

Past border agreements are in disarray as the Line of Actual Control sees heavy deployment

As winter arrives on the Line of Actual Control (LAC), the latest round of talks — the thirteenth — between India and China ended with no resolution in sight, leaving tens of thousands of soldiers facing the prospect of another harsh cold season on the heights of Eastern Ladakh. The contrasting statements sharply underlined the deadlock.

The Indian Army's statement on Monday morning noted that while India made "constructive suggestions" for resolving the remaining areas, the Chinese side "was not agreeable and also could not provide any forward-looking proposals". A Chinese statement on Sunday night accused India of making "unreasonable and unrealistic demands".

There was no joint statement, as in the last round in August, when agreement was reached to disengage at Gogra. The only surprise is that the discord is now fully out in the open, in contrast to the anodyne declarations of both sides in August to "enhance trust" and "expeditiously resolve" issues that have already dragged on for more than one year. In fact, recent events on the boundary offered a portent that all was not well.

First, reports citing Indian official sources, put out two days before Sunday's talks, revealed a face-off in the Tawang Sector in Arunachal Pradesh; later, Chinese soldiers had been detained for a few hours. The reports sparked an angry reaction in China, where the military apparently leaked on social media images from last year purportedly showing injured Indian soldiers detained by China in the Galwan Valley.

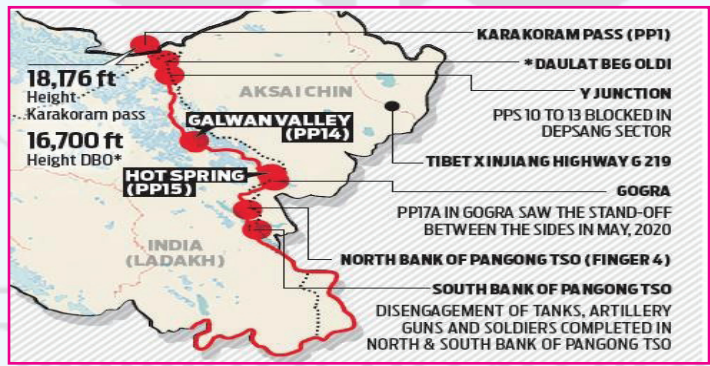
Statements from the Chinese Foreign Ministry, accusing India of following a "forward policy" in an explicit invocation of 1962, have vitiated the atmosphere.

That China put out a statement on Sunday night barely hours after the talks concluded — a departure from normal practice in a country where statements usually are carefully vetted — suggests the PLA had no real intention to seek a resolution.

This leaves the LAC in a perilous situation. Not only are several hotspots unresolved — the latest round was to discuss Hot Springs, while disputes remain over Demchok and Depsang — the Corps Commanders were also set to work out new protocols for patrolling.

Speaking this weekend, Indian Army Chief General M.M. Naravane noted a large-scale infrastructure build-up on the Chinese side, and said as Chinese troops were there to stay, Indian troops will be there to stay too. Ladakh and the western sector may remain the focus of tensions, but as recent flare-ups in Uttarakhand and Arunachal Pradesh show, the middle and eastern sectors are hardly tranquil.

Past border agreements are in disarray in the wake of China’s unprecedented amassing of troops, while around 50,000 troops of each side remain deployed in forward areas, all of which make for a dangerous mix as winter falls on the Himalayas.



WHY LAC OFTEN FLARES UP

23 “disputed and sensitive” areas along the unresolved 3,488-km-long LAC witness aggressive patrolling & face-offs between troops from the two sides

FLASHPOINTS INCLUDE:

- Himachal:** Kaurik, Shipki La
- Uttarakhand:** Barahoti & Pulan Sunda
- Ladakh:** Demchok, Trig Heights, Dumchele, Pangong Tso, Chumar & Spanggur Gap
- Arunachal:** Namkha Chu, Sumdorong Chu, Asaphila, Longju, Dichu, Yangtse, Fish Tail-1 & 2 in Dibang Valley

Expected Questions (Prelims Exams)

Q. Which of the following sites is/are involved in border dispute with China?

1. Hot Springs (Leh-Ladakh)
2. Kalapani (Uttarakhand)
3. Aksai Chin

Code-

- (a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only (d) All of the above

Expected Questions (Mains Exams)

Q. The border dispute with China has now reached new border areas. So what are the new changes needed in India's strategy against China? Discuss.

(250 Words)

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Note: - The question of the main examination given for practice is designed keeping in mind the upcoming UPSC main examination. Therefore, to get an answer to this question, you can take the help of this source as well as other sources related to this topic.