

DAYS AFTER DOVAL-WANG TALKS IN BEIJING

Corps Commander set to meet Chinese counterpart in N-E

New hotlines likely at Army commands in Kolkata, Lucknow; border meeting point at Joshimath

Amrita Nayak Dutta

New Delhi, September 4

INDIA AND China are likely to hold Corps Commander-level talks in the coming days amid reports of tension in the Taksing area of the Upper Subansiri district in Arunachal Pradesh.

The Indian Express has learnt that Lt General Girish Kalia, commander of the Army's III Corps, also called the Spear Corps with its headquarters at Rangapahar near Dimapur in Nagaland, will be holding talks shortly with his Chinese counterpart and other officers.

The Spear Corps is responsible for operations in Nagaland, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh's central and eastern sectors along the Line of Actual Control.

Multiple rounds of talks between local commanders have



National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and China Foreign Minister Wang Yi held boundary talks in Beijing on August 25. @EOIBEIJING

been held between the two sides in recent weeks to resolve issues.

Earlier this week, Army chief General Dhiraj Seth also visited the Spear Corps to "review the operational readiness of all formations and ongoing border development initiatives," the Army said in a post on X, adding that he was briefed on all aspects of capability development and initiatives taken to further strengthen combat capability.

On August 25, National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, who are the special repre-

sentatives for the boundary talks, met in Beijing.

A day later, it was announced that India and China had decided to advance discussions on "an early and substantial harvest" of boundary delimitation and border management, and agreed on two new border military hotlines in the eastern and middle sectors, two new meeting points for military commander-level meetings, and on holding the trans-border river meeting in September.

The two military hotlines in

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India-China Corps Commanders' meet

the eastern and middle sectors are likely to be at the Army command headquarters in Lucknow and Kolkata.

A Border Personnel Meeting (BPM) point will also be established in Joshimath in Uttarakhand for senior commander-level talks. Such meeting points already exist in Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh and Chushul in Ladakh.

Chinese President Xi Jinp-

ing is expected to attend the BRICS summit in New Delhi on September 12-13.

New Delhi and Beijing have been trying to restore ties that plummeted after the start of the military standoff along the LAC in eastern Ladakh in 2020.

Xi last visited India in October 2019 when he travelled to Mamallapuram near Chennai for the second informal bilateral summit of leaders.

Rubio visit likely in Oct. Quad summit on G20 margins in US being explored

Shubhajit Roy

New Delhi, September 4

US SECRETARY of State Marco Rubio is likely to visit India in October, and officials are preparing for a possible summit of Quad leaders in December in the US,

The Indian Express has learnt.

The Quad summit — the grouping comprises the US, India, Japan and Australia — is likely to take place on the sidelines of the summit of G20 leaders which, under the US presidency, will take place at the Trump National Doral Miami in Doral, Florida, on December 14-15.

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri hosted a meeting of Quad Sherpas in New Delhi Thurs-



US Secy of State Marco Rubio

day. It was attended by Sergio Gor, Special Envoy to South and Central Asia and Ambassador of US to India; Elly Lawson, Deputy Secretary, Strategic Planning and Coordination Group, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia; and, Hiroyuki Namazu, Senior

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Rubio visit likely in Oct

Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Japan.

A statement issued by the Ministry of External Affairs and US State Department said, “The Quad Sherpas’ Meeting follows the Quad Foreign Ministers’ Meeting held in New Delhi on 26th May 2026 and was convened to take forward its outcomes and to prepare for the next Quad Foreign Ministers’ Meeting.”

It said the Sherpas reviewed progress across ongoing Quad initiatives and discussed ways to further strengthen practical co-

operation, with a shared commitment to advancing a free and open Indo-Pacific.

“Discussions covered key areas of Quad cooperation, including maritime and transnational security; economic prosperity and security; critical and emerging technologies; and humanitarian assistance and emergency response. The Sherpas also exchanged views on developments in the Indo-Pacific and the broader regional and global context,” it said.

The Quad Sherpas, the statement said, reaffirmed the impor-

tance of focusing on concrete, action-oriented initiatives. They looked forward to continued consultations in the lead-up to the next Quad Foreign Ministers’ Meeting, it stated.

Ambassador Gor, in a post on X, said, “The Quad is moving forward with clear purpose.” He said that he joined other Quad Sherpas to set an action plan for concrete deliverables — advancing President Trump and Secretary Rubio’s commitment to a strong, results-oriented Quad.

