Belt & Road Summit

Why in news?

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China is about to host Belt and Road summit in Beijing in May 2017.

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What is the Belt & Road Summit?

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- The Belt and Road Summit is China’s first international conference of all the 60-plus countries that have signed up to be a part of the infrastructure corridor also known as the New Silk Route and the One Belt One Road (OBOR) project.
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- It was first proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2013 and China has already allocated a $40-billion fund.
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- The route is made up of railway lines, roads, highways, maritime channels and energy projects.
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- It that will connect China to places as far as the U.K., essentially for trade in goods and fuel supplies.
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Who is attending?

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- At least 28 heads of state and government will attend the forum in Beijing, including Russian President, Pakistani PM, Myanmar’s Aung San Suu Kyi, Kazakh President and leaders of Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines.
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- The Spanish, Greek, Hungarian, Serb and Polish PMs and the Swiss and Czech Presidents will also attend.
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- Italy will be the only member of the G-7 to attend at a head of state level.
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- In addition, UN Secretary-General, World Bank President and OMF Managing Director are also expected.
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Why is India refusing to attend?

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- **India has been wary of China's intentions with the project.**
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- Those worries were further enforced with the announcement of $46 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).
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- It will connect to Xinjiang through parts of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).
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- India cannot be a part of the summit which will include Indian Territory as a part of Pakistan.
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- India will not attend the summit at a senior level or discuss joining the B&R Initiative until China clarifies its stand on PoK.
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Will India join the B&RI later?

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- All of India's neighbours, except Bhutan are a part of it.
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- India too is keen to increase connectivity with them.
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- Many of the projects envisaged under the BCIM (Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar) corridor and the "Asian Highway project" would merge into B&RI plans.
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- But tense bilateral ties with China, and India's growing concerns over Chinese intentions in South Asia and the 'Indo-Pacific' region make it practically unlikely that India will consider joining it in the near future.
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Source: The Hindu

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