

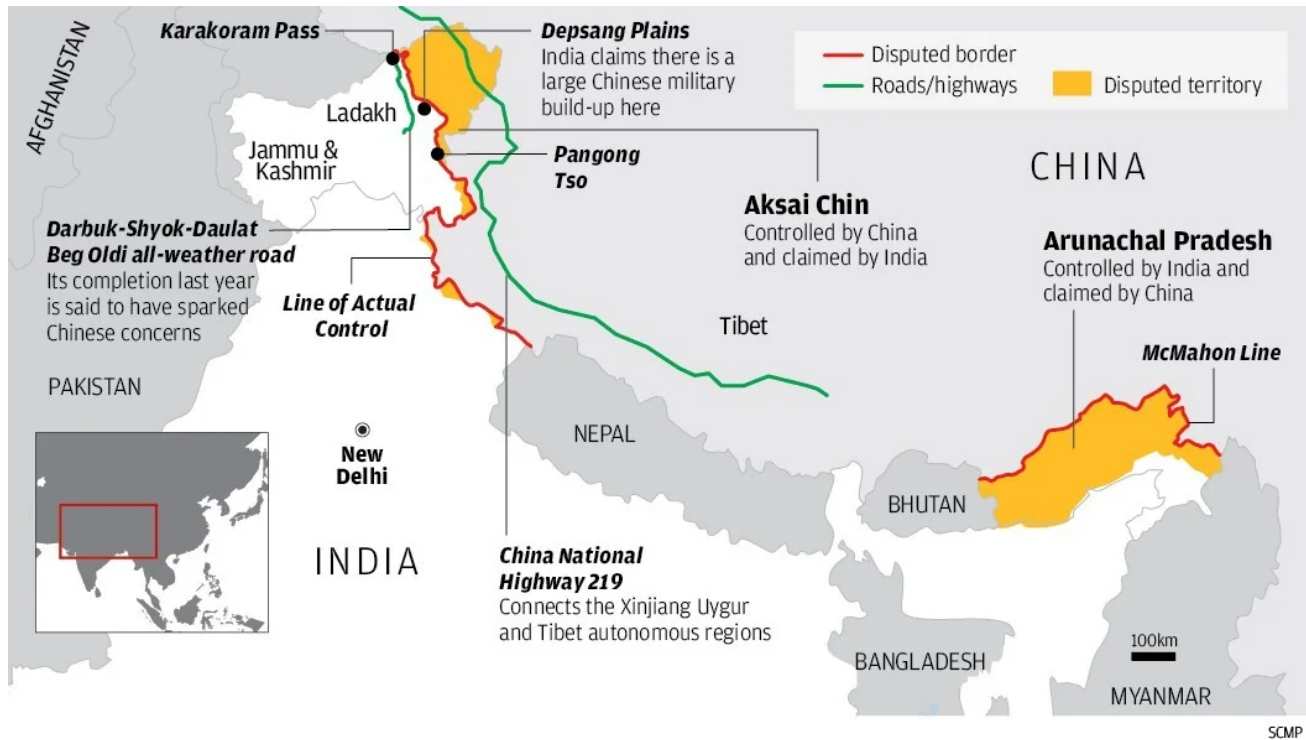
## **Squaring off again in the Himalayan Heights: India China Deadlock**

### **What is the issue?**

The Indian and Chinese soldiers will remain to be deployed against each other in the icy cold deserts of Ladakh this winter.

### **What is the reason behind China's aggressive focus on India?**

- The PLA incursion into Barahoti, a demilitarised zone in Uttarakhand in August was a significant pointer to the renewed Chinese aggression against India.
- The incursion of Chinese patrols in Arunachal Pradesh have also increased in frequency and duration.
- The major reason for China's aggressiveness is to further the institutional interest as the army of the revolution which is currently losing its pre-eminence in Taiwan and South China Sea.
- PLA's view that the Indian military has been exerting a greater presence on Chinese territory in the border areas in the last 10-12 years is also a reason.
- The Doklam stand-off of 2017, when Indian soldiers walked onto Bhutanese territory claimed by China, was a turning point in the PLA's approach.
- Beijing's unilateral action of changing the status quo resulted in the [Ladakh crisis](#).



## What was New Delhi's response to Chinese aggressions?

- **The Indian military has inducted more modern military platforms backed by infrastructure construction in the China border.**
- The Indian military always maintained a defensive deterrence against the PLA.
- India's advantage in dissuading a major military conflict with China is that as a lesser power, it has to only deny an outright military victory to the PLA.
- Also, India's primacy of Air Force is an added advantage.

## What are the challenges?

- **Military modernisation** - The sharp decline in the Indian economy after demonetisation and the coronavirus pandemic made it difficult to generate enough resources for military modernisation.
- The parliamentary standing committee on defence has repeatedly warned about the increasing technological asymmetry with PLA.
- **Divisive majoritarian politics** - India's foreign policy in the neighbourhood is adversely affecting the Indian interests.
- The UAE brokered backchannel deal with Pakistan fell through because of New Delhi's policies in Kashmir.
- **The treatment of religious minorities and the issues over**

**the influx of Myanmar refugees in Mizoram has made India-Bangladesh relation weaker.**

- **Power competition in the Indo-Pacific - Groupings like Quad (India, the United States, Australia, Japan) does not have a 'hard power' agenda yet unlike the trilateral security pact, AUKUS.**
- **Executive's shadow - The lack of institutional checks and balances on the political executive imposes a bigger cost in decision-making on national security issues.**
- **The removal of an official report about Chinese presence across the LAC from the Defence Ministry's website and non-acknowledgement of Indian soldiers in Chinese captivity after the Galwan clash have been done to evade political accountability.**
- **Neither the Parliament has been allowed to ask questions nor the parliamentary standing committee deliberated upon the issue.**

### **What is the future ahead?**

- The Indian government's aim is to restore the *status quo* on the LAC in Ladakh that existed before May 2020 has not happened so far.
- A new *status quo* has been created which curtails Indian patrolling rights while the PLA remains to be settled in the Indian territories of Depsang, Hot Springs and Demchok.
- India now has no choice but to be prepared for all eventualities on the Sino-India border.

### **Reference:**

1. <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/squaring-off-again-in-the-himalayan-heights/article37116>

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2. <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/india-china-border-point-issue-has-a-past-pullback-ther-e-is-key-to-de-escalation-in-region-7566864/>

