Belt and Road Forum

Why in news?

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India did not attend the BRI event of China; this underlines the enduring tragedy of Sino-Indian relations.

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India’s Distrust with China:

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- The distrust list with china has just got a little longer with the addition of the BRI.
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- Deep distrust spawned over the decades by \n
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    - Unresolved territorial disputes
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    - Intensifying competition for regional influence
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    - Difficulties over trade
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    - Growing divergence on multilateral issues like nuclear order, terrorism, Asian security
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How India should respond to BRI?

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- India’s long-term response to the BRI must be **three-fold.**
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- Union must impart greater energy and **urgency to its own internal and regional integration projects.** For the gap between India’s rhetoric on

connectivity and performance on the ground has been too wide.
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- Union must match its criticism of Chinese political and financial terms for connectivity projects with the **demonstration of a different Indian model that is less hegemonic and more in sync with global norms.**
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- Union must continue to **press Beijing for a sustained dialogue on connectivity** that will not only minimise the current contentions but also address the deeper questions on territorial sovereignty and regional rivalry that have been greatly reinforced by China's Belt and Road Initiative.
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What is the way forward?

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- As an advocate of a multipolar Asia, India has done well to sit out the Belt and Road Forum.
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- A **wait-and-watch strategy** on the BRI does no harm for the moment but the government should simultaneously step up its infrastructure building in India and the neighbourhood.
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- It should look to pool its resources with the **Japanese Partnership for Quality Infrastructure (PQI).**
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- Even if India and Japan cannot match the scale and ambitions of BRI, they will gradually begin to attract partners which will likely be alienated as the true costs and motives of Chinese investments.
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Source: Live Mint

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