measure the depth of the water and the quality of the mud, so that will require diving equipment and oxygen tanks—the languages of targeted nations. Full and thorough studies are only possible with the help of related languages. These are the international and regional studies China needs these days.

I highly recommend the book *India's Political System*. I know most of its authors, who are all proficient in Hindi, English or both. Its political system is one of the most central characteristics of India and comparable to the mud and water in a pond.

Today is an opportune time to publish the book. India studies in China date back long ago, when they usually focused on religion and philosophy before shifting to language and literature in modern times alongside a few on India's political systems. As far as I know, only a few books published in China have broached the subject.



January 9, 2016: The 24th New Delhi World Book Fair opens in New Delhi, capital of India. As the Guest of Honor at the book fair, China presented over 5,000 books from 81 publishing houses. by Qiao Zhenqi/China Pictorial

Studies on India's Political System by Lin Lianguang is one. Published by Peking University Press in 1995, the book offers chapters such as “Constitution,” “Legislative System,” “Judicial System,” “Executive Organs,” and “Caste, Religion, Tribe and Political Systems.” It was published more than two decades ago and not particularly long, so there is much more to be said today. *Guide to the World States—India* co-authored by Sun Shihai and Ge Weijun was published by Social Sciences Academic Press in 2003 and it includes a chapter dedicated to “Politics,” covering “Constitution,” “Federal Legislative Organs,” “Federal Executive Organs,” “Major Political Parties,” and other topics. *India Studies* by Deng Bing was published by Yi Wen Publishing House in

2009 and it has a chapter devoted to India's politics with content about the country's Constitution, legislative system, judicial system, and federal executive organs. Both books only offer one chapter on India's political system, and the content is limited and even outdated to some extent. So, the release of *India's Political System* meets new domestic demand for contemporary and quality study literature about India's political system.

With nearly 500,000 Chinese characters, the book covers a wide array of topics in nine chapters: “Constitution,” “India's Parliament,” “Federal Executive Organs,” “Judicial System,” “President,” “Political Party System,” “Relations between Central Government and Local Governments,” “Grassroots

Governance,” and “Main Issues of Contemporary Political Development.” Specifically, the first chapter, “Constitution,” heavily informs subsequent chapters. Based on the “Constitution” chapter, others sketch out or detail certain aspects of India’s political system. But each chapter can be read independently. If readers just want to know about India’s federal executive system, they can flip directly to the third chapter, “Federal Executive Organs.” And those seeking to understand India’s political party system should go straight to Chapter Six. The book confines its content to introducing and explaining the “water and mud” to researchers of India through a preliminary study of it. This effort deserves affirmation and encouragement. The book fully and objectively introduces the political system of India. In the chapter “Constitution,” the authors combed the history of the formulation of India’s Constitution and outlined its basic content, presenting the text to readers alongside notes about its related history and theoretical foundation.

In the chapter “India’s Parliament,” the authors gave explanations to the Indian parliament’s organizing structure and operation model with analysis of parliamentary practice to help readers grasp how it functions and inspire deeper reflection and contemplation. As for the study of the “water and mud” of India’s political system, the book combines

introduction and research. For example, in the chapter “Political Party System,” the authors first introduced the stipulations related to political parties and then studied the concise history of India’s political parties and their evolutions with emphasis on the policies and social practices of some major parties. Although the country has many political parties, the chapter is well organized and substantive. Additionally, the introduction is followed by in-depth interpretation and analysis of India’s political party system based on theory and practice.

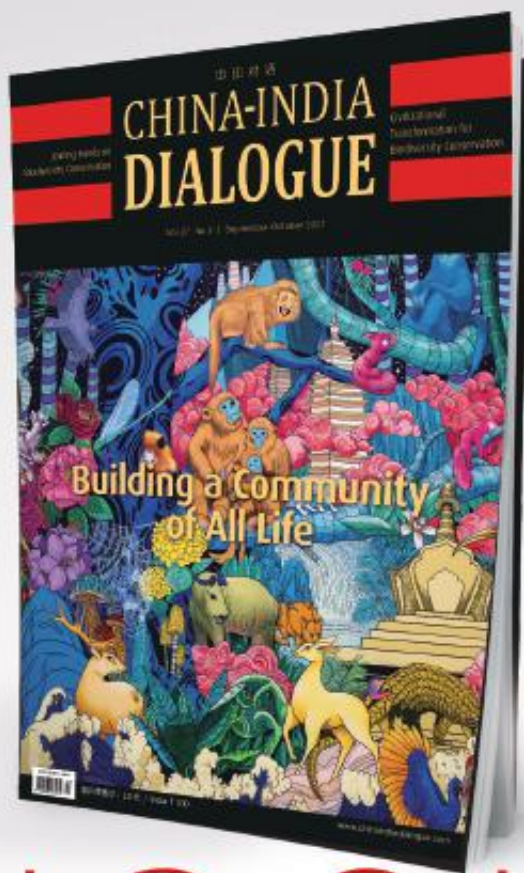
In the chapter “Relations between Central Government and Local Governments,” after outlining India’s governments at all levels, the authors presented a scientific definition of “central-local relations.” And then they reviewed practices on the relations between India’s central and local governments as well as their respective responsibilities to society. The content of this chapter has rarely been seen in other books, evidencing the authors’ advanced perspectives and views resulting from deep understanding and insight on Indian society.

A highlight of the book is the summaries at the end of each chapter. Rather than repetitive rundowns of the chapters, they feature new opinions from the authors. For instance, the summary of the “Constitution” chapter offers a particularly profound insight. “Through the Constitution, India

brings the country with the world’s second-largest population and possibly the most domestic divergences together,” it reads. “And the Constitution also provides a basic framework for the Indian government to govern the country’s various ethnic groups with different languages and religions.” This conclusion seems concise but reflects the authors’ research findings and academic insights. The summary of the chapter “Political Party System” is a particularly accurate capsule of India’s present political situation. It compares the strengths of India’s three largest political parties and predicts their development after considering the real impact of Hindu nationalism. Focused on thorough introductions or research findings, all of the other chapters are also academically and practically valuable.

It is worth mentioning that the compilation team headed by Dr. Xie Chao is young and ambitious. They probed the field and continuously deepened work in the field. I believe they will all continue contributing to future improved revised versions. India studies needs scholars like these. 📖

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The author is a professor at the School of Foreign Languages and director of the Center for South Asian Studies at Peking University. This article is an excerpt from the preface of the book India’s Political System.



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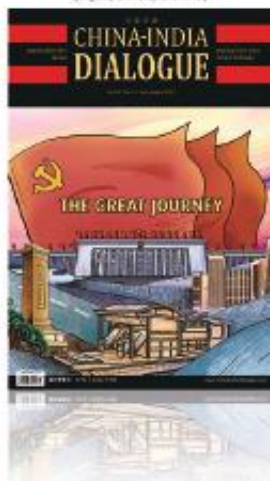
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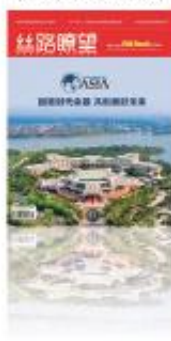
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