

Heritage diplomacy along belt and road initiative: Sri Lanka's role

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At present, preservation of cultural heritage is complex. There is also a major growth of international cooperation between countries in Asia regarding preservation of cultural heritage. China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), that is also known as "One Belt One Road" (OBOR), is a gallant vision which focuses on improving connectivity as well as cooperation among several countries in Asia, Africa and Europe via a network of infrastructure projects in many sectors such as maritime ports, power grids, telecommunications, IT, logistics, energy and transportation. Termed as China's "soft power" strategy, this project plays a complex role in diplomacy, people-to-people connectivity, culture, heritage and history. Situated at the crossroads of the Indian Ocean, Sri Lanka has an advantageous geographical position and will benefit greatly as a trading hub. In land as well as sea forms, BRI gives a stimulus to a network of heritage diplomacy, which promotes interpersonal connections. Through BRI, China is spending immensely for heritage diplomacy to secure influence in the Indian Ocean region. According to experts, at present, deep history of China plays a major role in international affairs. BRI is considered as the most noteworthy and far-reaching project China has proposed. There are five goals in this endeavor: connectivity and cooperation, facilities connectivity, people-to-people relationships, policy coordination and unimpeded trade. BRI Project is an initiative to support "inter-civilization exchanges" which will build "bridges of friendship", advocate human development and promote world peace.

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