



Chintan
Research
Foundation



SCO SUMMIT 2025

Resetting India-China Ties

21 August 2025 | 6:00 PM

Seminar Hall 1,2,3 | India International Centre, New Delhi



CHINTAN RESEARCH FOUNDATION

Chintan Research Foundation is an independent think tank committed to shaping policy through rigorous research and thought leadership. With a strong focus on fostering collaboration between policymakers and industry, CRF aims to incorporate practical insights into its research and advocacy efforts. It conducts comprehensive research to support informed decision-making and engages with stakeholders through discussions, events, and workshops. By publishing research papers, articles, and op-eds, CRF seeks to address key challenges in India and the Global South, fostering diverse perspectives and contributing to impactful policy advocacy.

CRF is committed to intellectual rigor, ethical integrity, and independent analysis. We prioritize objectivity, sustainability, and people-centric, data-driven solutions that address pressing policy challenges. Elevating ideas, empowering people is at the core of our mission, driving meaningful dialogue and impactful change. To undertake research that drives impactful policy solutions across climate change, energy transition, economy, trade, investment, geopolitics, and strategic affairs, with a special focus on India and the Global South.

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Ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to China for Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit in Tianjin, Chintan Research Foundation (CRF) and Centre for Global India Insights (CGII), will jointly organise a Panel Discussion on Resetting India-China Ties in the Context of SCO summit on August 21, 2025. The conference will be organised at Seminar Hall 1,2,3, India International Centre at 6:00pm-7:30pm.

The Panel Discussion will focus on the evolving agenda of the 10-nation SCO summit and prospects of enhanced cooperation among SCO countries in areas of trade and investment, security, counter-terrorism, and development cooperation. The conference will also discuss the ongoing normalisation of relations between the two Asian giants and explore specific opportunities and challenges that could pave the way for a positive trajectory of India-China relations in the near term. The panel discussion will help generate concrete recommendations for rebuilding trust and enhancing India-China relations across the spectrum.

Concept Note

With Prime Minister Narendra Modi expected to visit China to participate in the SCO summit on August 31-September 1, 2025, the role of the 10-nation Eurasian grouping in advancing regional cooperation in addressing cross-country challenges will be in the spotlight. Amid a turbulent regional and international landscape, the SCO Summit in Tianjin, China, is expected to enhance security cooperation among member countries to combat the "three forces" of terrorism, separatism and extremism, an area of key concern for India as the country has suffered a spate of cross-border terror attacks, including the April 22, 2025 targeting of innocent tourists in Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir. The Tianjin summit is also expected to enhance development cooperation among SCO countries in industrial and supply chains, and to foster new growth drivers in fields such as economy, trade, investment, energy, connectivity, scientific and technological innovation, green industries, and the digital economy. As the second largest economy and the most populous democracy in SCO, India's role in strengthening the grouping and leveraging it to promote its strategic and economic goals will be looked at closely.

India-China Reset

In view of shifting geopolitical calculus, the multi-layered relationship between India and China merits a close assessment. The process of normalisation of relations that started with an agreement on border patrolling in October 2024, followed by a meeting between the leaders of India and China in Kazan (Russia), has acquired a new momentum. Recent developments such as the resumption of e-visas to Chinese citizens and the resumption of the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra, after a hiatus of five years, signal

mutual desire to improve bilateral relations. The visits by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, National Security Adviser Ajit Doval, and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar to China in the context of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and their wide-ranging talks with Chinese leaders have set the stage for forging cooperative and harmonious relations between India and China.

These constructive steps, which seek to boost people-to-people ties, underscore mutual determination to move beyond prolonged stress following the border clashes in Ladakh in the summer of 2020 and rebuild a multi-dimensional win-win relationship. Rebuilding the relationship will entail mutual respect and mutual sensitivity to each other's core concerns. Given huge stakes in building a cooperative relationship, there is a compelling need to rethink the narrative of India-China relationship from that of adversaries to of partners in development and co-creators of an Asian Century. Looking ahead, there will be opportunities as well as challenges as the two Asian giants mark 75th year of establishment of diplomatic relations in 2025 and seek to forge a new model of peaceful co-existence and mutual empowerment that is in tune with their national interests and realities of the 21st century.

Opportunities and Challenges

As the world's second largest and fifth largest economies accounting for combined GDP of around \$23 trillion, a dynamic and balanced economic relationship will bring benefits and new opportunities to both India and China. The business communities in both countries are pitching for resumption of economic ties. While China wants removal of restrictions on investment which were imposed after the Galwan clashes in the summer of 2020, India has pressed China for removal of trade restrictions and enhanced market access for Indian products in China. Bilateral trade has grown to around \$125 billion, but trade deficit has also increased to around \$100 billion. This kind of huge trade deficit is untenable and needs to be addressed with urgency. Chinese investment in India remains sub-optimal. According to DPIIT, China's cumulative foreign direct investment into India till March 2025 (since April 2000) was \$2.5 billion. Given the untapped potential, Chinese investment in India needs to be scaled up significantly that will help create new jobs as well as help in addressing trade deficit.

On the other side, there are challenges arising from the un-demarcated boundary which lies at the heart of off-and-on tensions between India and China. Border tensions, which have increased sharply in the last few years, erode trust and stall the relationship. There are also complications arising from third-party relationships. While China is suspicious of India's deepening strategic partnership with the US, New Delhi has long-standing issues with Beijing's overt and covert support to Pakistan. Reports about China supplying air-to-air missiles to Pakistan during Operation Sindoor has fuelled negative perception of China in India.

