

India's absence at OBOR meet

REFLEX ACTION

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The Belt and Road Forum, hosted by China on May 14-15, for international cooperation evoked splendid response across the universe, despite New Delhi gratuitously choosing to opt out of this major infrastructure initiative delegation. Japan too, for all its ongoing alterations with China over the disputed islands in the East China Sea and simmering discontents for decades, sent a high level delegation.

With a massive 900 billion US dollars investments ranging from ports in Pakistan and Sri Lanka to high-speed railways in east Africa to gas pipeline crossing central Asia, Beijing's One Belt, One Road (OBOR) project is the largest overseas investment initiative ever mounted by a single nation. Having invested heavily on infrastructure development for decades that saw sustained double-digit growth close to three decades, China is now using its expertise to leverage and state-sponsored infrastructure projects in far-flung places through the OBOR task. This is being attempted not only to spread its clout and heft but also to provide domestic companies—with high-speed rail manufacturers to telecom companies—with domain knowledge and experience to become global brands.

Western analysts note that since 2013 when the OBOR project was launched, it has expanded to cover projects as far afield as New Zealand, UK and even the Arctic. It is no wonder that China has zeroed in on 65 countries along the Belt and Road that would host hundreds of projects bearing the OBOR insignia. They said core projects include a \$64 billion land route from China's Xinjiang region to a deep water port in Pakistan, Gwadar. About B&R, Indian officials maintain that New Delhi has objections related only to the CPEC traversing through Gilgit and Baltistan of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) though the project is of strategic concern. New Delhi is no doubt concerned over this 3,000-

km long project that was taken over by the Chinese, would eventually become a future naval base. The Gwadar port opposite the Mumbai port housing the Indian Navy's western naval command provides a berth for China in the Arabian Sea and to the Indian Ocean. Incidentally, China would spend \$1.1 billion on developing a 'port city' in Sri Lanka's Colombo, across from Gwadar. A planned 3000 km (1,900 mile) high-speed rail line from south-west China to Singapore would cost even more.

India with its vast amount of investment needs for beefing up its rickety infrastructure and to build new ones would have been a whiter in at least taking part in the OBOR Forum particularly when many of Beijing critics including the US, Japan and Russia did send high-level delegation. No doubt, India's prospective borrowings from AIIB would entail relatively high interest cost with attendant conditionalities being imposed by Beijing for funding OBOR projects including purchase of Chinese materials and using their manpower. But as the one who pays the piper calls the tune, one has to get adjusted to conditional irritants if it eventually helps in building or supplementing the massive efforts of indigenous development of the country's vital infrastructure for ensuring high economic growth.

Again, it is not only in OBOR but also in other important initiatives of China, New Delhi ought to be keen on associating lest its commercial engagement with the Middle Kingdom should be mutually rewarding, even as decades of territorial disputes remain unresolved. The initial bonhomie between Xi and Modi soon after the latter's assuming office in 2014 and the back to back visit

of the two leaders should not go wasted, if the working chemistry is well founded to pave the way for ensuring lasting benefits to Asia's two giant nations. India is set to join the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in June and is also participating actively in a Chinese crafted Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). With the US-led Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) now firmly spurned by the Trump Administration, the RCEP which emerged as a sort of riposte for having excluded China in the TPP might be a springboard for more open and free trade among participating nations. The RCEP excludes the US and other TPP members such as Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, Vietnam and the US but includes Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, South Korea, Laos, Myanmar, the Philippines and Thailand. The latter set of countries provides ample latitude for New Delhi to engage with China and other tiger economies of the South East Asian frame on a vigorous and mutually beneficial footing.

China is also internationalizing its currency renminbi which would be increasingly used by its OBOR infrastructure network concatenating continents-a long-term plan for funding projects along trade corridors to Europe. According to HSBC's Chief Economist for Greater China, Mr. Qu Hongbin, internationalization of renminbi likely to benefit from the rising tide of OBOR-related business flows, as financial integration is a crucial part of the strategy.

Given the growing clout of China in the emerging global order with the western nations on a distinct retreat from globalization and finding increased virtue in being nationalist first and protectionist second, it is time India recognized the stark geopolitical reality and played its card diplomatically and dexterously. It is not that one needs to be afraid of Chinese hegemony in Asia as India is no small power to be cowed down as it is set to be the world's seventh largest economy by 2019 to coincide with Modi's first term in governance with a comfort of demographic dividend to keep its powder dry for any face-off with any adversary or friend turned into a foe. (IPA)

A nation is a society unified by delusions about its ancestry and by common hatred of its neighbors
William Ralph Inge

Media trial

In their pursuit of sensationalism and increasing TRP, most TV news channels are now engaged in tendentious reporting that often creates doubts about the character and probity of men in public life, especially politicians. There is no concealing their aim. They do not inform their viewers, they do not want to place plain facts before them but want to defame, denigrate and destroy the reputation of their targets by holding what may be called media trials. Their targets are usually those who are in the opposition. Rarely does one find someone in the ruling dispensation being targeted. This is the rule. Exceptions to the rule are rare. The victims are helpless. Except approaching the courts they have no other remedy. And litigation is an expensive and time-consuming thing. Even if justice is eventually secured, the damage to reputation will have been done. In the process, the dividing line between journalism and character assassination is getting obliterated.

