

## Even as India and China engage in talks, but the current state of tension is likely to continue

China passing a new border law amid a continuing stalemate in negotiations with India sends a clear signal to New Delhi that Beijing is in no mood to quickly end the 18-month-long crisis along the LAC. The law, which will take effect on January 1, designates the responsibilities of various agencies in China, from the military to local authorities, in guarding the frontiers. It “stipulates that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the People’s Republic of China are sacred and inviolable”. Calling on the military to “guard against and combat any act that undermines territorial sovereignty and land boundaries”, the law says the Chinese military “shall carry out border duties” to “resolutely prevent, stop and combat invasion, encroachment, provocation and other acts”. India has reacted sharply, telling China that it must not use legislation as a “pretext” to formalise the PLA’s actions since last year to unilaterally alter the LAC.

While the law says Beijing will negotiate with its neighbours to settle its borders, India reminded China that the legislation will have little bearing on the India-China boundary as both sides are yet to resolve the boundary question. Responding to India’s concerns, the Chinese Foreign Ministry said the law would not affect the implementation of existing agreements. The legislation also has implications for the only other country China has unresolved land borders with — Bhutan — calling for continuing efforts to develop border areas. Among those efforts is the on-going construction of frontier villages, including in disputed areas.

The Chinese side may justify the law as an “internal” matter akin to India’s abrogation of Article-370 and the creation of a Union Territory in Ladakh, which China strongly opposed because it included Aksai Chin, but there is one crucial difference. The new Chinese legislation, first proposed in March, came almost a year into the LAC crisis.

It followed the PLA’s amassing of two divisions of troops in forward areas in the summer of 2020, in contravention of the four past border agreements, and essentially gives a stamp of approval to those moves. If both New Delhi and Beijing at least appear to be in agreement that the legislation will not affect past agreements, the fact is those understandings are already in tatters. The last round of LAC talks, held on October 10, ended with both sides trading accusations, Beijing blaming India for

making “unrealistic” demands and New Delhi countering that the other side offered no real proposals for a solution. Indeed, the new law underlines that China increasingly sees little space for compromise as far as its frontiers are concerned. Even as India and China continue negotiations, the law is the latest signal that the current state of affairs along the border, marked by continuing deployments by both sides in forward areas and a build-up of infrastructure, is likely to continue over the longer term.

### Expected Question (Prelims Exams)

**Q. Which country has recently passed the border law?**

- (a) China
- (b) Bhutan
- (c) Nepal
- (d) Russia

### Expected Question (Mains Exams)

**Q. What is China's new border law? How does it talk about negotiating a border agreement with its neighboring countries? And What effect can it have on India?**

**(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.**