



(From left) VIT University chairman G. Viswanathan, Nankai University vice-president Xu Jingjun and Renmin University dean Wang Wen share their views during the event.

By **Ananth Krishnan** in Beijing

EVEN as India and China continue to engage with a host of difficult political issues — and a relationship that has become an increasingly complicated mix of competition and cooperation — there is still much that both countries can do to fulfil the untapped potential of Indian software coming together with China's hardware.

Leading experts in IT, manufacturing and education from both sides, speaking at the India Today Global Roundtable in Beijing, were of the view that a starting point would be much greater engagement between two countries.

"If you meet a taxi driver in China, he will say India means two things to him — IT, and beauty," said Prakash Menon, long-time CEO of NIIT China which trains tens of thousands of Chinese every year in provinces around the country.

However, the much heralded marriage of software and hardware "hasn't been a perfect fit" so far, acknowledged Kaiser Kuo of Baidu, the Internet giant often known as "China's Google".

This week, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will press China for greater market access for Indian firms. But the issue goes far beyond market access and also depend on Indian companies "needing to localise their

Joining hands in IT to help both giants

services" for the China market, said Rangarajan Vellamore, Chairman of the Confederation of Indian Industry-India Business Forum IT Working Group and CEO Infosys China.

Beyond IT, there was also untapped complementarity in manufacturing, with powerhouse China today dealing with overcapacity in many sectors while India is trying to kickstart its 'Make in India' drive. In China, Modi will seek Chinese investment in pushing forward two industrial parks in Gujarat and Maharashtra, with China pledging \$ 20 billion in the next five years.

One big lesson from

A student asks a question to the panel.

China's success, according to James Zhan, President of Tata Sons China, was investor-friendly policies that were unveiled at the start of China's reforms, from tax structures to fast clearances and infrastructure.

The information gap was not just an IT problem: there was little two-way flow between two of the world's biggest education markets because of a common focus on the West. "Chinese students go to western countries and spend huge amounts, when with one-third or one-fourth of the amount they can have the same or better education in India, but that is not known to Chinese students and parents," said G. Viswanathan, Chancellor of VIT University.

