

IFNIA 2020

INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON NEW INCLUSIVE ASIA 2020

BRI - Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic, Changing Reality and the Way Forward

December 17, 2020

IFNIA 2020

INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON NEW INCLUSIVE ASIA 2020

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Co-organisers



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IFNIA 2020

INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON NEW INCLUSIVE ASIA 2020

BRI - IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, CHANGING REALITY AND THE WAY FORWARD

Launched in 2013, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has faced many challenges but none like those posed by COVID-19. As the ripple effects of the coronavirus are felt across the globe, the scope and scale of BRI will invariably be affected, both in the near and longer-term future.

However, there are regional variations in the dynamic of the COVID-19 impact on BRI. From Africa to Central Asia, and South Asia to Southeast Asia, the disruptions assume diverse shapes and forms. While some BRI projects might have been temporarily grounded or stalled due to lockdowns, a few BRI partner countries have requested that their loans be forgiven or repayments be delayed. Post pandemic, BRI would need to address issues on debt sustainability and economic viability of mega infrastructure projects.

According to the World Bank projection, China is the only major economy that will register positive growth in 2020 while the global economy is expected to contract by about 4.4%. Could the China-led BRI act as the engine of growth that would accelerate the global economic recovery from the pandemic?

COVID-19 has reminded the world that viruses recognise no geographical borders or ethnicity. It also reminds the world that mankind is a community with shared future and greater cooperation in public health systems among BRI countries is urgently needed.

In the meantime, the US has elected a new president and ASEAN+5 have signed the world's largest trade deal, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), which covers nearly a third of world population and accounts for 29% of global GDP. Would such new reality in anyway affect BRI?

The above are but some of the issues that will be discussed at IFNIA 2020. A panel of 16 distinguished scholars and experts from 9 countries will share their views and insights on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on BRI, the changing reality as well as how BRI should refocus cooperation and development strategies in the post pandemic era.

IFNIA 2020 is co-organised by the Centre for New Inclusive Asia, Malaysia, the Centre for Global and Strategic Studies (CGSS) of Pakistan, and Verité Research of Sri Lanka in partnership with the Institute of the Belt and Road Initiative, Tsinghua University, China. This Forum is supported by the Belt and Road Studies Network (BRSN), an international network of more than 100 BRI think tanks worldwide, which was launched at the 2nd Belt and Road Forum held in Beijing in April 2019.



The Independent Voice of Inclusive Asia

CNIA is a non-government Malaysian think tank focusing on the studies of the new dynamics of Asia brought about by the rise of China and other Asian powers, in particular, ASEAN and South Asian countries. It is a Global Partner of the Belt and Road Studies Network (BRSN), an official alliance of international think tanks with research interest in the Belt and Road Initiative, launched by China at the 2nd Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in 2019.

The rise of China is considered by many as the most important phenomenon of the 21st century. The world needs to understand China as much as China must know the rules of the game in engaging with the world. Malaysia is uniquely the confluence of Asia's three great civilisations, namely, Chinese, Indian and Islamic. As a member of the British Commonwealth, Malaysia is also well exposed to Western political and economic philosophies and cultural values.

CNIA intends to exploit this distinct advantage by serving as a bridge to promote better understanding inter and intra Asia, as well as between the New Asia and the World.

CNIA was co-founded by Tan Sri Ong Tee Keat and Mr Koh King Kee.

Tan Sri Ong Tee Keat, Chairman of CNIA, is the former Federal Transport Minister and Former Deputy Parliament Speaker of Malaysia. He is currently the President of The Malaysia-China Silk Route Business Chamber and has been active in promoting Malaysia-China relations since his early days in active politics, more so after exiting from partisan politics in 2013. He is a well-known figure in the Chinese language literary circle for his creative writing as well as his social critique and political commentaries.

Mr Koh King Kee, President of CNIA, is currently the Director of the China Belt and Road Desk, Baker Tilly MH Advisory Malaysia. He is the Joint Vice Chairman of the Council of International Advisors of the National Academy of Belt and Road Green Development at China International Culture Exchange Centre, and former Research Director of People's Justice Party (PKR), Malaysia. Mr Koh has keen interest in the economic development and politics of China and has delivered numerous talks on BRI both in Malaysia and China.

