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Joint border development mooted as solution

Rhea Sundara Raju

BENGALURU: While questioning the need for joint border development between China and India, Shastri Ramachandaran, author and journalist, said that although a joint development isn't likely in the next 20 years, it can help settle the border conflict.

On Tuesday, the Bangalore International Centre (BIC) hosted a discussion titled 'China through another prism'. Shastri Ramachandaran and Manoj Kewalramani, Chairperson of the Indo-Pacific Studies programme at Takshashila Institution, discussed the border conflicts between China and India and China's development model.

He said that apart from protocol, nationalistic sentiments, and domestic political pressures, the Chinese seem to have a cultural pattern that naturally makes them expansionist. They see boundaries as part of a territory and will try to possess it with or without military rule.

The discussion encouraged a refined understanding of China's developmental model, allowing the audience to consider its implications for India and other developing nations. Highlighting that this developmental model wipes off inequalities like caste, ethnicity, religion and all other divides, he said, "This model is something that we have been conditioned to believe, which has become an article of faith. The only redeeming feature of this developmental model, even in India, is that it is extremely secularising".

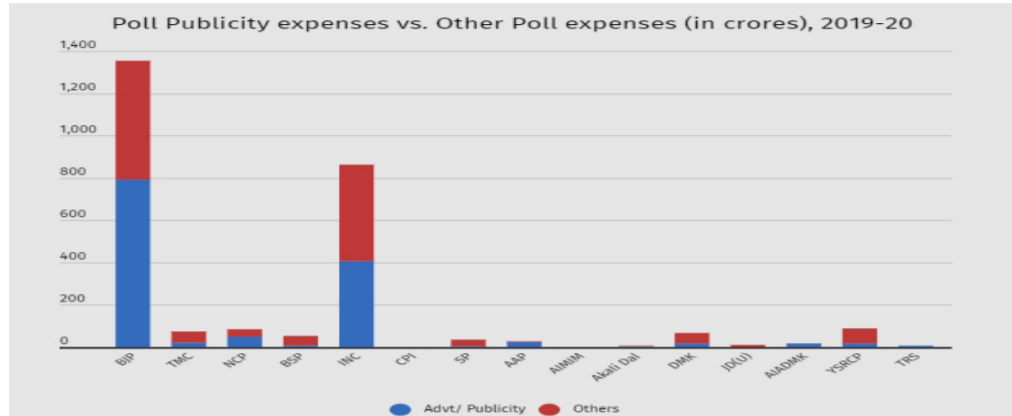
Political shift towards online advertising

Amrutha GP

BENGALURU: Amidst the country's election fervour, political parties have been pushing their advertisements through all the mass media platforms. Various reports suggest that the amount spent on these ads has increased significantly.

Political party expenditures on public relations have attracted much interest and research. Understanding the financial commitments political parties make to influence public opinion is critical, as individuals demand greater transparency from their government.

Parties' practices for allocating funding for publicity have changed significantly since the emergence of digital



The Economic Times

media and the changing nature of political communication.

According to Statista, BJP, India's ruling party, became the most prominent online political advertiser in 2024 after spending over 300 million Indian rupees on Google Ads and Meta. Next in line was the regional political party YSRCP in Andhra Pradesh.

Indian National Congress is said to have spent nearly 130 million rupees on online advertisements in the same time frame.

In a significant shift, political parties in India poured over 1.1 trillion Indian rupees into advertisements in 2023, marking a 7% increase from the previous

year. Moreover, more than half of this advertising revenue was generated by new media, indicating the rising influence of digital platforms in political communication.

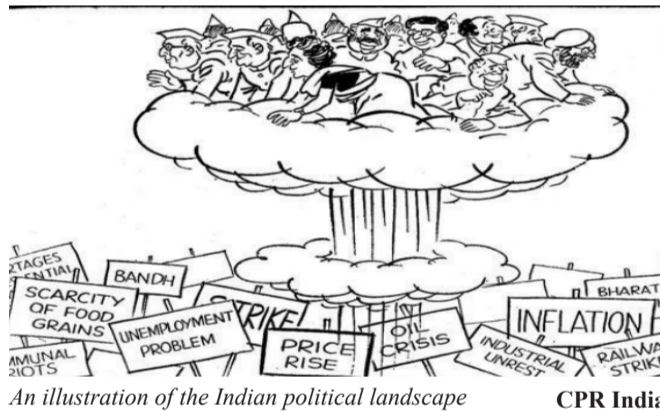
According to estimates, the market will grow by 10% in 2024 and 9% CAGR (compound annual growth rate) through 2026.