“Proud to take up the mantle of Quad Sherpa and to help turn that vision into action,” he said.

India was supposed to host the Quad summit last year, but its ties with the US were strained

after Trump’s claims of mediation between India and Pakistan post Operation Sindoor and Washington’s decision to impose heavy tariffs on Delhi. The two countries are currently firming up a bilateral trade deal.

While efforts are being made by both India and the US to repair ties — Rubio visited India in May this year for the meeting of Quad Foreign Ministers — it looks unlikely that the US President will be travelling to India this year.

Rubio’s next India visit will be an attempt to schedule a Quad summit in the US because Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to attend the G20 summit.

India in touch with Ukraine, Russia to help end war: EAM

Express News Service
New Delhi, September 4

INDIA HAS been in continuous touch with both Ukraine and Russia and is trying to see if there are ideas and suggestions that will contribute to the mitigation or the cessation of the conflict, External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar said on Friday.

Jaishankar, who is in Poland after visiting Ukraine, said that he discussed with his Polish counterpart Radoslaw Sikorski the complex global challenges, including supply chain resilience, and food, fuel and fertiliser security.

"The Deputy Prime Minister and I also understandably discussed some major global and regional issues, notable among them is the war in Ukraine, now in its fifth year... I myself have just come here from Kyiv," he said, referring to his visit to Ukraine a day earlier.

Replying to a question, he said India has been in continuous touch with both the Ukrainian and Russian sides. "What we are trying to do is to see if there are ideas and suggestions which can be developed in some way in which they will contribute to the mitigation, ideally, the cessation of



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar meets Poland Deputy PM Radoslaw Sikorski in Warsaw on Friday. ANI

the conflict," he added.

A day earlier, Jaishankar had said in Ukraine that India is ready to extend "help in any manner" to end the Ukraine-Russia war. He had met President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and his Ukrainian counterpart Andriy Sybiha in Kyiv on Thursday.

On Friday, Jaishankar reiterated that India believes that endless war must give way to an end to war. "These are wars without winners. Every additional day means more death, more destruction, more loss to the parties themselves, and more cost to the rest of the world," he said in Warsaw.

"Our efforts must therefore focus on promoting dialogue and diplomacy. We must each

do what we can in whichever way we believe could be most effective and support the efforts of others to bring this conflict to an end. This is India's strong conviction, and we are acting on it," he added.

On India's purchases of Russian oil, the minister said the issue is a conflict, and its solution lies in negotiations, not in trade.

"This war is not going to end... not because somebody chose to buy or not buy oil or alumina or fertilisers or metals and minerals. It will end when there is diplomacy, when there is dialogue and when there is negotiation. So, I think let's diagnose the problem right," he said while replying to another question.

In his talks with Sikorski, the EAM reviewed the progress of the Joint Action Plan 2024-28, which focuses on, among other things, trade and investment, defence, culture and multilateral cooperation.

"Value Poland's support for deeper India-EU cooperation. Confident that the entry into force of the FTA will lead to even closer bilateral cooperation," Jaishankar said, adding that India and Poland have a longstanding cordial relationship that was elevated to a Strategic Partnership in 2024.

"The world is today grappling not only with multiple wars but also serious challenges of food, fuel and fertiliser availability. Supply chain resilience is an independent but added concern. As political democracies, market economies and open societies, India and Poland can cooperate to shape the direction of many important global debates. Our tradition of working closely in the United Nations and multilateral forums is an important expression of that convergence," he said.

Later, Jaishankar called on Polish President Karol Nawrocki and discussed the bilateral Strategic Partnership and views on the Ukraine conflict and the West Asia situation.

ISRO launches advanced imaging satellite EOS-05

India's first dedicated imaging satellite will provide real-time imagery from about 36,000 km above earth; ISRO breathes easy after successful mission in the wake of back-to-back failures

Hemanth C.S.
BENGALURU

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on Friday successfully launched its advanced earth observation satellite EOS-05 aboard the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV-F17).

The GSLV, on its 19th flight, placed the 2,367-kg EOS-05 into the intended sub-geosynchronous transfer orbit (Sub-GTO) about 18 minutes after lifting off from the second launch pad of the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota at 2.55 a.m.

The EOS-05 is India's first imaging satellite designed to monitor earth from geosynchronous orbit, about 36,000 km above earth.

"I am very happy to announce that the GSLV-F17 vehicle has successfully and precisely injected the advanced earth observation satellite EOS-05 into the intended and required orbit," ISRO Chairman V. Narayanan said.