CNIA has signed strategic cooperation agreements with several well-known think tanks in China and cohosted forums, seminars and webinars with Tsinghua University, Nanjing University, Renmin University and Jinan University.



Center for Global & Strategic Studies (CGSS), Islamabad, Pakistan

The Center for Global & Strategic Studies (CGSS), Islamabad is a public policy institution with the mission to help improve policy and decision-making through analysis and research. Our research focuses on all subjects of relevance, such as geo-strategic affairs, regional cooperation, national security strategy, international affairs, global security environment, climate change, food security, counter-terrorism, energy, justice, and national/international security affairs.

We are also the lead Think Tank working on the Belt & Road Initiative (BRI), the Eurasian connectivity and regional cooperation platform including Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Our empirical research and analysis help the government, organizations and communities.

Our mission is to find solutions for sustainable objective policies for regional, extra-regional and beyond, giving an inlet to the development of an international level network of institutions and organizations which will be broadening the virtue of horizons of the scope of information for better and well-defined analysis.



Verité Research, Sri Lanka

Verité Research (VR) is a private think tank based in Colombo, Sri Lanka, that provides strategic analysis for Asia. Its main research areas are economics, politics, law and media. VR's research teams work collaboratively and in an interdisciplinary manner and thrive on developing evidence-based solutions to the most challenging issues facing Sri Lanka.

VR has conducted research for government, private sector, multilateral agencies, diplomatic missions, and civil society actors. In addition to publishing reports, briefs and articles on a wide range of topics, VR regularly convenes and hosts public discussions on trending topics of national and regional importance, featuring local and international experts.

VR also runs several web platforms designed to give the public quick and comprehensive data and insights on key topics and issues ranging from media ethics to parliamentary performance of MPs. Notable among these are Manthri.lk, Sri Lanka's pioneering parliamentary monitoring platform, and BudgetPromises.Org, a web platform that tracks the government's performance in delivering its budget promises every year.

VR's interdisciplinary environment places the organisation in a strong position to understand the multiple forces shaping policy-making in Sri Lanka's political and economic landscape. This enables Verité to offer a range of products and services that are specifically targeted to support clients in the corporate and development sectors with their strategic planning. This includes consultations, briefings and subscription-based products such as *The Media Analysis and FrontPage*.



Institute of the Belt and Road Initiative, Tsinghua University

The Institute of the Belt and Road Initiative of Tsinghua University has been jointly established by Tsinghua University and the All-China Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese. Tsinghua University's disciplinary leverage and academic expertise, combined with the resources from the Chinese Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese, allow for an innovative partnership to further the Institute's vision.

Its goal is to carry out in-depth analyses and to deepen systematic academic research on critical issues pertaining to the implementation, progress and further development of the Belt and Road Initiative. By bringing relevant stakeholders together, it aims to facilitate theoretical and practical understanding of BRI's impact, and identify emerging avenues of cooperation.

Through these efforts, the Institute of the Belt and Road Initiative aspires to complement Tsinghua University's policy of building action-oriented, interdisciplinary think tanks aimed at providing effective solutions to existing and foreseeable challenges.



Belt and Road Studies Network

“一带一路”国际智库合作委员会

Belt and Road Studies Network (BRSN)

Initiated in Beijing in April 2019, the Belt and Road Studies Network (BRSN) is an open mechanism of academic exchange and cooperation. It serves international think tanks, international and regional organizations and researchers, promotes studies on the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), shares ideas and research findings, and encourages theoretical innovation, knowledge dissemination and personnel exchanges.

