

INDIA NEEDS TO EXECUTE ITS VISION ON REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: India - China

The second Belt and Road Forum starts in Beijing on Thursday. Around 40 world leaders are expected to be present. However, India has once again decided to sit out — it had not participated in the first edition held in 2017. The reasons for sitting out in 2017 remain valid till today. India's primary problem with the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. Said to be the flagship project of the BRI, the corridor passes through territory occupied by China but claimed by India.

While India's participation is ruled out from the Belt and Road Forum on grounds of sovereignty and territorial integrity, India had put out a longer note explaining the key criteria that such connectivity initiatives should fulfil. According to the ministry of external affairs (MEA), "connectivity initiatives must be based on universally recognized international norms, good governance, rule of law, openness, transparency and equality". The projects, MEA added, should not create unsustainable debt burden or harm the environment. And finally, the project should involve inputs from the local communities, and, ultimately, empower them by transferring skills and technologies. India was the first country to point to these problems in the BRI. Today, many more countries agree with India and critique the BRI in roughly the same language.

It is often said that India should make the transition, as far as global governance is concerned, from being a rule taker to a rule shaper. Whether there is indeed such a dichotomy, the Indian behaviour in this instance has been definitely one of a rule shaper. Its sitting out of the Belt and Road Forum in 2017 would have counted for little if it had not laid out an alternative vision of connectivity before the world. But vision is not the same as execution. In the intervening period, India, along with Japan, the US and Australia, have moved ahead to provide better quality alternative to the BRI, but much remains to be achieved on this front.

First Published: Apr 24, 2019 21:04 IST

END

Downloaded from crackIAS.com

© **Zuccess App** by crackIAS.com

