

India, China Look To Reset Strained Relationship

Modi, Xi Holding Two-Day, Freewheeling Informal Summit; No Statement To Be Issued

WUHAN (China): India and China will look to re-set their strained ties as Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Xi Jinping meet each other at a two-day informal summit in the central Chinese city of Wuhan starting today (April 7).

The Asian giants, who fought a brief war in 1962 and have a history of mutual distrust, nearly came to an armed conflict near their border in 2017, taking their ties to a new low.

However, the "one of its kind" rendezvous between Modi and Xi at the heart of China is a sign enough that the two countries were willing for a new start in their tense relationship.

The Xi-Modi meeting will be different from the past ones as the talks will not be choreographed but freewheeling with only one Mandarin-speaking Indian interpreter present.

The meeting is an offshoot of Xi-Modi parleys just after the resolution of the Doklam crisis on the sidelines of BRICS Summit at Xiamen in China.



"The idea germinated at the Xiamen summit," said an official.

The two leaders will meet not once or twice but "several" times during the two days and will have heart-to-heart conversations, Chinese and Indian officials say.

According to informed sources, Modi and Xi might amble down the East Lake in Wuhan or take a boat ride by the historic

villa of Mao Zedong. Though there is no formal agenda of the meet and both will not issue any joint statement, thorny issues like border dispute will come up during their chat.

"You can imagine the importance Xi provides to India as this is the first time he is having such a meeting with any foreign leader. They will chat on all outstanding

issues," a Chinese official said.

India and China have a long-standing dispute over their 3,500-km long winding border, which ties them down. Of the 14 neighbours, China is yet to settle its boundary dispute only with India and Bhutan. Of the 14 neighbours, China is yet to settle its boundary dispute only with India and Bhutan. New Delhi is against

Beijing's grand Belt and Road project whose artery cuts through Pakistan-controlled Kashmir. India's stance on the Belt and Road matters to China as the opposition by New Delhi could well hamper the project. Another sticking point is Beijing's opposition to New Delhi's application to enter the Nuclear Suppliers Group and its plea at the UN to declare the Pakistan-based Masood Azhar as an international terrorist.

China's foray into the India Ocean also worries India.

India's inclination to be the part of Quad -- an emerging bloc of the US, Japan and Australia apparently to counter China in the Indo-Pacific -- worries Beijing.

As both sides have decided not make public the outcome of the two-day meet, a Chinese top official said both leaders may arrive at some important consensus to resolve their outstanding issues.

The Chinese side has said both the leaders will also talk beyond the bilateral relations. US trade protectionist policy will figure in the talks.

Letter Warns Manitoba Town Residents: 'Don't Do Yoga'

BOISSEVAIN, Man.: Lindsay Alvis was excitedly preparing to open up the first yoga studio in the small southwestern Manitoba community she calls home when a letter showed up in the mail boxes of some of her neighbours. "PLEASE DON'T DO YOGA" the letter began.

The typed letter left in mailboxes around Boissevain cautions people in the community of about 1,500 not to do yoga because of its Hindu roots, before closing with a dire warning for Christians.

"If you do yoga or are think-

ing of joining a class, prayerfully search your heart."

The letter, which warns about "yoga missionaries" and that "no part of yoga can be separated from the philosophy behind it," is only signed with the name "Marie." Alvis was astounded and disappointed that it was being circulated just as she was preparing to teach her first class at Soul Work Yoga and Fitness.

"If you don't like yoga don't do yoga," Alvis said.

"(If yoga) doesn't fall within your beliefs then don't do it, but I don't think you need to send out a

letter warning people of dangers, telling people not to do yoga and saying it in response to a yoga studio opening in your town."

Alvis was born and raised in the former town, not far from the border with North Dakota. She ended up moving to Alberta, living there for 13 years, before she came back so her husband could take over the family farm two years ago.

"I know religion is big in Boissevain but, when I decided to open the studio, I only had positive feedback," Alvis said. "I never intended to offend any reli-

gion and I don't believe that yoga is any sort of religion, especially like in my yoga studio."

She teaches Buti yoga, a cardio-intensive version of the traditional practice which involves stretching and dance. It was created by a celebrity trainer in the United States. Alvis said it's far removed from having any religious overtones.

While her studio will be the first yoga-dedicated location in Boissevain, yoga has been in the community for a while. Alvis previously taught classes through the local municipality. "It went very

well in town. So it was kind of a first for me hearing about this," said recreation director Samantha Dyck.

"Since I've been here, I've never heard any issues with yoga with regards to religious beliefs."

Calls to local churches were not returned. Alvis said she won't let the letter dampen her excitement over the studio opening.

While a few people may share the letter's sentiment, she said a lot more have reached out to show their support.

"I just want a great thing for the community," she said.

15th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Will Be In Varanasi In Jan. 2019

TORONTO: The 15th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) Convention, 2019 will be held from January 21-23, 2019 in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, in association with the State Government of Uttar Pradesh.

The theme of the 15th PBD Convention, 2019 is the "Role of Indian Diaspora in building a New India", in reverence to the sentiments of the larger diaspora community to participate in Kumbh Snan and their desires to witness the Republic Day Parade.

Broadly, the PBD Convention, 2019 will be held as per the fol-

lowing tentative schedule:

21.01.2019: Youth PBD: Special Guest from Norway (Himanshu Gulati) and Guests of Honour from New Zealand (Kanwaljit Singh Bakshi) and US Congresswomen (Tulsi Gabbard).

22.01.2019: Inauguration of PBD Convention by Prime Minister of India with Chief Guest, Prime Minister of Mauritius.

23.01.2019: Valedictory keynote address and conferment of PBSAs by President of India.

24.01.2019 Departure for Allahabad for Kumbh Snan

25.01.2019: Return to New Delhi by special train

26.01.2019: Participation in the Republic Day celebration

The event will bring forth the key issues faced by the overseas Indian community and ways to enhance Indian Diaspora participation in the country's economic growth. The focus of the 15th PBD Convention, 2019 is to unleash the potential of young PIOs to participate in the Youth PBD and PBD Convention.

The conclave is sought to create a sustainable and inclusive growth model by combining

unique strengths of the Diaspora youth as a medium of change in society and also the participation of young Indians in the online "Bharat Ko Jaaniye Quiz" in order to build a strong global connect. The Diaspora by their contribution and participation in the 15th PBD Convention, 2019 in a manner that spawns innovations and skills in their respective fields would enable India to make a global mark in the process of exploring and developing new synergies.

Ministry of External affairs, India, organizes PBD in order to

have a meaningful dialogue and mutually beneficial engagement between India and its Diaspora. The overseas Indian community estimated at over 25 million is scattered across every continent. It is in this light that a meaningful dialogue and mutually beneficial engagement between India and its Diaspora assumes great significance.

Members of Indian Diaspora interested to participate in the above PBD Convention, 2019 may visit the website and register their names on www.pbdindia.gov.in/how-register.

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