Here is the thrust of manifestos this election

Shruti Srivastava

As Lok Sabha elections are nearing, the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Indian National Congress, the two major parties in India, have created election manifestos with multiple promises, while several members of both parties are criticising each other's manifestos. The parties are essential components of a democracy, and therefore, their manifestos reflect the country's economic and social landscape.

According to a study by the Centre for Policy Research, in the current scenario, the BJP government prioritises national



An illustration of the Indian political landscape

security (10.4%), political competence (8%), and development and infrastructure (23.6%), while the left-leaning parties continue to prioritise social fabric (16.1%) as they consider themselves to be the principal ideological

opposition to the Hindu majoritarian ideology that the BJP champions.

However, the study indicates that welfare plans for agriculture, women, health and education, and underprivileged classes were com-

mon promises among all the parties. The share of welfare promises in party manifestos has increased across parties. All parties dedicate 5-10 per cent of their promises to welfare schemes.

When it comes to women's welfare, the BJP dedicates 10-20 per cent of the share of words in their manifestos for women's welfare schemes, highlighting equal opportunities for women, including education and training. The Congress has focused on removing social disabilities for women to ensure their full participation in the country.

Activist calls for prioritising development of state

Sherin Johnson

BENGALURU: On Tuesday, Brindha Adigae, a social activist and the founder of Global Concerns, said that the Karnataka government should take measures to ensure that revenue generated in the state is used for the development of the state, which would aid its people.

Speaking at Citizen Manifesto, a discussion organised by CNN news18 on April 16 at St Joseph's University, Adigae said that whether a student studies in a corporation or a government school, it should not limit their dreams. She said, "Where you come from doesn't matter. What matters is your aspirations and where you want to go."

Adigae opined that unemployment is another major issue. According to statistics, a large number of students graduating from various professional courses, including engineering, do not have job opportunities available to them in the state.

While discussing development, she emphasised the importance of prioritising infrastructural needs, such as stormwater drains and metros for transportation, over construction projects that may be considered luxury. She suggested putting luxury construction projects on hold to prioritise dealing with water scarcity in the state.

The fate of the dancing gods

Parvathi Nair

BENGALURU: Although they aren't given much respect, "Theyyam" performers enjoy a certain status associated with the particular deity they carry, said Pepita Seth, a writer and photographer, on Wednesday at a lecture organised by the Bangalore International Centre (BIC). During the lecture titled, 'The Gods Who Come Down from Heaven', Seth elaborated on her work about theyyam, published in her recent book 'In God's Mirror: The Theyyams of Malabar'.

Theyyam is a popular ritual worship form in Kerala involving dance, music, and costumes.

Speaking about the future of the ceremonial tradition, she opined



A Theyyam artist in full attire

Kerala Tourism

that younger performers are very determined to carry the art forward. "For the first time, they have found a way of earning money without upsetting Theyyam," she said. Citing a few examples of performers she knows, Seth explained that many have jobs that pay enough to sustain their families. Moreover, the newer generation of performers aspire to get better-paying and stable

jobs but fear they may not have enough time for their art. "When I asked him what happens when you get the job, a total look of fear ran across his face, and he said that he can't give it up (Theyyam)," she said while recalling an interaction with one of the young performers who had asked her to help refine his English language skills to secure a job in a bank.

Fahadh starrer 'Aavesham' stuns

Sonia Sebi

Aavesham, yet another fun-packed movie from the Romancham director Jithu Madhavan, is a well-crafted gangster comedy with Fahadh Fasil in the lead role. The plot revolves around 3 college students, played by Instagram influencers Hipster Mithun Shankar and Roshan Shanavas, who befriend a local goon to take revenge on their abusive seniors.

The movie that was released as the reintroduction of Faasil in Malayalam cinema is a one-person show like his other movies. It is a perfect blend of action and comedy, combining gripping fight sequences and humour. Sajin Gopu is in the spotlight

as 'Amban' in a supporting role to Fasil's character, which undoubtedly outshines the protagonist himself. The movie does not have an actress in the lead role and lacks the presence of a female character altogether.

The music, composed by Sushin Shyam, is a stand-out feature, with energetic soundtracks and songs that took down the internet even before the movie's release. Sameer Thair's cinematography and Chethan Dsouza's stunt choreography are top-notch, adding to the already thrilling mass entertainer, now the talk of the town, with an impressive global box office collection.