AGENDA

BRI - IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, CHANGING REALITY AND THE WAY FORWARD

December 17, 2020

WELCOME ADDRESS

14:00 – 14:20

Tan Sri Ong Tee Keat

Chairman, Centre for New Inclusive Asia, Malaysia

Prof. Dr Shi Zhiqin

Director, Institute of the Belt and Road Initiative, Tsinghua University

Lt. Col. Khalid Taimur Akram (Retd)

Executive Director, Center for Global & Strategic Studies (CGSS), Pakistan

Dr Nishan de Mel

Executive Director, Verité Research, Sri Lanka

SPECIAL ADDRESS

14:20 – 14:40

Mr Tang Rui

The Chargé d'Affaires Ad Interim

Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Malaysia

The COVID-19 Aftermath: Can BRI Spearhead the Global Recovery?

Mr Jiang Tieying

BRSN Representative, Research Fellow at National Think Tank of

Xinhua News Agency

KEYNOTE SPEECH

14:40 – 15:10

Challenges and Opportunities Facing BRI under the COVID-19 Pandemic

Prof. Huang Renwei

Executive Vice Director, Fudan Institute of Belt and Road & Global Governance

Former Vice President of Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences

Giving New Impetus to BRI in the Post Pandemic Era

Prof. Dr Niaz Ahmad Akhtar

Vice Chancellor, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan

China-ASEAN Cooperation in the Post Pandemic Era

Prof. Dr Kriengsak Chareonwongsak

Chairman, Nation Building Institute of Thailand

SUB – FORUM I

15:10 – 16:00

THEME: BRI- IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Moderator: Mr Xu Qinduo

Host of Dialogue Weekend, CGTN

Senior Fellow at Pangoal Institution

Making Sense of the COVID-19 Fallout on BRI in South Asia

Prof. Dr Rong Ying

Vice President and Senior Research Fellow of China Institute of International Studies (CIIS)

CPEC and the Pandemic: Current State of Affairs and the Way Forward

Mr Hassan Daud Butt

Chief Executive Officer, KP-Board of Investment & Trade (KP-BOIT), Pakistan

Building Back Better from COVID-19: Ensuring A Sustainable Recovery for Bangladesh and Potential Links to BRI

Dr Masrur Reaz

Chairman and Founder, Policy Exchange of Bangladesh

China's Investment in ASEAN: Green Shoots in a Post COVID-19 World?

Dr Guanie Lim

Incoming Assistant Professor at National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS), Japan

Q & A

SUB – FORUM II

16:00 – 16:50

THEME: BRI IN THE POST PANDEMIC CHANGING REALITY

Moderator: Dr Dinusha Panditaratne

Advisor, Verité Research, Sri Lanka

Former Executive Director, Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute of International Relations and Strategic Studies (LKI)

Impact of the Pandemic on Economic Development in Maldives: Challenges and the Way Forward

Hon. Mohamed Saeed

Member of People's Majlis, Republic of Maldives

Member of National Security & Foreign Relations Committee, Maldives

The COVID-19 Repercussions on China's Infrastructure Diplomacy in Southeast Asia

Dr Mao Weizhun

Associate Professor in International Politics at the School of Government, Nanjing University

Biden Administration and the Approach to Trade, Investment and Institution in the Indo-Pacific

Mr Sourabh Gupta

Senior Asia-Pacific International Relations Policy Specialist, Institute for China-America Studies, Washington DC

Challenges of Kenya BRI Projects in the Post Pandemic Era

Mr Xu Qinduo

Host of Dialogue Weekend, CGTN

Senior Fellow at Pangoal Institution

Q & A

SUB – FORUM III

16:50 – 17:40

THEME: BRI - REFOCUSING COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES IN THE POST PANDEMIC ERA

Moderator: Dr Peter Chang

Deputy Director, Institute of China Studies, University of Malaya

BRI: Keeping the Promise and Meeting the Context

Dr Nishan de Mel

Executive Director and Head of Research of Verité Research, Sri Lanka

Transforming the Landscape of BRI: New Approaches and Goals in the Post COVID-19 World

Prof. Dr Shabir Ahmad Khan

Director of Area Study Centre (Russia, China & Central Asia), University of Peshawar

