
India-China Bilateral Brief

On 01 April 1950, India became the first non-socialist bloc country to establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China. Although the border conflict of 1962 was a setback to bilateral ties, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's 1988 visit marked a beginning in the improvement of bilateral relations.

2. During Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's visit in 2003, India and China signed the Declaration on Principles for Relations and Comprehensive Cooperation, and mutually decided to appoint Special Representatives (SRs) to explore the framework of a boundary settlement. During the April 2005 visit of Premier Wen Jiabao, the two sides established a Strategic and Cooperative Partnership for Peace and Prosperity.

3. Over the past decade, India-China relations have expanded and diversified through several high-level visits. During President Xi Jinping's visit to India in September 2014, the two sides redefined their bilateral engagement as a Closer Developmental Partnership. In May 2015, Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited China and held meetings with President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang. Prime Minister Modi and President Xi held their first Informal Summit in Wuhan on 27-28 April 2018 and their Second Informal Summit in Chennai on 11-12 October 2019.

4. Prime Minister Modi and President Xi have also met on the sidelines of various multilateral summits. Prime Minister Modi visited China to participate in the G20 Summit in Hangzhou (Sept 2016), the BRICS Summit in Xiamen (Sept 2017) and the SCO Summit in Qingdao (June 2018). President Xi visited India in October 2016 to participate in the BRICS Summit in Goa.

5. The two leaders met along the sidelines of the SCO Summit in Astana (09 June 2017), which led to the Astana Consensus that differences should not become disputes. Further, Prime Minister Modi and President Xi met on the sidelines of the SCO Leaders' