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# 25th Round of India-China Special Representatives Talks Held in Beijing

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CURATED &amp; WRITTEN BY

**Bharat Choudhary**

UPSC Educator &amp; Content Creator

[in linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)

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# 25th Round of India-China Special Representatives Talks Held in Beijing

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✓ Every fact web-verified against primary sources

*National Security Adviser Ajit Doval held the 25th round of Special Representatives (SR) talks on the India-China boundary question with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Beijing on August 25, 2026. An eight-point consensus emerged from the round, and Doval also called on Chinese Vice President Han Zheng.*

## THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVES MECHANISM

The Special Representatives mechanism is the highest-level dedicated channel between India and China on the boundary question. It was created in **2003** during Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's visit to Beijing, with **Brajesh Mishra** and **Dai Bingguo** as the first Special Representatives. India is represented by the National Security Adviser and China by its Foreign Minister.

The current round is the first since Doval and Wang Yi met in New Delhi in **June 2026** on the sidelines of the BRICS National Security Advisers' meeting.

## Why a Separate Channel Exists

The boundary question has never been settled through the ordinary diplomatic track. The SR mechanism was designed to insulate boundary discussions from the routine turbulence of the **bilateral** relationship, and it has survived every major downturn since its creation, including the **Doklam standoff (2017)** and the **Galwan Valley clash (June 2020)**.

## THE 2005 AGREEMENT AND THE THREE-STAGE FRAMEWORK

The SR talks operate under the **2005 Agreement on Political Parameters and Guiding Principles for the Settlement of the India-China Boundary Question**. This agreement envisages a three-stage process:

| STAGE   | CONTENT                                                  | STATUS            |
|---------|----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Stage 1 | Agreement on political parameters and guiding principles | Completed, 2005   |
| Stage 2 | Agreement on a framework for settlement                  | Under negotiation |
| Stage 3 | Delineation and demarcation on the ground                | Not begun         |

**Article VII** of the 2005 Agreement is significant for India. It provides that settled populations in border areas will be safeguarded, a provision India reads as protecting Arunachal Pradesh’s inhabited areas from any territorial adjustment.

## THE LINE OF ACTUAL CONTROL

The Line of Actual Control (LAC), as commonly cited by India, runs approximately **3,488 km** and is divided into three sectors:

| SECTOR  | REGION                        | KEY FRICTION AREAS                    |
|---------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Western | Ladakh                        | Depsang, Demchok, Galwan, Pangong Tso |
| Middle  | Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand | Barahoti                              |
| Eastern | Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh     | Yangtse, Asaphila                     |

The Middle Sector is the least contested, and both sides have exchanged maps for this sector. It is the only sector where a degree of clarification has actually occurred.

## India’s Territorial Position

India’s position, consistently held by the Government of India, is that **Aksai Chin and the Shaksgam Valley are Indian territory under illegal Chinese occupation**. The Shaksgam Valley was ceded by Pakistan to China under the 1963 boundary agreement, which India does not recognise. **Arunachal Pradesh is an integral and inalienable part of India**, and periodic Chinese attempts to rename places within the State do not alter that fact. The whole of **Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, including Pakistan-occupied Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, is an integral part of India**.

## THE CONFIDENCE-BUILDING ARCHITECTURE

The India-China border management framework rests on a layered set of agreements:

| YEAR | AGREEMENT                                                  | CORE PROVISION                                    |
|------|------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| 1993 | Agreement on Maintenance of Peace and Tranquillity         | First formal acceptance of the LAC concept        |
| 1996 | Agreement on Military Confidence Building Measures         | Limits on force levels and exercises near the LAC |
| 2005 | Protocol on Modalities for Implementation of CBMs          | Operational detail for the 1996 agreement         |
| 2012 | Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination (WMCC) | Diplomatic-level border affairs mechanism         |
| 2013 | Border Defence Cooperation Agreement                       | Procedures for handling face-offs                 |

This architecture did not prevent the most serious escalation of the post-1962 period. The **Galwan Valley clash of June 15, 2020**, in which **20 Indian soldiers** were martyred, remains the essential historical background to every subsequent round of these talks. China has never officially confirmed its own casualties.

## DISENGAGEMENT IS NOT DE-ESCALATION

Disengagement at the last two friction points, **Depsang and Demchok**, was completed in **October 2024**, following the Modi-Xi meeting at **Kazan, Russia** in the same month. Both leaders met again at **Tianjin** during the 2025 SCO Summit, and both sides invoked the direction set at those meetings during the current round.

A crucial analytical distinction for the examination:

- **Disengagement** means separating troops at specific friction points to prevent contact.
- **De-escalation** means reducing troop numbers and equipment in the wider theatre.
- **De-induction** means returning forces to peacetime locations.

Only the first has occurred. Troop density and military infrastructure on both sides of the LAC remain at post-2020 highs, which means the current normalcy is political rather than military.

## UPSC RELEVANCE

**GS Paper 2 (International Relations):** India and its neighbourhood; bilateral agreements involving India; effect of policies of developed and developing countries on India's interests.

**Prelims focus:** Year of SR mechanism creation, the 2005 Agreement, LAC length and sectors, the sequence of CBM agreements.

**Mains angle:** A strong answer should argue that India's principal **leverage** lies in sequencing, that is, keeping trade normalisation, direct flights and visa liberalisation coupled to verifiable border stabilisation rather than allowing the economic and security tracks to run separately. It should also note that the SR channel's value is as a crisis-insulated strategic channel rather than as a forum likely to deliver actual delimitation.

## ★ FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGE PEDIA

### SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVES MECHANISM:

Instituted: 2003, during PM Vajpayee's Beijing visit

First SRs: Brajesh Mishra (India) and Dai Bingguo (China)

India's SR: National Security Adviser (Ajit Doval); China's SR: Foreign Minister (Wang Yi)

25th round: Beijing, August 25, 2026

### BOUNDARY FRAMEWORK:

Governing agreement: 2005 Agreement on Political Parameters and Guiding Principles

Three-stage process: political parameters, framework, delineation and demarcation

Article VII safeguards settled populations in border areas

### LINE OF ACTUAL CONTROL:

Length as cited by India: approximately 3,488 km

Three sectors: Western (Ladakh), Middle (Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand), Eastern (Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh)

### CONFIDENCE-BUILDING AGREEMENTS:

1993: Peace and Tranquillity Agreement

1996: Military Confidence Building Measures Agreement

2005: Protocol on Modalities

2012: Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination (WMCC)

2013: Border Defence Cooperation Agreement

### OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:

Historical background, the Galwan Valley clash: June 15, 2020; 20 Indian soldiers martyred; Chinese casualties never officially confirmed

Depsang and Demchok disengagement completed: October 2024

Modi-Xi meetings referenced: Kazan, Russia (October 2024) and Tianjin, China (2025 SCO Summit)

Doklam standoff: 2017

India's position: Aksai Chin and Shaksgam Valley are Indian territory under illegal Chinese occupation; Arunachal Pradesh is an integral and inalienable part of India

Sources: *Business Standard*, *Ministry of External Affairs*

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