Member of Board of Experts, CGSS, Pakistan

BRI in South Asia and Southeast Asia: A New Framework for Regional Cooperation

Dr Lu Yang

Research Fellow, Institute of the Belt and Road Initiative, Tsinghua University

Resident Scholar, Carnegie-Tsinghua Centre for Global Policy

BRI Through the Prism of Azerbaijan Amid the COVID-19 Pandemic

Dr Farid Shafiyev

Chairman, Center of Analysis of International Relations, (AIR Center),

Baku, Azerbaijan

Q & A

CLOSING REMARKS

17:40 – 17:45

Koh King Kee

President, Centre for New Inclusive Asia, Malaysia

END OF IFNIA 2020

Hosts & Special Guest



Special Guest
Mr Tang Rui

The Chargé d'Affaires Ad Interim,
Embassy of the People's Republic of
China in Malaysia



Prof. Dr Shi Zhiqin

Director,
Institute of the Belt and
Road Initiative,
Tsinghua University, China



Mr Jiang Tieying

BRSN Representative,
Research Fellow at
National Think Tank of
Xinhua News Agency, China



Tan Sri Ong Tee Keat

Chairman,
Centre for New Inclusive Asia,
Malaysia



Koh King Kee

President,
Centre for New Inclusive Asia,
Malaysia



**Lt. Col. Khalid Taimur
Akram (Retd)**

Executive Director,
Center for Global and
Strategic Studies (CGSS),
Pakistan



Dr Nishan de Mel

Executive Director
and Head of Research,
Verité Research, Sri Lanka



Dr Peter Chang

Deputy Director, Institute of China Studies,
University of Malaya

Dr Peter T. C. Chang is trained in the field of comparative philosophy and religion. In recent years, Dr Chang's research is focused on analyzing the new lease of life ancient philosophical and religious traditions are relishing in modern China. The project looks at how a rejuvenated Confucianism could shape the evolving character of the Chinese milieu and in turn impact the global community. Multidisciplinary in scope, the study covers subjects ranging from social-political reform to inter-civilizations engagements, and bioethical issues to environmental concerns.

Currently based at the Institute of China Studies, University of Malaya, Dr Chang is analyzing the opportunities and risks associated with the Belt and Road Initiative. He is examining this from the perspective of China's soft power, specifically the Chinese traditional as well as popular cultural imprints upon the world at large in general, and Malaysia in particular.



Mr Xu Qinduo

Host of Dialogue Weekend, CGTN
Senior Fellow at Pangoal Institution

Mr Xu Qinduo works as producer of the *TODAY* show and political analyst at China Radio International. He also hosts *Dialogue Weekend* at CGTN every week. As a political analyst who follows Chinese foreign policy closely, Mr Xu frequently contributes to international media outlets such as The New York Times, Press TV, Turkey's TRR, Russia Today, etc. He is a Member of the International Board of Experts of Center for Global and Strategic Studies (CGSS), Pakistan.

Mr Xu majored in both English language and international studies. His focus of research has been on China's rise and its interactions with the rest of the world. Mr Xu spent four years in the US as chief correspondent of CRI and one year in Australia as visiting scholar to University of Melbourne. He is a senior fellow at the Pangoal Institution and an adjunct professor at Renmin University of China.



Dr Dinusha Panditaratne

Advisor, Verité Research, Sri Lanka

Former Executive Director, Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute of International Relations and Strategic Studies (LKI)

Dr Dinusha Panditaratne is an expert on foreign policy and international law. She previously served as the Executive Director of the Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute of International Relations and Strategic Studies (LKI) in 2015-2018 and subsequently as a Non-resident Fellow of LKI. Prior to her appointment at LKI, Dr Panditaratne was an Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Law at Chinese University of Hong Kong and a Visiting Fellow at University of Hong Kong. She is an attorney admitted to practice in the State of New York and previously worked at Milbank LLP, a law firm on Wall Street.

Dr Panditaratne is an Advisor to Verité Research and serves on several boards in the non-profit and corporate sector. She is also a member of the Asia-Pacific Leadership Network for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, and previously of the International Advisory Board of the Asian University for Women in Bangladesh. Dr Panditaratne received her initial degree in law with first-class honours from University of Oxford and her master's and doctorate from Yale Law School.



