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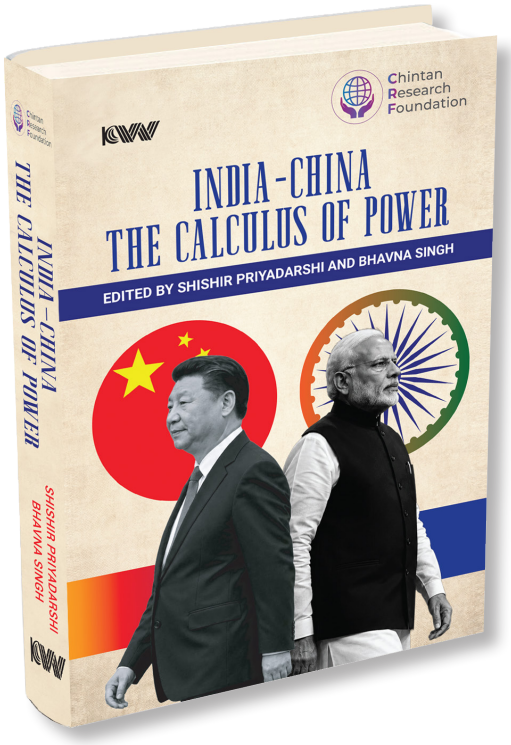

'You can change friends but not neighbours and only good fences make good neighbours'

Why do India and China still behave as adversaries despite geographical and civilizational proximity? What defines their choices as rational actors in a rapidly changing world order? Is there a method to the 'quixotic' madness for resources and race? This volume attempts to provide some answers….

India–China relations are increasingly shaped by an intractable calculus of power in which competition, cooperation and strategic caution coexist. Beyond the unresolved boundary dispute, the relationship is embedded in wider contests over economic influence, technology, connectivity, regional order and the future architecture of the Global South. Despite significant economic, technological and military asymmetry, neither country exercises uncomplicated dominance. India seeks to manage this asymmetry through strategic autonomy, issue-based partnerships and calibrated engagement, while China continues to expand its influence across India's neighbourhood and beyond.

This volume examines how these dynamics shape Indian and Chinese choices across bilateral, regional and multilateral arenas. Essays explore the historical nostalgia and narratives, current exigencies and strategic mistrust that constrain cooperation while identifying possibilities for coexistence. The volume conceptualises India–China relations not through the lens of a choice between engagement and confrontation, but as a continuous negotiation between the imperatives of economic coexistence and the realities of strategic competition.

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