

Xi's visit to Dhaka will mark a milestone for Sino-Bangladeshi relationship

By Zhang Xiaoyu Source: People's Daily and Global Times

Chinese President Xi Jinping kicks off a visit to Bangladesh Friday. The visit is taking place three decades after the former Chinese president Li Xiannian visited Dhaka in 1986. Both China and Bangladesh have great expectations for this historic state visit.

In recent years, the leaders of China and Bangladesh have had frequent interactions on different occasions. In 2014, the President of Bangladesh Abdul Hamid and the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina visited China separately in November and June and had talks with President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang.

The leaders of both sides reconfirmed they would promote a closer bilateral comprehensive cooperative partnership to constantly score new results. Chinese Vice Premier Liu Yandong made an official visit to Bangladesh in 2015 and the cultural and educational ties between the two sides have been strengthened. Xi himself visited Bangladesh in 2010 when he was vice president. His state visit this time will bring the Sino-Bangladeshi relationship to a new level.

On the one hand, China is the biggest trade partner of Bangladesh and Bangladesh is the third biggest South Asian trade partner of China at the moment. Xi's visit will bring new opportunities to the two countries' trade cooperation and the development of the Bangladeshi economy.

During this visit, the two sides are expected to sign agreements in more than 20 projects, including the construction of transportation, electricity and energy infrastructure. These projects will help develop Bangladesh and improve local people's livelihoods.

Moreover, Bangladesh is located in the Bay of Bengal and borders on India and Myanmar. It is not only China's important cooperative partner in South Asia, but also has a key place in the development of the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Corridor. Chinese investment in Bangladesh will help increase regional infrastructure connectivity and create more possibilities in cooperation among the four countries.

Besides, the two countries' industrial structure is complementary and it is feasible that the labor intensive industries of China will be moved to Bangladesh in future.

In June 2016 the two sides signed a memorandum for the establishment of a Chinese Economic Industrial Park in Chittagong, Bangladesh. It means there will be more Chinese enterprises investing and starting business in Bangladesh in near future and their rich experience in infrastructure construction and manufacturing can contribute to Bangladesh's development.

Undoubtedly, Bangladesh is eager to draw from China's successful experience and seize the chances brought by the construction of "One Belt and One Road" and promote bilateral connectivity. At the same time, China will benefit from the excess manufacturing capacity and

these actions will help China to reach out internationally to create new drives for growth.

On the other hand, Xi's visit will help deepen the mutual understanding between the two countries' people and create more chances for governmental and non-governmental exchanges between the two sides.

For a long time, information about Bangladesh has been rarely seen in Chinese mainstream press and the news about Bangladesh is no more than natural disasters.

As a result, the Chinese people usually have a vague impression of the country. It is significant that the state visit will open a new window for Chinese people to learn about the society and culture of Bangladesh.

Meanwhile, there are more and more Bangladeshi youngsters learning Chinese and planning to take further education in China, it is important for them to know the real China in the proper and right way. This visit will be a perfect opportunity for China to share the fruits of development with Bangladesh and present the image of itself as a responsible country.

With the construction of "One Belt and One Road" and the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Corridor, Xi's visit to Dhaka will mark a milestone in the Sino-Bangladeshi relationship and bring new opportunities to bilateral cooperation, just as he pointed out in 2015 that "China and Bangladesh have nothing but friendship, trust and cooperation." It is clear that China will make more specific plans to enhance the ties with Bangladesh in future.

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