Mr Jiang Tieying

Research Fellow, National Think Tank
of Xinhua News Agency

Former Bureau Chief, Xinhua News Agency
Baku Bureau, Azerbaijan

The COVID-19 Aftermath: Can BRI Spearhead the Global Recovery?

Served as a research fellow at the national think tank of Xinhua News Agency, Mr Jiang Tieying draws nearly a decade of experience in Xinhua on a range of positions, from journalist, deputy chief editor, director of overseas bureau to the current research fellow on Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) studies.

He is a Research Affiliate, China-Africa Partnership of the Research Centre of China Development Bank, and a former senior visiting academic of University of Haifa, Israel.

Mr Jiang's work focuses on BRI regional cooperation from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean. His professional work over the years involved interview missions and research trips to BRI countries, such as Syria, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Malaysia, Armenia, Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Singapore.

Mr Jiang conducts regular courses on new media and inter-culture mass communication as a guest lecturer at Communication University of China and Beijing Foreign Studies University. As a research fellow with good reputation, he has been interviewed by various media outlets, including Sputnik News (Russia), Al Jazeera, Asia Pacific Daily and Sansa Satellite to discuss BRI.



Prof. Huang Renwei

Executive Vice Director, Fudan Institute of Belt and Road & Global Governance

Former Vice President of Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences

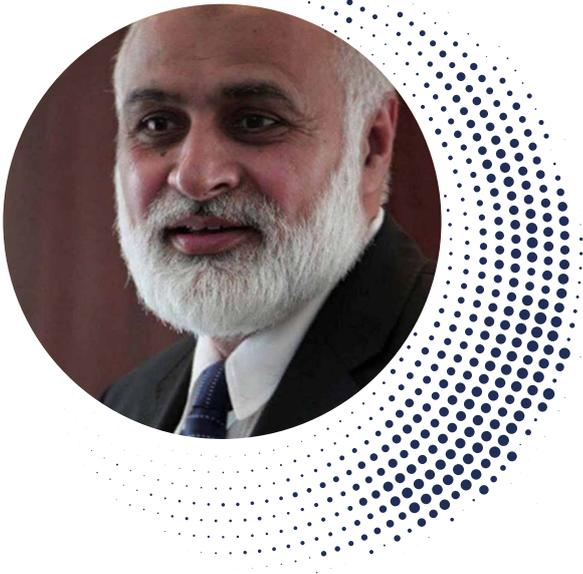
Challenges and Opportunities Facing BRI under the COVID-19 Pandemic

Prof. Huang Renwei is Executive Vice Dean of Fudan Institute of Belt and Road & Global Governance (BRGG) and Former Vice President of Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, Fudan University.

He also serves as Deputy Director of Shanghai Municipal Center for International Studies, Vice Chairman of Shanghai Association of International Relations, Vice Chairman of Shanghai Association, Secretary General of World Forum on China Studies, Vice President of China National Association for International Studies, Vice President of China Association of America Studies, and President of Shanghai Association of American Studies.

Mr Huang holds a PhD in American History. His academic work “The Time and Space of China’s Rise” (2002) has been widely quoted in the academic community of China. For over 30 years, Dr. Huang dedicates to research on American history, Sino-U.S. relations, the mainland relations with Taiwan, global governance, international economic relations as well as the rise of China.

Professor Huang has been active as a visiting professor at Leiden University, Nederland (1997); the Rand Corporation, US (1998); and Stanford University, US (1999).



Prof. Dr Niaz Ahmad Akhtar

Vice Chancellor, University of
the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan

Giving New Impetus to BRI in the Post Pandemic Era

Professor Dr Niaz Ahmad Akhtar (SI) holds a Ph.D. in Chemical Engineering from University of Leeds, UK. He has done his undergraduate in Chemical Engineering from the University of Punjab.

Previously, Dr Niaz has served as the Vice Chancellor of the University of Engineering and Technology (UET) Taxila, and as the Rector of the National Textile University, Faisalabad. He was also the Director of the Institute of Quality and Technology Management at the Punjab University. Currently, he is working as the Vice Chancellor of the University of Punjab. Dr Niaz is also serving on different boards and committees at the University of Punjab. Dr Niaz, in recognition of his service, was awarded Sitara e Imtiaz.



