

China: SCO can bridge India-Pak distance

Could Be Good Platform: Foreign Minister Wang

Saibal Dasgupta | TNN

Beijing: China expects the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation to play a key role in resolving the differences between India and Pakistan, which joined the organisation last year.

“We know there are existing and historical unresolved conflicts between Pakistan and India,” Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi said on Monday in an interview with CGTN, the country’s national broadcaster. “But I think after they joined the SCO, maybe we can provide a better platform and opportunities for the building of relations between them.”

The statement is significant because Prime Minister Narendra Modi had indicated on Sunday that Pakistan was a major stumbling block in the improvement of relations between India and China.

Speaking at the first SCO summit after India joined the organisation in the Chinese coastal city of Qingdao, Modi said infrastructure pro-



Prime Minister Narendra Modi shakes hands with Pakistan’s President Mamnoon Hussain as Chinese President Xi Jinping walks by at the signing ceremony of the SCO in Qingdao on Sunday

grammes should take into account the need to “respect the sovereignty” of member states. He was referring to the fact that China’s Belt and Road Initiative passes through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. India also became the only SCO member to refuse to endorse the BRI which was backed by Russia, Pakistan and Central Asian countries.

Wang said all SCO members have taken pledges about maintaining good relations with other members. He described the SCO as a “great vehicle” for improving ties between India and Pakistan.

Afghanistan’s stability is the top regional security issue for the organisation because it is a neighbour to most SCO members, the minister said.