It is in this context that the notice issued by the Delhi High Court to TV anchorperson and his channel assumes importance. The High Court asked the anchorperson to 'bring down the rhetoric' and 'put out the facts'. 'You cannot call him a Congress leader and former Union minister' names. This is uncalled for, the court observed. Indeed, name-calling has nothing to do with journalism but some electronic media are doing it regularly, bringing down the credibility of the profession. Newsmen are supposed to present facts before their readers/viewers objectively so that they can draw their own conclusion about men and matters on the basis of the facts presented. Deliberate distortion or omission of facts or presentation of facts in a motivated way is plain dishonesty.

Another very negative trend that has become manifest in TV journalism lately is blatant ultranationalist propaganda and running down everyone as anti-national, unpatriotic or even traitor who does not support such fanatic propaganda. Their patriotism is questioned at the drop of a hat. This trend is subversive of democracy and democratic practice. A fear psychosis is being sought to be created so that nobody dares to criticize or call in question the official line on any issue. Some channels are now acting more as the issuing authority of certificates of patriotism and nationalism than centres for disseminating information. As these channels are patronized by the powers that be, ordinary citizens prefer to fall in line rather than raise voices of dissent. The Press is supposed to be the fourth estate of a democracy but that institution is being turned into an instrument for suppression of democracy. That is the tragedy.

CBSE class XII exam result declared, Island percentage up by 6.98

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Vocational Stream

| Position | Name of the Student | Name of the School | Percentage |
|----------|---------------------|------------------------|------------|
| I. | K. Bhawani | | 84.2 |
| II. | U. Bharathi | | 83.0 |
| III. | Amit Kumar Singh | GSSS Model, Port Blair | 77.20 |
| IV. | V. Bala Vijay Kumar | | 76.4 |
| V. | Priya Mondal. | | 74.6 |

Isles to observe World No Tobacco Day today

PORT BLAIR, MAY 30—/ Along with the rest of the country, the Directorate of Health Services here will observe World No Tobacco Day on May 31 on these islands on the theme "Tobacco - a threat to development".

As part of the observance, various IEC activities will be conducted on May 31 by all Health Institutions across these islands including State Health Education Bureau of Directorate of Health Services, A & N Administration to create awareness among the general public about the ill-effects of consumption of tobacco product. The state level function will be organised in the auditorium of Industrial Training Institute (ITI), Dollygunj at 10.30 am tomorrow. Dr. S.K. Kathpalia, Director (I/c), Andaman and Nicobar Islands Institute of Medical Science will be the chief guest of the function. Faculty members of the institute, students, paramedical staff and general public will attend the function.

Training prog on Deptt Enquiry held

PORT BLAIR, MAY 30—/ The Police Training School, Prothrapur organized two-day course on Departmental Enquiry recently for in-service police personnel from the rank of Assistant Sub-Inspector to Inspectors with the main objective to upgrade the professional skills of Police Officers by relevant rules and latest initiatives of China, New Delhi ought to be keen on associating lest its commercial engagement with the Middle Kingdom should be mutually rewarding, even as decades of territorial disputes remain unresolved. The initial bonhomie between Xi and Modi soon after the latter's assuming office in 2014 and the back to back visit

of the two leaders should not go wasted, if the working chemistry is well founded to pave the way for ensuring lasting benefits to Asia's two giant nations. India is set to join the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in June and is also participating actively in a Chinese crafted Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). With the US-led Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) now firmly spurned by the Trump Administration, the RCEP which emerged as a sort of riposte for having excluded China in the TPP might be a springboard for more open and free trade among participating nations. The RCEP excludes the US and other TPP members such as Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, Vietnam and the US but includes Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, South Korea, Laos, Myanmar, the Philippines and Thailand. The latter set of countries provides ample latitude for New Delhi to engage with China and other tiger economies of the South East Asian frame on a vigorous and mutually beneficial footing.

Rough sea forecast

PORT BLAIR, MAY 30—/ Under the influence of moderate to strong Southwest monsoon current, generally rough seas are likely along and off Andaman and Nicobar coast. Fishermen have been advised to be cautious while venturing into the sea. Distant Warning Signal No-II lowered at Port Blair Port. The general public have been advised to take precautionary measure and contact the State Control Room, District Control Room and Emergency Operation Centres in case of any emergency.