Prof. Dr Kriengsak Chareonwongsak

Chairman, Nation Building Institute
of Thailand

China-ASEAN Cooperation in the Post Pandemic Era

Professor Kriengsak Chareonwongsak, a Senior Fellow at Harvard University, USA, was in addition a Prime Ministerial Adviser in Thailand, a Member of Parliament and Vice Chair of the Economic Development Committee in the House of Representatives. Currently, he is President of the Institute of Future Studies for Development, Chairman of the Nation-Building Institute (NBI), and Professor of Management and Economics, Othman Yeop Abdullah Graduate School of Business, Universiti Utara Malaysia.

Professor Kriengsak Chareonwongsak is a Director of Singapore's Public listed Company ASTI Holdings and Chairman of the Board Risk Management Committee, Krungthai-AXA Life Insurance Public Company Limited. He graduated from Monash University, Australia, with First Class Honours and top of the class, and in 1981 an Economics PhD. He obtained a Master of Public Administration degree from Harvard University, USA, and holds a Master's Degree from Judge Business School at the University of Cambridge, UK, having also a D.Phil. (Doctor of Philosophy in Management) and Post Doctoral Studies (Management and Policy Analysis) both at the University of Oxford, UK. He teaches business, finance, and economics at the graduate level at several universities. He has published more than 200 books and numerous articles, presented over 500 academic papers and 6,000 newspaper and magazine articles.



Prof. Dr Rong Ying

Vice President and Senior Research Fellow of China Institute of International Studies (CIIS)

Making Sense of the COVID-19 Fallout on BRI in South Asia

Dr Rong Ying is Vice President and Senior Research Fellow of the China Institute of International Studies (CIIS). He had previously served as Deputy Director for South Asian, Middle Eastern and African Studies, Director for International Exchange, Director for International Strategic Studies, and Director for American Studies at CIIS from 1999 to 2008.

He was Vice President of CIIS from 2008 to 2011. From 1993 to 1997, he served at the Chinese Embassy in the United Republic of Tanzania as Third Secretary and as Minister-Counsellor at the Chinese Embassy in Japan from 2011 to 2016.

Dr Rong received his MA in English from Beijing Normal University and his PhD from Peking University. He was a visiting scholar at the Bush School for Government and Public Service, Texas A & M University, U.S. from April to October 2000.



Mr Hassan Daud Butt

Chief Executive Officer,
KP-Board of Investment & Trade
(KP-BOIT), Pakistan

CPEC and the Pandemic: Current State of Affairs and the Way Forward

As Project Director of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Projects (Oct 2016 - Sep 2019), Mr Hassan Daud Butt was responsible for overall coordination, monitor and control, and progress review of the entire CPEC portfolio. He was the Committee member for articulating CPEC Long Term Plan and Gwadar Smart Port City Master Plan. Earlier as a Diplomat in the Embassy of Pakistan in Beijing, China (2009-2013) and Hanoi, Vietnam, he carried out M & C and facilitation of the entire spectrum of strategic projects, and has remained engaged with Chinese Government and enterprises for procurement and tracking of all ongoing and new projects. He is a recipient of Chinese Commemorative Medal by the Chinese Ministry of Defense for improving Pakistan-China relations, and letter of Commendation as a member of the team for preparing the Long Term Plan of CPEC.

Mr Hassan assumed charge as CEO of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provincial Board of Investment & Trade (KP-BOIT) in September 2019, and has been assigned additional charge as CEO of KP-SEZA in January 2020. He is also the Focal Person for Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) initiative of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government and Chairman of the Committee for formulating KP's Industrial Policy and New Merged Districts Incentive Policy.

In pursuit of realizing the dream of transferring international project management principles and knowledge to the next generation of professionals, Mr Hassan remains actively involved as trainer and faculty in various institutions' Project Management departments.



