



LOC & LAC BORDER DISPUTES – INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

NEWS: The border dispute between India and China has seen recent developments, particularly regarding military disengagement along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

Line of Control

- The LoC emerged from the 1948 as “ceasefire line” negotiated by the UN after the Kashmir War.
- It was designated as the LoC in 1972, following the Shimla Agreement between the two countries. It is delineated on a map signed by DGMOs of both armies and has the international sanctity of a legal agreement.
- The part that is under Indian control is known as the state of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.
- The Pakistani-controlled part is divided into Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit–Baltistan. The northernmost point of the Line of Control is known as NJ9842.

Line of Actual Control

- The Line of Actual Control (LAC) is the demarcation that separates Indian-controlled territory from Chinese-controlled territory.

LAC is different from the Line of Control (LoC) with Pakistan:

- The LoC emerged from the 1948 ceasefire line negotiated by the United Nations (UN) after the Kashmir War.
- It was designated as the LoC in 1972, following the Shimla Agreement between the two countries. It is delineated on a map signed by the Director General of Military Operations (DGMO) of both armies and has the international sanctity of a legal agreement.
- The LAC, in contrast, is only a concept – it is not agreed upon by the two countries, neither delineated on a map nor demarcated on the ground.



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- Length of the LAC: India considers the LAC to be 3,488 km long, while the Chinese consider it to be only around 2,000 km.





Sectors Across the LAC:

- It is divided into three sectors: the eastern sector which spans Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim (1346 km), the middle sector in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh (545 km), and the western sector in Ladakh (1597 km).
- The alignment of the LAC in the eastern sector is along the 1914 McMahon Line.
- The McMahon line marked out previously unclaimed/undefined borders between Britain and Tibet.
- The middle sector is the least disputed sector, while the western sector witnesses the highest transgressions between the two sides.

Recent Agreements and Restoration of Patrolling Rights

A significant recent development involves the restoration of **patrolling rights in the Depsang Plains and Demchok** in Ladakh—areas that have been key flashpoints in the ongoing conflict between India and China. This agreement is viewed as the first concrete step toward restoring the **pre-2020 status quo** along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). Additionally, agreements have been reached regarding other sectors along the LAC, including **Arunachal Pradesh**.

Significance of the Agreement

- **De-escalation and Stability**
This disengagement process, though in its early stages, is crucial for reducing tensions and preventing further military confrontations along the border. It lays the groundwork for **gradual de-escalation and the de-induction of troops**, a process that will require careful monitoring and sustained diplomatic efforts.
- **Impact on Bilateral Relations**
For India, progress with China is vital not only for improving **bilateral relations** but also for its broader **geopolitical strategy**. Easing tensions with China opens up diplomatic space for India as it navigates relationships with major global powers, including **Russia** and the **West**.
- **Political Engagement**
A potential meeting between the Indian Prime Minister and the Chinese President on the sidelines of the **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit** could further solidify these agreements and pave the way for future **political and economic engagement**.

Recent Diplomatic Interactions

Recent high-level diplomatic interactions have played a key role in the disengagement process along the LAC. India's **National Security Advisor Ajit Doval** met with Chinese Foreign Minister **Wang Yi** on the sidelines of the BRICS NSA meeting in St. Petersburg, Russia. Optimism for further disengagement is linked to the upcoming **BRICS Summit** in October in Kazan, Russia, where leaders from both nations are expected to meet.



Significance of the Disengagement Process

The 31st meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation & Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC) was described as “frank, constructive, and forward-looking.” Both sides expressed a desire to “narrow down differences” and seek an “early resolution of outstanding issues.” The use of the phrase “narrow down differences” for the first time in bilateral talks signals hope for further disengagement and progress in resolving the border standoff.

Challenges in the Disengagement Process

Stalled Negotiations

Despite multiple rounds of negotiations, **agreements on Demchok and Depsang** have yet to materialize, and progress has been slow.

Military Build-Up

Both India and China have continued to build up **infrastructure** and maintain substantial **troop deployments** along the 3,488 km-long LAC. Currently, both nations have an estimated **50,000-60,000 troops** stationed along the border, underscoring the potential for escalation.

Source: <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/beijing-confirms-troop-disengagement-going-smoothly-at-the-moment-9640615/>