The Big Picture

Taking into account challenges and opportunities, there is a pressing need to develop a consensus on resetting relations between India and China as it concerns the lives of over 3 billion people living in these large Asian countries. The terms of engagement need to be reappraised and thought afresh. The Panel Discussion will help generate recommendations from diplomats, economists and strategic experts on

steps and initiatives required to forge a future-focused stable and cooperative partnership that is not only good for the two countries but for the region and the world.

Event Objectives

The panel discussion will examine the following themes with the overarching goal of building harmonious and constructive relations between India and China.

Regional and Global Cooperation

- Role of regional organisations such as SCO in promoting India-China cooperation.
- Enhancing India-China cooperation in multilateral and plurilateral groupings such as G20 & BRICS.

Enhancing Economic Relationship

- To examine the current state of economic relationship and suggest ways for reducing trade deficit.
- Steps to boost two-way investment. Identifying sectors for investment such as infrastructure, EVs and renewables.

Maintaining Border Peace and Security

- Ways to boost border peace pending the final resolution of the boundary question.
- Ways to ensure Galwan-like clashes and Doklam-like incidents are not repeated.

Rebuilding Trust

- Ways to enhance mutual trust and communication.
- How to boost people-to-people and cultural contacts

Event Agenda

1800-1805h	Welcome Remarks Shishir Priyadarshi, President, Chintan Research Foundation
1805-1820h	Keynote Address H.E. Xu Feihong, China's Ambassador to India
1820-1905h	Panel Discussion
	Moderator/Chair: Mr. Shishir Priyadarshi, President, Chintan Research Foundation • General (Retd.) M.M. Naravane, Former Chief the Inidan of Army Staff • Amb. Venkatesh Varma, Member of National Security Advisory Board & India's former Ambassador to Russia • Amb. (Retd.) Neelam D. Sabharwal, India's former Ambassador to the Netherlands and foreign policy analyst • Mr Manish Chand, CEO of Centre for Global India Insights (CGII)
1905-1925h	Q & A session
1925-1930h	Vote of Thanks

Welcome and Opening Context



Mr. Shishir Priyadarshi

President, Chintan Research Foundation

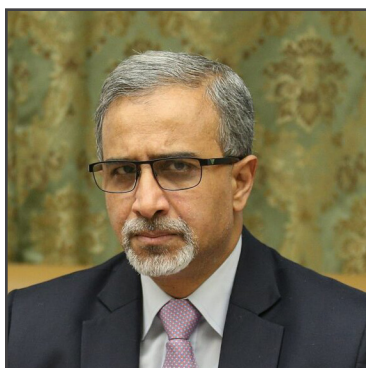
Mr. Shishir Priyadarshi, President of Chintan Research Foundation, was the first IAS officer to serve as Director of the WTO's Development Division in Geneva, working closely with the World Bank, IMF, UNCTAD, and OECD. With over two decades in the Indian Administrative Service, he contributed to economic and industrial policy at state and federal levels. A prolific author, he has published extensively on trade, development, and economic issues, and has held academic affiliations with institutions including LSE, ISB, NUS, IIT Delhi, University of Barcelona, and the World Trade Institute.



H.E. Xu Feihong

China's Ambassador to India

H.E. Xu Feihong is a Chinese Ambassador to India and previously he served as the Chinese Ambassador to Afghanistan and Romania.



Amb. Venkatesh Varma

India's former Ambassador to Russia

Ambassador D.B. Venkatesh Varma, Member of the National Security Advisory Board, is a former Indian Foreign Service officer (1988–2021) who served as India's Ambassador to Russia, Spain, and the Conference on Disarmament. An M.Phil. in International Relations from JNU, he was the first recipient of the S.K. Singh Award for Excellence in the IFS and has contributed significantly to India–Russia strategic ties.



General (Retd.) M.M. Naravane

Former Chief of the Indian Army Staff

General Manoj Mukund Naravane is a retired Indian Army General who served as the 28th Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) and temporary Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee from December 2021 to April 2022, including during the Galwan Valley clash in June 2020. A regular commentator on foreign affairs, he has served with the Indian Peace Keeping Force in Sri Lanka, as Defence Attaché in Yangon, and led Indian delegations abroad. He holds multiple degrees in defence studies and is the author of two books, *The Cantonment Conspiracy* and *Four Stars of Destiny*.



Amb. (Retd.) Neelam D. Sabharwal

India's Former Ambassador to the Netherlands

Ambassador Neelam D. Sabharwal is a distinguished diplomat whose career in the Indian Foreign Service, beginning in 1974, spanned key postings across Hong Kong, China, the United States, Switzerland, France, Cyprus, and the Netherlands. At the Ministry of External Affairs of India, she led key desks on China, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Eastern Europe. She also served as Permanent Representative to UNESCO and the OPCW. She pioneered the India Studies programme at Maastricht University and contributed to EU migration policy research. A scholar and regular commentator on India–China and India–Europe relations.



Mr. Manish Chand

CEO, Centre for Global India Insights (CGII)

Manish Chand, a well-known international relations expert, is Founder-CEO of the Centre for Global India Insights, a think tank focused on international affairs and India's rise as a global power. He is also Editor-in-Chief of India Writes Network and India and The World, a magazine-journal on global affairs. His latest book, *India's G20 Legacy: Shaping a New World*, is a compendium of essays by eminent diplomats and experts. He has authored and edited several works, including *Journeys Across Continents* and *Two Billion Dreams*. Chand has collaborated with India's MEA, leading think tanks, media organizations, and industry bodies.



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