Dr Masrur Reaz

Chairman and Founder,
Policy Exchange of Bangladesh

Building Back Better from COVID-19: Ensuring A Sustainable Recovery for Bangladesh and Potential Links to BRI

Dr M. Masrur Reaz is an economist and is the founder and Chairman of Policy Exchange of Bangladesh, a private sector think-tank focusing on applied public policy and market solutions for economic growth. Dr Masrur worked as a Senior Economist in the Finance, Competitiveness, and Innovation (FCI) Global Practice of the World Bank Group (WBG) where he served for ten years during 2010 - 2020. As part of the WBG work, he led competitiveness initiatives in the East Asia and Pacific, and South Asia regions. He also served as the Program Manager/Head of Bangladesh Investment Climate Fund (BICF). Dr Masrur task led WBG's support to Government of India on reform efforts related to Ease of Doing Business and led the World Bank Group's investment climate program in Nepal in 2013 - 2014. He also led a strategy team in 2013 to develop trade and competitiveness strategy in Sri Lanka.

Prior to joining the World Bank Group, Dr Masrur worked as an Adviser in the Economic Growth team of UK's Department for International Development (DFID). Dr Masrur earlier worked in the academia as an Assistant Professor of Finance, and in the private sector as an analyst. Dr Masrur is a commonwealth scholar, and he holds a Ph.D. in Development Economics from University of Manchester, UK, and an MBA from University of New Orleans, USA.



Dr Guanie Lim

Incoming Assistant Professor at
National Graduate Institute for
Policy Studies (GRIPS), Japan

Independent Project Consultant

China's Investment in ASEAN: Green Shoots in a Post COVID-19 World?

Dr Guanie Lim is an incoming Assistant Professor at National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS), Japan. He is also an independent project consultant for various international organizations.

Formerly a Research Fellow at Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Singapore, Dr Lim's main research interests are international political economy and global production network/ global value chain analysis. Dr Lim is interested in broader development issues within Asia, especially those of China, Vietnam, and Malaysia. In the coming years, he will be conducting comparative research on how and why China's capital exports are reshaping development in two key developing regions – Southeast Asia and Middle East.



Hon. Mohamed Saeed

Member of People's Majlis, Republic of Maldives

Member of National Security & Foreign Relations Committee, Maldives

Impact of the Pandemic on Economic Development in Maldives: Challenges and the Way Forward

Hon. Mohamed Saeed is a Member of People's Majlis of the Republic of Maldives. Currently, he is also a Member of the National Security & Foreign Relations Committee. Previously, he served as the Minister of Economic Development of Maldives from 2013 – 2018.

He also remained as Alternate Director of the Asia Infrastructure and Investment Bank (AIIB), China in January 2016. He also served as the International Advisory Member of the Expert Advisory Committee of China Association for Small and Medium Commercial Enterprises. He is a Geo-Strategic expert on the regional issues



Dr Mao Weizhun

Associate Professor in International Politics at the School of Government, Nanjing University

The COVID-19 Repercussions on China's Infrastructure Diplomacy in Southeast Asia

Dr Mao Weizhun is currently an Associate Professor in International Politics at the School of Government, the Deputy Editor-in-chief of NJU Asia-Pacific Review, and a Research Fellow at the Centre for Asia-Pacific Development Studies, Nanjing University.

He holds the Doctor's degree in Social Science (Dr. rer. soc) awarded by Universität Konstanz in 2015 and a PhD degree in International Relations from Renmin University of China in 2012. From 2011 to 2014, Dr Mao conducted his research in a transnational project as Junior Researcher and Postdoctoral Associate at Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF), Leibniz Association, Germany.

His recent research topics include infrastructure building and Belt & Road Initiative, data governance and diverse issues of international security on great powers.



Mr Sourabh Gupta

Senior Asia-Pacific International Relations Policy Specialist,
Institute for China-America Studies,
Washington DC

Biden Administration and the Approach to Trade, Investment and Institution in the Indo-Pacific

Mr Sourabh Gupta is a resident senior fellow at the Institute for China-America Studies (ICAS) in Washington D.C. He is a senior Asia-Pacific international relations policy specialist with two decades of Washington, D.C.-based experience in a think tank and political risk research and advisory capacity. Key area of expertise pertains to the intersection of international law, both international maritime law (Law of the Sea) and international trade and investment law, with the international relations of the Asia-Pacific region. Areas of specialization include: analysis of major power relationships and key flashpoint issues in the Asia-Pacific region; analysis of outstanding territorial disputes and maritime law-related developments in Asia; and analysis of developments in World Trade Organization and Asia-Pacific investment, trade and economic regionalism-related policy and politics.

