

India, China are engines of global growth, says Xi

Huang Jiang, Richard Von Weizsacker fellow at the Bosch Academy in Germany points out that U.S.-led protectionism provides the strategic cement for bonding China and India.

“The informal summit is a great idea. At least both sides can see that a more cooperative relationship can increase their leverage in dealing with the outside world, especially the U.S. and its allies,” Mr. Huang told *The Hindu* .

A search for partners

Observers say that China has understood that under the cover of a trade war, the Trump administration is obstructing China's rise, triggering Beijing's search for new geo-economic partners, including India.

Domestic compulsions, including the 2019 general elections, also appear to be adding to Mr. Modi's urgency to re-engage with China.

“Before going to elections he [Mr. Modi] can say: ‘Look, I have achieved something with regard to China,’” *Nikkei Asian Review* quoted Pankaj Jha, Professor of Defence and Strategic Studies at the O.P. Jindal Global University as saying.

“If Mr. Modi can get billions of dollars of foreign investment from China, it would be a big coup,” an official source who did not wish to be named said.

Another official earlier told *The Hindu* , that the Prime Minister is looking for progress on two pet themes — a final settlement of the border rather than “management” of the frontier and the rise of an “Asian century” in cohabitation with China.

Some Chinese scholars are signalling that the discussion on resolving border issue is likely to be intertwined with the resolution of “Tibetan separatism.” In a lecture ahead of the Xi-Modi informal summit, Dalai Lama, the Tibetan spiritual head in exile, said Tibet can remain a part of China. Last year, the Dalai Lama expressed his readiness to return to Lhasa from his abode in Dharamsala.

“Historically the boundary issue and the Tibetan question is linked. If the Tibetan issue is resolved, it is very favourable for China and India to resolve the boundary”, says Long Xingchun, professor at the China West Normal University.

The interaction between the two leaders began on Friday afternoon when President Xi received Prime Minister Modi at the Hubei Provincial Museum.

In tune with the sobriety of the occasion, Mr. Modi avoided his customary hug with Mr. Xi. A firm handshake, a broad smile and an exchange of words appeared more appropriate. The two watched a brief performance of traditional dance — the prologue to at least five rounds of marathon one-on-one talks spread over a day and a half. The two leaders meet on Saturday for engagements that include a stroll on the edge of the East lake, followed by a boat ride.

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