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Jaishankar Meets Wang Yi in Manila: Peace at the Border First

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Jaishankar Meets Wang Yi in Manila: Peace at the Border First

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*On , External Affairs Minister **S. Jaishankar** met Chinese Foreign Minister **Wang Yi** in **Manila** on the sidelines of ASEAN-related meetings. Jaishankar reiterated India's core position that **peace and tranquillity in the border areas is a prerequisite for the normal development of ties**, while raising market access, the trade imbalance and supply-chain concerns, including rare earths and fertilisers.*

WHAT HAPPENED IN MANILA

The meeting took place alongside the calendar of ASEAN foreign ministers' meetings, a familiar setting for India-China contact where [multilateral](#) schedules create space for bilateral talks. Jaishankar used the meeting to restate the settled Indian framework for the relationship rather than to signal any softening of position.

His central message was direct: **"Peace and tranquillity in the border areas is a prerequisite for the normal development of ties."** In other words, progress on trade, investment and people-to-people contact cannot run ahead of stability along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

The Three Mutuels

Since the **2020 Galwan clash**, India has anchored its China policy in what is often called the **"three mutuels"**: **mutual respect, mutual interest and mutual sensitivity**. This formulation makes normalisation conditional on Chinese conduct at the border and on a relationship that is genuinely two-way rather than one-sided.

THE STRUCTURAL ASYMMETRY

Even as diplomacy continues, the economic relationship is deeply unbalanced.

DIMENSION	INDIA-CHINA REALITY
Trade balance	India runs its largest bilateral trade deficit with China
Critical inputs	Dependence on China for rare earths, fertilisers , and industrial intermediates
Border	Unresolved boundary question; disengagement managed but incomplete

Jaishankar specifically raised **market access**, the **trade imbalance** and **supply-chain concerns** including **rare earths and fertilisers**, signalling that India will contest the **asymmetry** even while keeping channels open. This is the essence of India's **multi-alignment**: engaging China where interests overlap, resisting where they clash, and never conceding on sovereignty.

THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA'S FIRM STAND ON THE BORDER

India's position on territorial integrity is unambiguous. **Aksai Chin and Arunachal Pradesh are integral parts of India**. Arunachal Pradesh is an inseparable part of the Indian Union and no amount of renaming or cartographic assertion by China alters that fact. Aksai Chin, under illegal Chinese occupation, likewise remains Indian territory.

The **2020 Galwan Valley clash** in eastern Ladakh saw **20 Indian soldiers martyred** while defending the frontier; Chinese casualties were never officially disclosed by Beijing. India's insistence that the border cannot be de-linked from the wider relationship flows directly from that experience: the sanctity of the LAC and the restoration of status quo ante remain non-negotiable.

THE WIDER DIPLOMATIC CALENDAR

The Manila meeting sat within a busy multilateral year.

- The **SCO Summit** calendar, where India and China are both members, frames continued high-level contact.
- India is chairing the **BRICS Summit** later in 2026, adding to the diplomatic traffic between the two capitals.
- **Wang Yi** attended as a **CPC Politburo member and Foreign Minister**, underlining the seniority of the Chinese **interlocutor**.

These overlapping forums give India room to pursue its interests across multiple tables while keeping the bilateral relationship on a controlled, conditional footing.

STRATEGIC READING

The encounter captures the defining tension of contemporary India-China ties: **normalisation versus structural asymmetry**. India seeks stable, predictable relations and access to Chinese inputs its economy needs, yet it will not trade away the border or accept a lopsided economic relationship. Managing trade dependence while firmly contesting the frontier is the balancing act, and Manila showed India holding that line.

UPSC RELEVANCE

GS Paper 2 (International Relations): India-China bilateral relations, border management, the role of multilateral forums (ASEAN, SCO, BRICS) in great-power diplomacy, and India's policy of strategic autonomy and multi-alignment.

Prelims pointers:

- **Wang Yi** is a **CPC Politburo member and Foreign Minister** of China.
- India's China framework since 2020 rests on the **three mutuals**: mutual respect, mutual interest, mutual sensitivity.
- India runs its **largest bilateral trade deficit** with China.
- India chairs the **BRICS Summit** later in 2026; both India and China are **SCO** members.
- The **2020 Galwan clash** in eastern Ladakh martyred **20 Indian soldiers**.

Mains question: "For India, the border question and the broader relationship with China cannot be de-linked." Discuss how India balances economic engagement with China against the imperative of territorial integrity and border stability. (250 words)

★ FACTS CORNER, KNOWLEDGE PEDIA

The Line of Actual Control (LAC) is the effective boundary between India and China, distinct from a formally delimited border.

Aksai Chin and Arunachal Pradesh are integral parts of India; Arunachal Pradesh is an inseparable part of the Indian Union.

Rare earth elements are 17 metals critical for electronics, defence and clean-energy technologies, where China dominates global supply.

The SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organisation) and BRICS are groupings in which both India and China participate.

The Galwan Valley clash (June 2020) was the first deadly India-China border incident in over four decades.

Sources: Ministry of External Affairs press releases, The Hindu on India-China talks, Indian Express on Jaishankar-Wang Yi meeting

Source: Jaishankar Meets Wang Yi in Manila: Peace at the Border First — [Ujyari.com](https://ujyari.com) | Free UPSC & State PCS Current Affairs

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