

Institute of Chinese Studies

WEDNESDAY SEMINAR

*Eclipsing the West:
China, India and the
Forging of a New
World*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Speaker:

Sir Vince Cable

21 January 2026

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Speaker: Sir Vince Cable, Visiting Professor in Practice, The London School of Economics and Political Science, London.

Chair: Prof. Alka Acharya, Director, Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi.

Venue: Zoom Webinar

- The seminar examined the emerging shift in global economic power away from the West, noting the decline in the Western share of global output and the corresponding rise of the Global South, with China and India accounting for a substantial part of this transformation. Sir Vince Cable argued that these changes represent a historical reversion rather than a novelty. He noted that China and India had been dominant economic powers for centuries before their relative decline in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Furthermore, current trends are moving the global system back towards an older distribution of economic weight.
- A central theme of the presentation was the structural advantage of scale. Large and increasingly integrated domestic markets in China and India, combined with internal labour mobility were cited as sources of resilience against protectionism and as foundations for industrial, technological and strategic capacity. The speaker compared the development paths of China and India, highlighting China's strengths in manufacturing, infrastructure and long-term planning, and India's strengths in services, human capital, and economic adaptability.
- Sir Vince Cable identified three main axes of contemporary geoeconomic competition which includes manufacturing, technology and finance, arguing that China now dominates global manufacturing. Further, China is rapidly catching up with the United States in key technologies such as AI, green technologies and telecommunications, and the dominance of the US dollar, is increasingly being challenged.
- In conclusion, the speaker argued that global governance institutions have weakened and that the world is moving towards a more fragmented and overlapping set of

alignments from a bloc-based order. While India-China relations combine both cooperation and rivalry, the speaker emphasised that the 21st century will be decisively shaped by both countries and that sustained dialogue and people-to-people engagement will be essential despite enduring strategic tensions.

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