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‘Practical LAC definition can improve ties’

Former Foreign Secretary MK Rasgotra feels Sino-Indian ties can get a big fillip if China agrees to a practical definition of the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

Speaking after being conferred the ML Sondhi Prize for International Politics, Rasgotra quoted a Chinese academic to assert that China’s Belt and Road Initiative will make progress in South Asia only if India shows adequate interest. Therefore, a Chinese gesture on LAC could open the doors for the wholehearted participation of many countries including India.

Sui Zongji, adviser to the government of China on Indian and South Asian Affairs, has said that China keenly wants India in the BRI “not only because of India’s population, labour resources and a huge market but also because of India’s political influence over the South Asian and Indian Ocean countries”.

But if China agrees to clearly define the LAC’s course, India might be persuaded to consider a China-India Friendship Railway Corridor.

According to Rasgotra, if China does bring the railway line from Lhasa, or some other place in Tibet, to Kathmandu, it could come down to Raxaul on India-Nepal border and from there advance to places of pilgrimage interest to Chinese Buddhists—Sarnath and Gaya.