

India, China hold military talks in Arunachal Pradesh

Corps Commander-level meeting comes ahead of BRICS Summit, which the Chinese President is expected to attend; the talks were held amid concerns over military build-up along the LAC

Saurabh Trivedi

NEW DELHI

Amid concerns over conflicting territorial claims and military build-up along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), the Indian and Chinese Armies held their first Corps Commander-level meeting in the Eastern Sector on Sunday, marking a significant expansion of the military dialogue mechanism beyond the Ladakh sector.

The meeting was held at the Vacha-Damai Border Personnel Meeting Point in Arunachal Pradesh amid reports of tension in the Taksing area of Upper Subansiri district.

According to Defence Ministry sources, Lieutenant-General Girish Kalia, Commander of the 3 Corps



Dialogue route: The meeting was held at the Vacha-Damai Border Personnel Meeting Point in Arunachal Pradesh. FILE PHOTO

(Spear Corps), led a 12-member delegation that included an Inspector-General of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police.

The 3 Corps, headquartered at Rangapahar in Nagaland, is responsible for operational areas along the LAC in Arunachal Pradesh.

The Indian Army has two Corps formations responsible for the frontier in the State – the Tezpur-based 4 Corps and the Rangapahar-based 3 Corps.

The talks are significant as Corps Commander-level meetings between the two Armies have largely been

held at the Chushul-Moldo Border Meeting Point in eastern Ladakh, particularly after the June 2020 Galwan Valley clashes. The meeting comes days before India hosts the BRICS Summit in New Delhi from September 11 to 13, which Chinese President Xi Jinping is expected to attend.

The latest meeting comes amid reports of continued Chinese activity and alleged incursions in the Taksing area, despite two high-level engagements since July.

Until now, the Corps Commander-level mechanism had primarily been used to address military issues and tensions along the western sector of the border in Ladakh.

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The mechanism became particularly important following the Galwan clashes, in which both sides suffered casualties.

Since then, India and China have continued to use military and diplomatic channels to manage differences and maintain stability along the LAC.

On August 6, the two countries held the 36th meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs. This was followed by the 25th round of talks between the Special Representatives (SR) on the Boundary Question in Beijing on August 26. National Security Adviser Ajit Doval represented India, while the Chinese delegation was led by Wang Yi, Member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and Director of the Office of the Central Commission for Foreign Affairs.

The two sides signed an eight-point outcome document following the SR-level talks. The agreement included a decision to establish two additional Border Personnel Meeting Points and new hotlines to strengthen communication and confidence-building mechanisms along the frontier.

According to sources, one of the newly proposed meeting points will be in the Eastern Sector under the operational responsibility of the 3 Corps, while another will be in the Central Sector. The sources clarified that Joshimath is not among the newly identified meeting points.

Meanwhile, the Indian Army has been closely reviewing its operational preparedness along the frontier. Recently, Army Chief General Dhiraj Seth visited the headquarters of the 3 Corps, where formation commanders briefed him about operational readiness and measures being undertaken to strengthen combat capabilities.

Rajnath Singh set for 3-day Sri Lanka visit to boost defence ties

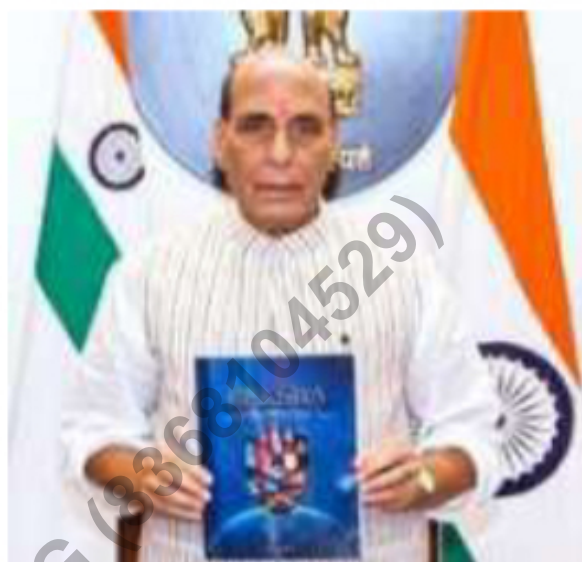
Saurabh Trivedi

NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will undertake an official visit to Sri Lanka from September 8 to 10, marking the first such visit by an Indian Defence Minister to the island nation in 38 years. Mr. Singh will hold consultations with Sri Lanka's top leadership on a range of bilateral, regional and defence-related issues, and also interact with members of the Indian diaspora in Colombo.

