

CHINA READY TO WAIT FOR INDIA'S BRI PARTICIPATION

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China on Monday signalled that it was ready to wait for India's participation in President Xi Jinping's signature Belt and Road Initiative, but also pointed to possible downside to New Delhi's delay in participating in the giant connectivity project.

In response to a question on the likelihood of India's non-participation in the upcoming Belt and Road Forum (BRF) that will take place later this month, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lu Kang stressed that Beijing was ready to exercise patience. He highlighted that "if the relevant side would like to wait and see, we do not oppose that".

The spokesperson's remarks align with China's perception about India's participation in BRI following last April's Wuhan informal summit between President Xi and Prime Minister Narendra Modi. In August, Zhang Jun, China's Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs, said that India was China's "natural partner" in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

But during the media briefing on Monday, Mr. Lu emphasised that India could be negatively impacted if it arrived as latecomer in the BRI family.

In an obvious reference to New Delhi, the spokesperson said that "some countries will lose some opportunities as more international organisations are participating at the (BRF) event".

Citing sovereignty concerns, India has not joined the BRI, following the establishment the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) that passes through Pakistan Occupied Kashmir.

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