He said this was the 107th launch from the spaceport in Sriharikota and the 19th mission of the GSLV.

"The first launch of the GSLV-D1 was done with a payload of 1,536 kg. From that, we have gradually im-

EOS-05 is India's first dedicated imaging satellite placed in the geosynchronous orbit, about 36,000 km above the earth



Eye in the sky



Wonder awaits: A child watches the EOS-05 launch through binoculars. PTI

At 2,367 kg, EOS-05 is the heaviest satellite launched by the GSLV

Key purposes: Near real-time imagery will aid agriculture, environment monitoring, and disaster management

■ **Strategic data** from the geo platform will support "national activities"

Lifespan: The satellite has an operational life of **nine years** and is equipped with multi-band operating capabilities

■ This is the **19th GSLV mission** and the 107th launch from Sriharikota



■ EOS-05 replaces the EOS-03 satellite lost in the **unsuccessful GSLV-F10 mission** in August 2021

■ **3-stage, 51.7 metre GSLV**, with its third stage being cryogenic, has a lift-off mass of 420.5 tonnes

proved the performance of this vehicle by optimising the structural mass and improving the propulsion systems. Today, we have injected the heaviest satellite, a 2,367-kg satellite, using this launch vehicle," he added.

Dr. Narayanan said that once operationalised, EOS-05 would become In-

dia's first dedicated imaging satellite operating from the geosynchronous orbit, providing important strategic data for the country.

'Operating perfectly'

"From the satellite data, we confirm that all the valves are operating perfectly, the solar panel is deployed, and the health of

the satellite is perfectly all right. In the coming days, we will raise the orbit and take it to the required orbit and place the satellite in the geo platform for national activities," Dr. Narayanan said.

The EOS-05, dubbed an "eye in the sky", will provide real-time imagery, helping sectors such as agriculture, environment and disaster management.

A huge relief

The successful launch comes as a huge relief for ISRO, which has not carried out a launch since the failure of the PSLV-C62 mission carrying the EOS-N1 earth observation satellite on January 12, 2026.

The space agency, following the back-to-back failures of the PSLV-C62 in January 2026 and the PSLV-C61 on May 18, 2025, had taken a cautious approach and refrained from carrying out further launches.

Though seven missions, including the GSLV-F17/EOS-05 mission, had been scheduled to take place in the first quarter of 2026, ISRO did not launch any satellites during the period.

The successful launch of the 2367-kg EOS-05 also puts behind the failure ISRO had encountered in August 2021 with the GSLV-F10/EOS-03 mission.

Belgian port can be key to Indian exports: De Wever

Belgian Prime Minister pitches Port of Antwerp-Bruges as India's gateway to Europe; Commerce Minister Goyal says two countries could deepen collaboration in the lab-grown diamond sector

The Hindu Bureau

MUMBAI

Belgian Prime Minister Bart De Wever on Friday pitched the Port of Antwerp-Bruges as a gateway for Indian exports to Europe. He is in Mumbai for a high-level dialogue on the India-EU Free Trade Agreement.

"The FTA would strengthen trade, create opportunities for businesses, young talent and investment, and make the Indian and European economies more resilient to global disruptions. The Port of Antwerp-Bruges will be a key logistics link between India and Europe creating opportunities in diamonds, pharmaceuticals, food processing, maritime services, green hydrogen and infrastructure," Mr. De Wever said.

"The agreement is expected to eliminate or reduce tariffs on more than 95% of Indian and European goods exports," he added.

Bilateral trade between both countries stood at approximately \$13.08 billion in 2025-26.



All ears: Belgian Prime Minister Bart De Wever in conversation with Union Minister Piyush Goyal, in Mumbai, on Friday. PTI

"More and more voices today are calling for barriers to go up, for markets to be shut off, and for tariffs to be imposed. Some do this entirely arbitrarily. In doing so, they inflict serious economic damage on their trading partners, making them dependent and turning them into vassals," said Mr. De Wever.

'Invest in India'

Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal invited Belgian companies to invest in India, saying Belgium's technology, innovation and capital could be combined with India's scale, talent and

young workforce. Mr. Goyal described Maharashtra as an attractive destination for investment and highlighted its position as India's financial, commercial and industrial hub.

Meanwhile, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said he wants Belgium to be central to the State's growth toward a \$1-trillion economy. "Our ambition is clear: to build Maharashtra into a \$1-trillion economy by 2030, and we want Belgium to be a part of that journey," Mr. Fadnavis said.