The last Indian Defence Minister to visit Sri Lanka was K.C. Pant, who travelled to the country in 1988 while serving in Rajiv Gandhi's Cabinet.

Mr. Singh is expected to meet Sri Lankan President and Defence Minister Anura Kumara Dissanayake, Prime Minister Harini Amarasuriya and Secretary to



Rajnath Singh

the Ministry of Defence Air Vice Marshal (retd.) Sam-path Thuyacontha.

Discussions are likely to cover defence cooperation, including possible collaboration in air-defence systems, and a review of ongoing security engagements between the two countries.

The two sides are expected to review the full implementation of the India-Sri Lanka Defence Cooperation Memorandum of Understanding signed on April 5, 2025.

ISRO's role is by no means diminishing: space officials

Agency will remain the bedrock of the Indian space sector, says IN-SPACe chief Pawan Goenka amid concerns raised by ISRO staff associations over 'privatisation'; agency calls concerns 'baseless'

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

The top brass of India's space establishment refuted suggestions that privatisation in the space sector threatened the workforce of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

The role of the ISRO was "by no means diminishing", said IN-SPACe chairman Pawan Kumar Goenka on Sunday, responding to a joint letter from nine ISRO employee associations seeking written clarification on whether the government intends to transfer the agency's launch-vehicle and satellite manufacturing to private firms. "There has been some misleading narrative in the media around the future role of ISRO. Let me say it unequivocally: ISRO's role is by no means diminishing. It will remain the bedrock of Indian space sector." Dr. Goenka said in a post on X.

The reforms that began in 2020, he said, were aimed at expanding India's overall space ecosystem,



There has been misleading narrative... the direction is not a smaller ISRO. It is a larger Indian space ecosystem, with ISRO pushing the technological frontier.

PAWAN KUMAR GOENKA
IN-SPACe chairman

was dated September 4 and addressed to Dr. V. Narayanan, Secretary, Department of Space and Chairman, ISRO. Its signatories cited Dr. Goenka's public remarks on August 21 that ISRO would eventually not make or manufacture any launch vehicles.

Questions raised

They asked whether that position represented an approved Space Commission decision. They further asked what would happen to sanctioned strength and recruitment over the next five to 10 years, and whether the associations would be consulted before irreversible decisions.

Employees of the Department of Space are exempted from the statutory definition of "industry" and cannot form trade unions. They instead organise as service associations recognised under the Central Civil Services (Recognition of Service Associations) Rules, 1993. The letter was copied to the Confederation of Central Government Employees and Workers.

with IN-SPACe authorising non-government participation and NewSpace India Limited (NSIL) commercialising mature capabilities.

Industry would increasingly manufacture and scale mature launch vehicles and satellites, he added, while ISRO would concentrate on advanced R&D, scientific and strategic missions, and infrastructure too complex for private developers – including the Bharatiya Antariksh Station by 2035 and an Indian crewed lunar mission by 2040. "The direction is not a smaller ISRO," he wrote.

Longer clarification

His post was followed by a longer clarification from ISRO, calling suggestions of

privatisation "completely baseless and incorrect" and stating that the agency would neither be privatised nor have its importance reduced. Transferring a mature technology, it said, did not amount to withdrawal from that domain; the shift was towards an "ISRO-led national space ecosystem", institutionalised through the Indian Space Policy 2023.

The agency said India now has over 450 space start-ups against a handful in 2020, and aims to grow its roughly \$8.4-billion space economy to \$44 billion by 2033. Ownership of critical national space infrastructure, it said, would remain with the government. The letter that prompted the responses

Steady gaze

ISRO's EOS-05 satellite has uses in varied areas from security to weather

The successful launch of the Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) EOS-05 satellite is India's first earth-imaging satellite bound for a geosynchronous orbit, meaning that it is locked-in to the earth's rotation and can be tuned to continuously observe the same location. The rocket placed it in a transfer orbit early on Friday; onboard thrusters are expected to raise it to its final perch at some 36,000 kilometres above the earth's surface over the coming weeks. From there it can track fast-changing events such as floods, cyclones and forest fires, and monitor crops, forests, water bodies and land use. Unlike a conventional camera, its sensors examine how the earth's surface reflects different wavelengths of light, helping distinguish vegetation, water and other land cover. Because it is perched farther away than conventional low-orbit imaging satellites, its strength is not ultra-fine detail but the ability to return to the same broad areas very frequently. India has long had eyes in geostationary orbit, but they have been weather satellites, namely the INSAT-3D series. Its dedicated earth-imaging satellites have operated in low, polar or sun-synchronous orbits. Flying a few hundred kilometres up, they capture much finer detail, but move constantly around the planet, imaging a different strip of territory on successive passes and taking days to return.