Agromet bulletin for farmers

PORT BLAIR, MAY 30—/ The Central Island Agricultural Research Institute here has released the agromet bulletin for farmers for the period from May 31 to June 4. In the bulletin, CIARI forecast cloudy weather with moderate rainfall in the next five days. In South Andaman, 92 mm of rainfall is expected, while 60 mm and 110 mm of rainfall is expected in the North and Middle Andaman and Nicobar Island respectively during the period. The maximum temperature will be 29 to 32 degrees centigrade with minimum

temperature of 25 to 26 degree centigrade, whereas the maximum and minimum relative humidity is expected to be in the range of 78 to 82 % and 71 to 80 %, respectively in Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Wind speed of 16 to 28 kmph is expected from southwesterly direction. Farmers in South Andaman region have been advised to prepare the nursery field of paddy and before final preparation of nursery field, apply farm yard manure @ 2 t/ha and neem cake @ 500 kg/ha, transplant already grown vegetable seedlings of brinjal and chilli in

Cyclone 'Mora' lays centered over B'desh

PORT BLAIR, MAY 30—/ The severe cyclonic storm 'MORA' over Bangladesh coast on Tuesday moved northeastward during the past six hours with a speed of 32 kmph and lay centered at 11.30 on Tuesday over Bangladesh near Latitude 22.8°N and Longitude 92.0°E, about 60 km north-northeast of Chittagong and 120 km southwest of Aizawl. The system is very likely to continue to move north-northeastward and weaken into a cyclonic storm during next six hours and into a deep depression in subsequent six hrs.

The schedule of the examination has been displayed in the notice board of Dr BR Ambedkar Institute of Technology here. Candidates, who have applied for the AMIE Summer 2017, can download their hall tickets from the website www.isindia.org. The schedule of the examination has been displayed in the notice board of Dr BR Ambedkar Institute of Technology, Pahargoon, a release from the Chairman, The Institution of Engineers (India), A & N State Centre said.

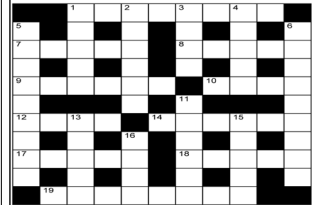
AMIE exams from June 3

PORT BLAIR, MAY 30—/ The AMIE Summer 2017 examinations will be held from June 3 to 9, at Dr BR Ambedkar Institute of Technology here. Candidates, who have applied for the AMIE Summer 2017, can download their hall tickets from the website www.isindia.org. The schedule of the examination has been displayed in the notice board of Dr BR Ambedkar Institute of Technology, Pahargoon, a release from the Chairman, The Institution of Engineers (India), A & N State Centre said.



Branches of a massive tree crashed near Seva Nibetan, Japan Road at Dairfarm during stormy winds last Sunday at around 2.30 pm. These islands record numerous tree crashing incidents every year during monsoon forcing power-cuts, traffic disorder etc. (Pic: M SURESH KUMAR)

QUICK CROSSWORD 1679



Across
1. Tibia (6)
7. Hickory tree nut (5)
8. About (5)
9. Not certain (6)
10. Reach maximum (4)
12. Engrave with acid (4)
14. Food store (6)
17. Music speed (5)
19. Extraterrestrial being (5)
20. Dazzlingly bright (8)

Down
1. Hosiery (5)
2. Disregard (6)
3. Reverse (4)
4. Health professional (5)
5. Ornamental shrouded piece (9)
6. Yen (6)
11. Seasoned preserved sausage (6)
13. Dry remedy (5)
15. Engaged (6)
16. Depressed (4)

Previous Solution
Across: 1. Decanter, 6. Foul, 7. Calmed, 9. Calch, 11. Serum, 12. Ivory, 13. Learn, 16. Enamel, 18. Mini, 19. Catering.
Down: 1. Delicacy, 2. Crust, 3. Yell, 4. Yell, 5. Yell, 6. Demanding, 10. Ceramic, 14. Alibi, 15. Flat, 17. Nib.

SUDOKU: 1866

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | 4 | | | | 8 |
| 4 | 8 | 2 | 6 | 5 | |
| | 6 | 9 | | | |
| 1 | 5 | 2 | | | 6 |
| 3 | | | | 7 | 8 |
| | | | 9 | 1 | |
| | 4 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 9 |
| 9 | | | 2 | 4 | |

| Yesterday's Solution 1865 | | | | | |
|---------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | 6 | 7 | 3 | 2 | 4 |
| 3 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 7 | 9 |
| 2 | 9 | 1 | 6 | 5 | 8 |
| 9 | 4 | 2 | 8 | 6 | 3 |
| 7 | 3 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 5 |
| 5 | 1 | 8 | 9 | 4 | 7 |
| 6 | 2 | 9 | 4 | 8 | 1 |
| 1 | 8 | 5 | 7 | 3 | 2 |
| 4 | 7 | 3 | 5 | 9 | 6 |

DISCLAIMER

The views in the articles published here are absolutely the views of the author and The Echo of India does not stand liable for them.



Collage shows devotees in large numbers performing puja rituals at Ganesha, Shri, Thrapathi, Hanuman, Shirdi Sai Baba Temple Kumbhshikam at Rangat Bayon Tuesday. Villagers from different parts of Rangat and Nimbudata attended the religious function. (Pic: V SENTHIL KUMAR)



Picture shows members of Gayatri Cheta Kendra presenting a Nukkad Natak near Durga Mandap, Junglighat on Monday to generate awareness on the ill-effects of tobacco and drugs. The team also performed at Dairfarm in the evening hours. (Pic: M SURESH KUMAR)