



Chinese Report on the Belt and Road Initiative: Some Highlights

**Dr. Sanjeev Kumar*

China's State Information Center released a report titled *Belt and Road Big Data Report 2017* in Beijing on October 12, 2017. Sourced from over 200 companies, 800 think tanks and 1,000 media outlets across 60 Belt and Road countries, the report is expected to help assess the progress made by China on the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The following table provides details on the themes/aspects of the BRI.

Theme	Main highlight	Details
International cooperation through BRI	International cooperation further enhanced.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trade with BRI countries accounted for 25.7 per cent of China's overall foreign trade in 2016, marginally higher than the 25.4 percent in 2015. • Southeast Asian countries account for 47.76 per cent of China's trade with all countries along the Belt and Road routes. • Russia remains one of the most important partners in construction of the Belt and Road.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Russia, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Thailand and Vietnam rank as the top five partners for China. • The BRI has achieved good synergy with the development plans, strategies and organizations of Russia, the 10 members of ASEAN, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Mongolia, the United Kingdom, Poland, the European Union, Saudi Arabia, etc.
<p>Role of Chinese enterprises</p>	<p>BRI creates rare historical opportunities for the Chinese enterprises to “go out”.</p> <p>BRI enhances the reputation and influence of the Chinese brands and products.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Among the top 50 Chinese enterprises, in terms of their influence and involvement in projects related to the BRI, 42 per cent are private, 36 per cent are state-owned enterprises administrated by the central government, 20 per cent are SOEs under the administration of local governments, and the remaining 2 per cent are joint ventures. • Statistics from China’s Ministry of Commerce shows that the number of project contracts Chinese enterprises inked in 2016 in the countries along the Belt and Road routes doubled, compared to 2015. • Among the top 50 enterprises taking part in the BRI among the provincial regions in China, most came from three major cities/provinces: (a) Beijing, (b) Guangdong and (c) Shanghai. • Chinese companies showed more interest in Belt and Road development and have seen an increased presence along the route, especially those in (a) construction, (b) manufacturing, (c) finance and (d) internet industries. • Five of the top 50 enterprises are from IT sector.

<p>Financial Cooperation</p>	<p>China should strengthen financial cooperation with Central and Eastern Europe in pursuing the BRI.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • China's financial connectivity with countries along the Belt and Road routes further improved in 2017. • China's connectivity with Russia, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia are better than the others. • China's financial cooperation with Northeast and Southeast Asia are the closest along the routes, and the countries involved offer a good financial environment. • China's financial cooperation with Central and Eastern European countries should be strengthened, and the local financial environment needs to be improved.
<p>Role of China's provinces</p>	<p>China's Provinces more actively participating in BRI projects.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The five most active participants of the Belt and Road Initiative in 2016 were Guangdong, Fujian, Shanghai, Zhejiang and Shandong. • The five most active participants of the Belt and Road Initiative in 2015 were Guangdong, Zhejiang, Shanghai, Tianjin and Fujian. • In 2016, Shandong replaced Tianjin in the list of top five most active participants of the Belt and Road Initiative • Thirty provincial regions have set up Belt and Road administrative departments; all of the 31 regions surveyed have published synergy strategies to map out potential opportunities in the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative; and 24

		<p>provincial regions have issued related policies, covering free trade zones, industrial parks, finance, culture, tourism, medical care, cross-border e-commerce and logistics.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BRI encountered some problem, such as the disequilibrium of participation, the weakness of local supporting facilities in some places and the shortage of cultural and tourism communication.
<p>Cultural Exchanges/Sister cities relations</p>	<p>China has over 700 sister cities along Belt and Road routes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thailand, Russia, Egypt, Ukraine and Cambodia are the top five countries along the Belt and Road routes having the highest level of cultural and people-to-people exchanges with China. • The top three regions which have the closest cultural and people-to-people connections with China are (a) Northeast Asia, (b) Central Asia and (c) Southeast Asia. • Russia and Kazakhstan have been involved in the maximum activities, such as forums, expos and tourism festivals with China in 2016. • Media and netizens in Singapore, Pakistan and Thailand have shown high expectations for the deepening of cooperation with China. • By May 18, 2017 Chinese cities established 2,451 sister cities overseas. • In 53 countries along the Belt and Road routes, 707 cities have formed sister-city relations with Chinese cities.

Source: The above table is prepared from various reports published by Chinese government agencies/websites especially yidaiyilu.gov.cn and china.gov.cn citing the Big Data Report.

**Dr. Sanjeev Kumar, Research Fellow, Indian Council of World Affairs, New Delhi.*

Disclaimer: The views expressed are that of the Researcher and not of the Council.