EOS-05's timing could hardly be better. Given the devastation by the Bhote Koshi deluge in Nepal, which has claimed 1,344 lives, such satellites can play some role in understanding changes in landforms and how they may act as precursors to glacier-breaks and avalanches. Or, as winter approaches in north India, in establishing whether stubble fires over Punjab have genuinely declined or burning has simply shifted in time to slip past the polar satellites. ISRO has described the EOS-05 as a "strategic" satellite, a term that stretches from security to weather. All of this is premised on the data reaching a wide enough set of analysts who can turn the images into forecasts and actionable insight. There is cheer, too, that ISRO's first successful launch of 2026 – and another vote of confidence in the cryogenic stage that failed the agency in 2021 – comes after setbacks. But that does not soften the temperamental nature of launches. Two consecutive failures of the PSLV, the agency's workhorse since the 1990s, in May last year and again this January, both traced to the third stage, suggest that dependability is not infallibility. The usefulness of its payloads, and the cadence of its launches, should be ISRO's calling card, rather than any single launch as the hallmark of institutional credibility.

Unfair to blame me for Rahman's visit being put off: Hasina

Suhasini Haidar

NEW DELHI

After a controversy over her August 5 press conference here, Bangladesh's former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina defended her right to hold media conferences and meet Awami League party colleagues.

"How can a press conference damage India-Bangladesh relations? I did not know that I was so powerful," Ms. Hasina said speaking to *The Hindu* over the telephone from an undisclosed location.

"My intention was never to damage anything," she said. Ms. Hasina fled to India after protests erupted in Bangladesh

in 2024. She said it was unfair of the Bangladesh government to suggest that her public interactions were the reason for a visit by Prime Minister Tarique Rahman to Delhi to be put off.

Ms. Hasina, who faces a death sentence for ordering a police crackdown on student protesters in 2024 in which hundreds were killed, refused to apologise for the killings, citing the deaths of policemen and her party members during that time.

She called on the international community to press for a revocation of the ban on the Awami League.



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'If my party says I should step down as its president, I will'

It is not for the govt. or the BNP to decide who will lead the Awami League, former Bangladesh PM says as she calls for the ban on her party to be revoked; she asks how her press conference could damage India-Bangladesh relations, adding that her intention was simply to tell the truth; she has not met Modi or Sonia during her stay as she has 'decided only to meet party workers and relatives'

INTERVIEW

Sheikh Hasina

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

Defending her right to hold a press conference and meet her Awami League party colleagues while in India, Bangladesh's former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina says she has no intention of damaging India-Bangladesh ties. In an interview to *The Hindu*, including in written replies and an extensive telephone conversation, Ms. Hasina, who has been convicted of murder and sentenced to death in Bangladesh, says she is undeterred about returning to Bangladesh, and accuses the Tariq Rahman government of continuing to harass and imprison her party workers. Excerpts:

On August 5 (2024), I did not leave Bangladesh by choice. My security personnel, party leaders, and family members urged me to leave the Prime Minister's residence. I was prepared to go to Tungipara [Ms. Hasina's hometown], and I had expressed my willingness to leave and resign as Prime Minister. But I didn't get the chance to resign.

I did not even know that I was leaving the country. Only when I was in the helicopter did I learn from my staff that I was being taken to India.

India received me at very short notice and made arrangements for my security and stay. I am grateful for that. But it was very hard for me to accept that I had been taken out of my own country.

When you reached Delhi on August 5, 2024, did you intend to stay in India, or was there a plan for you to travel elsewhere? Have you applied for asylum or visas in any other country?

No, I did not want to go anywhere else. I am next door to my country, as close as I can be to my people. From here, I can keep in touch with them. Where else would I go? How would I live somewhere else? I do not have any means to live abroad permanently.

Given your personal equations with them, have you met Prime Minister Narendra Modi or Sonia Gandhi during your time here?

Frankly, I did not want to try and meet them, given the circumstances. No doubt, I have good relations with them, but I decided I would only meet my party workers and relatives while here. Maybe a time will come that I will go home and then come again to India, and then meet everyone, including media.

Are you sure the Bangladesh government will allow you to go back, and not stop you at the border?



This is a peculiar situation. They repeatedly ask the Indian government to send me to Bangladesh, but when I say they don't need to send me, I will come myself, then that also seems to be a problem for them.

The Bangladesh government says your recent press conference has damaged the atmosphere for India-Bangladesh relations. Do you think your public remarks are affecting bilateral ties?

