

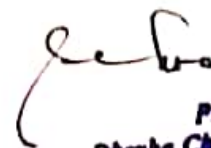
Topic of the Project: India China Relations in 21st Century

China-India relations also called Sino-Indian relations or Indo-Chinese relations, refers to the bilateral relationship between the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Republic of India. India and China have historically maintained peaceful relations for thousands of years of recorded history, but the harmony of their relationship has varied in modern times, especially after the Chinese Communist Party's seizure of power in 1949; the two nations have sought economic cooperation with each other, while frequent border disputes and economic nationalism in both countries are a major point of contention.

Since 2013 border disputes have reemerged to take centre stage in the two countries' mutual relations. In early 2018, the two armies got engaged in a standoff at the Doklam plateau along the disputed Bhutan-China border. Since summer 2020, armed standoffs and skirmishes at multiple locations along the entire Sino-Indian border escalated. A serious clash occurred in the Galwan Valley resulting in the death of 20 Indian soldiers and 42 Chinese soldiers.

Despite growing economic and strategic ties, there are a lot of hurdles for India and the PRC to overcome. India faces trade imbalance heavily in favour of China. The two countries failed to resolve their border dispute and Indian media outlets have repeatedly reported Chinese military incursions into Indian Territory. Both countries have steadily established military infrastructure along border areas including amidst the 2020 China-India skirmishes. Additionally, India remains wary about China's strong strategic bilateral relations with Pakistan, and China's funding to the separatist groups in Northeast India, while China has expressed concerns about Indian military and economic activities in the disputed South China Sea as well as hosting of anti-China activity from Tibetan exiles.

Two years after the Galwan clash, which resulted in the death of 20 Indian army personnel and at least four Chinese soldiers, tensions along the border remain real and the future course of bilateral relations is uncertain, at best. The two sides have continued to hold talks, both through diplomatic and military channels, but a resolution to the stand-off and the disengagement of forces does not appear likely in the near future. There has been no breakthrough in reaching a mutually agreeable arrangement for disengagement of troops at several points across the Line of Actual Control (LAC), including Patrol Point 15 near



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Kongka La, Depsang Bulge in Daulet Beg Oldi sector, and Charding Nullah Junction (CNJ) in Demchok.

There have been 15 rounds of talks between the two militaries at the corps commander level. These talks have been partially successful in disengaging the forces, but that there are around 60,000 troops on each side of the border is a testament to the absence of genuine progress over the past two years. The prevailing tension on the border is a symptom of the broader strategic competition between the two Asian neighbors.

For the last two years, India has insisted that there will be no normalization of relations with China unless the current border issues are resolved. China has suggested instead that the two sides set aside the border issue and move ahead on other aspects of their relationship. Although the troops remain at the border, India appears to be slowly moving toward a de facto normalization with increasing multilateral diplomatic exchanges involving China. That probably counts as a small victory for China.

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