He is a member of the United States Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific (USCSCAP) and was a 2012 East Asia Forum Distinguished Fellow.



Dr Nishan de Mel

Executive Director and Head of Research,
Verité Research, Sri Lanka

BRI: Keeping the Promise and Meeting the Context

Dr Nishan de Mel is the Executive Director and Head of Research of Verité Research, a think tank that provides analytical research and advisory services on economic, political and legal issues in Sri Lanka and Asia. He is an economist with extensive academic, policy, and private sector experience.

In Sri Lanka, he has served as the Executive Director of the International Centre for Ethnic Studies (ICES) and on the Board of the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute. He has been a Member of the Presidential Task Force on Health Sector Reform, Presidential Committee on Tobacco, Alcohol and Dangerous Drug Regulation, and the National Steering Committee on Social Security. Internationally, Dr Nishan has held several governing, teaching, and research positions, including as Lecturer in Economics at Oxford University.

He earned his masters and doctoral degrees in economics at University of Oxford, where he was a Chevening Scholar, and his undergraduate degree in economics from Harvard University.



Prof. Dr Shabir Ahmad Khan

Director of Area Study Centre
(Russia, China & Central Asia),
University of Peshawar

Member of Board of Experts,
CGSS, Pakistan

Transforming the Landscape of BRI: New Approaches and Goals in the Post COVID-19 World

Prof. Dr Shabir Ahmad Khan is the Director of Area Study Centre (Russia, China & Central Asia), University of Peshawar, Pakistan. He has various research publications in HEC recognized journals to his credit. He also translated Noor Sultan Nazarbayov, Kazakh President's Book "V Patok-e-Istoriie" Almaati 1999, from Russian into Urdu. He has taught various courses to M.Phil and Ph.D students.

He has participated and organized several national and international Conferences and Seminars. He is also a Member of the Board of Experts of the Center for Global & Strategic Studies (CGSS), Islamabad.



Dr Lu Yang

Research Fellow, Institute of
the Belt and Road Initiative,
Tsinghua University

Resident Scholar, Carnegie-Tsinghua
Centre for Global Policy

BRI in South Asia and Southeast Asia: A New Framework for Regional Cooperation

Dr Lu Yang is currently a research fellow at the Institute of the Belt and Road Initiative, Tsinghua University, and resident scholar of the Carnegie-Tsinghua Centre for Global Policy. She received her doctorate in political science from University of Heidelberg, Germany in 2014, worked as a lecturer in Heidelberg and later as postdoc fellow in the Department of International Relations at Tsinghua. She is also the CISLI fellow at the India-China Institute, The New School in New York. Her main research area is South Asian politics, especially Sino-Indian relations. In recent years, she has expanded her interests to the Belt and Road Initiative, with a special focus on regional cooperation.

In addition to academic writing, she also comments on current affairs in the media. She is the author of the book, *China-India Relations in the Contemporary World: Dynamics of National Interest and Identity*, published by Routledge in 2017.



Dr Farid Shafiyev

Chairman, Center of Analysis of International Relations, (AIR Center), Baku, Azerbaijan

BRI Through the Prism of Azerbaijan Amid the COVID-19 Pandemic

Dr Farid Shafiyev was educated at Baku State University where he studied history and law. Amidst his professional career, he went on to Harvard University Kennedy School of Government where he obtained a Master's Degree in Public Administration. Further, Dr Shafiyev acquired a PhD in History from Carleton University in Ottawa. In 1996, he joined the Foreign Service. Within the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry in Baku, he worked in the Political-Military Issues Division and the United Nations Affairs Division. On 19 February 2019, he was appointed the Chairman of the Center of Analysis of International Relations.



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