Mr. Goyal said the trade agreement, which had been under discussion for

around 25 years, would create opportunities for farmers, fishermen, MSMEs, startups, women entrepreneurs, manufacturers and service providers across India and Europe.

"The India-EU FTA brings together around two billion people, representing about a quarter of global GDP, a third of world trade and a market of around \$24 trillion," Mr. Goyal said.

He said all 27 EU countries were supportive of completing the remaining formalities.

On India-Belgium cooperation in the diamond sector, Mr. Goyal said the two countries could deepen collaboration in design and co-creation in gems and jewellery, including lab-grown diamonds, while also working towards greater cooperation in technology and certification centred around Antwerp, Mumbai and Surat.

India-Belgium gems and jewellery trade stood at around \$3.5 billion in 2025-26, according to Gem & Jewellery Export Promotion Council.

UN rights chief calls for end to Sri Lanka ‘impunity’

Meera Srinivasan

COLOMBO

Sri Lanka needs to do more to protect human rights, advance accountability, and end the “long legacy of impunity”, the UN Human Rights chief has said.

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, in its latest report on Sri Lanka released on Thursday, said the government “has continued to denounce racism and promote national unity”, but “wider efforts to ensure truth and justice risk being stalled and the momentum for transformative change being lost”.

The report comes even as President Anura Kumara Dissanayake completes two years in office.

Examining his government’s pre-election pledges and commitments made



Volker Turk

during UN High Commissioner Volker Turk’s visit to Sri Lanka in June 2025, the report acknowledged the government’s “notable steps” to tackle corruption, high-profile arrests and police-led investigations into certain political killings, enforced disappearances, and the 2019 Easter Sunday attacks. However, it observed “meaningful progress” remains “largely absent” in relation to accountability for inter-

national crimes allegedly committed by both State security forces and the LTTE during the nearly three decade-long armed conflict.

Recalling the NPP’s election promise to introduce a new Constitution that ‘guarantees equality, democracy and the devolution of political and administrative power to every local Government, district and province’, the report pointed to the Provincial Council elections that are pending for over a decade.

Further, the report highlighted the ruling coalition’s pledge to repeal the Prevention of Terrorism Act and urged the government to impose a moratorium on the law, expedite its repeal, and ensure that any replacement legislation complies with international human rights law.

'More than 120 killed as Yemen's Houthis, government forces clash'

Fighting that erupted on Thursday has killed at least 129 people, including 66 govt. troops, at least 62 Houthi fighters, and one civilian; the Houthis aim to cut off govt.-held port city of Mokha and advance towards areas bordering Bab el-Mandeb

Agence France-Presse
SANAA

A major offensive by Yemen's Houthis to seize control of the gateway to the Red Sea has left more than 120 people dead, sources said on Friday, the country's deadliest clashes in years.

Fighting erupted on Thursday, after the Iran-backed Houthis launched a ground assault along with rocket and drone attacks near coastal areas, vying for control of the narrow Bab el-Mandeb strait at the Red Sea's southern entrance.

Yemen, embroiled in more than a decade of civil conflict, in July became the



Renewed fighting: Flames and smoke rise from the port of Mokha during an earlier strike in Yemen. AP

latest country to be drawn into the West Asia war as the Houthis upended a 2022 truce with the Saudi-backed government.

Since then, the Houthis have imposed a maritime

blockade of Saudi Arabia and repeatedly attacked its ships in the Red Sea – a vital alternative route for oil exports after Iran all but halted Gulf shipments by blockading the Strait of

Hormuz. The rebels are now trying to tighten their hold over the Red Sea, one of the world's busiest shipping lanes, which they have disrupted with attacks on passing vessels since the Gaza war broke out in 2023.

The Houthi offensive aims to cut off the government-held port city of Mokha, under fire for weeks, and advance towards areas bordering the Bab el-Mandeb, military sources said.

The rebels have seized elevated sites overlooking government positions near the Red Sea and the city of Taiz further inland, a military source and a Taiz official said, requesting anonymity. The Houthis could

target ships from these elevated positions, they said.

The toll rose to 129 on Friday, according to a tally compiled from several sources, up from an earlier count of 81.

A Yemeni military official speaking on condition of anonymity said that 66 of his men had been killed, while medical and military sources close to the Houthis said at least 62 militants had died.

Another medical source said a civilian had also been killed.

Although the Houthis do not control areas bordering Bab el-Mandeb, they hold the key port city of Hodeida north of Mokha.