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- ❖ **Credibility & Neutrality of the Media**
- ❖ **Trump & the American Right**
- ❖ **Odisha in Global Trade**
- ❖ **Jail Administration in India**
- ❖ **GST & Indian Textile Industry**
- ❖ **Plight of Tea Tribes in Tea Estates
of Kaliabor, Assam**



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Sino-Indian Bonhomie

Much-hyped two-day visit of Prime Minister Modi on April 27-28 to China and his exchange of views with Chinese President Xi Jinping in an informal summit at Wuhan, to be seen beyond the paroxysms of ecstasy in the media, entails two significant outcomes for India: developing a joint economic project in Afghanistan and issuing strategic guidance to their respective militaries to strengthen communication in order to build trust and mutual understanding and enhance predictability and effectiveness in the management of border affairs. Sino-Indian collaboration in developing a joint economic project in Afghanistan, with whom India enjoys abiding civilizational ties, entails the potential of raising the hackles in Pakistan which sees India's asset-creation and enduring ties with the key Central Asian nation as a direct, strategic threat to its interests. According to some experts, China's willingness to partner with India in an "economic project" in Afghanistan demonstrates that that China has no wish to be bound by its "iron brother's" strategic compulsions and is governed by its own interests.

Another salutary outcome is the agreement in principle by both sides to issue strategic guidance to their respective militaries to strengthen communication in order to build trust and mutual understanding and enhance predictability and effectiveness in the management of border affairs. The two leaders further directed their militaries to earnestly implement various confidence building measures agreed upon between the two sides, including the principle of mutual and equal security, and strengthen existing institutional arrangements and information sharing mechanisms to prevent incidents in border regions. However, Beijing's conduct in again vetoing the listing of Pakistani terrorist Masood Azhar by the United Nations Sanctions Committee and persisting to oppose Indian membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group remain some of the major stumbling blocks in bringing Sino-Indian relations on an even keel and these issues perhaps remained outside the Wuhan agenda.

India is dealing with a strong leader in Xi and the Indian leadership has to demonstrate that it is being represented by a statesman because Beijing is not oblivious to the political dissonance in India and mounting domestic difficulties confronting the present dispensation. Only a strong statesman can bargain with his counterpart, especially when the Chinese are known hard bargainers. Undoubtedly, China is India's largest trading partner with current two-way trade pegged at \$ 87 billion; nonetheless, overall trade balance is hugely in China's favour. China and India comprise about 40% of the world's population and 18 percent of global gross domestic product. Their mutual economic cooperation entails the potential of ushering in a new era of economic prosperity in the region and can be a decisive factor in new international economic order. India has been opposed to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) — President Xi Jinping's signature initiative — and in order to carry forward the Wuhan agenda, New Delhi has to convince Beijing of its sensitivities in that regard, because mere criticism breeds misapprehensions. Undoubtedly, the Indian side has put it out that the Chinese would not insist on India joining the BRI; nevertheless, the fact remains that the project, especially its CPEC (China Pakistan Economic Corridor) dimension, is a direct assault on India's sovereignty and territorial integrity, as has been pointed out by many experts.

While raising the question as to can India afford to look the other way, some analysts draw attention to the tragic irony of Modi government's carping about CPEC for over four years now, without unveiling an alternative vision to challenge it. While heeding the warning of some analysts that the nature of Sino-Indian bilateral relationship is too complicated, competitive and fraught for any one meeting to have a truly transformative impact, admittedly, the Wuhan Summit has come at a time when both powers are attempting to reduce risk in their own environments. India and China require a new template to chart their course ahead and seemingly there is no better alternative to their leaders meeting in an informal summit, unburdened by the expectations of a pre-negotiated outcome, in going about the task. India needs to watch Beijing's behavior in the post-Wuhan period whether China will continue to expand its sphere of influence in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka and the Maldives and backing political forces hostile to India in these countries. However, the Wuhan process needs to be carried forward.

— BK