When I heard this, I was surprised. How can a press conference damage India-

to damage anything. I wanted to tell the truth. Freedom of speech and expression is part of democracy. So, the real question is not whether my press conference damaged relations. The real question is why truth and free speech are being feared so much.

In your time as PM, you also banned the Jamaat-e-Islami. Was that a mistake? They are now the main Opposition in Bangladesh...

Jamaat-e-Islami members were war criminals – they worked with the Pakistani Army during the occupation, they were convicted for rape, murder and genocide. That is why they were banned. But later, they would be part of coalitions with other parties. In 2013, the courts cancelled their registration, and they could not stand for elections.

That was years ago. Today, even the Indian High Commission and the Foreign Secretary (Vikram Misri) have met

with the Jamaat leadership...

If that is so, I have no comment.

Has the Indian government conveyed to you that you should not hold any more press conferences? What kind of support do you expect from India and the international community?

It is important for the world to understand what Bangladesh is going through today. The largest political party, the party that brought independence to Bangladesh, has been banned. My demands are simple. I ask the international community to support the lifting of the ban on the Awami League; the release of political detainees; the withdrawal of false cases; the safety and security of every citizen, especially women and girl children; freedom of movement; and freedom of speech and expression.

If the Bangladesh

government were to revoke the ban on the Awami League on the condition that you step down as its president, would you agree?

Awami League is the only party in Bangladesh that works according to a constitution. It is the party that decides who will be the leader. I am prepared to step down, but who is the government or the BNP to decide who will lead the Awami League?

How do you view the recent youth protests in India? Looking back, could your government have handled the protests in Bangladesh differently?

I will not comment on India's internal matters. India is a democratic country, and its people and institutions will deal with their own issues. No matter how differently I would have handled [protesters in Bangladesh], their sole motive was to remove me. There was no compromise with them.

What can you tell us about the events of August 5, 2024, when you fled from Dhaka?

US envoys meet Zelenskyy in Kyiv amid fresh peace push

Zelenskyy: Hope to restart talks with US and Russia soon

Reuters

Kyiv, September 6

UKRAINE'S TALKS with US peace negotiators Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner were "very substantial", President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Sunday.

Zelenskyy told reporters that they discussed security and economic guarantees for Ukraine and also supplies of air-defence missiles and a winter support package. He also hoped that trilateral talks, including Ukraine, Russia and the US would restart soon.

The two envoys met Zelenskyy and other top Ukrainian officials in central Kyiv. Zelenskyy, who believes Washington will be key to any peace deal, said a window of opportunity to make peace exists before US begins focusing on next presidential polls.

After the first round of talks between Ukrainian and US negotiators that lasted about three hours, the US envoys said that they were looking forward to making more progress.

"Substantive, important, and we are very encouraged," Witkoff told reporters after the talks, which also included a working



Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy with US envoys Jared Kushner and Steve Witkoff in Kyiv on Sunday. REUTERS

lunch. Zelenskyy said that more talks, which would also include European representatives, were planned later on Sunday.

Kushner and Witkoff travelled from Moscow, where they held three hours of talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin but did not appear to secure a breakthrough.

Previous rounds of US-mediated peace talks encouraged by President Donald Trump, who campaigned on a promise to quickly end war, have yielded few results. He suggested Friday US had a fresh proposal though he did not elaborate.

Kremlin aide Yuri Ushakov described Saturday's meeting as "highly useful", while a White House official told Reuters that next steps would be announced in the coming weeks.

Leipzig drone accusations 'start of real war': Lavrov

Moscow: Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Sunday that the accusations levelled at Moscow by the West that it was involved in the drone incident at Germany's Leipzig airport were, "by and large, the start of a real war," state news agency TASS reported.

"All these statements by Merz about making Germany the leading military power in Europe once again – they are being put into practice. He is, in effect, declaring war on us," Lavrov said.

REUTERS



FPIs pull out ₹7,443 cr. from equities in first week of Sept.

After investing in Indian equities for two consecutive months, foreign investors turned net sellers in the first week of September, pulling out ₹7,443 crore as a rebound in crude oil prices, rising U.S. bond yields, and a firm dollar dented risk appetite. The outflow came after foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) infused ₹30,919 crore in August and ₹20,200 crore in July. Before that, they remained net sellers for four straight months from March to June. With the latest withdrawal, total outflow by foreign portfolio investors from Indian equities has climbed to ₹2.32 lakh crore so far in 2026, surpassing the ₹1.66 lakh crore withdrawn in 2025. PTI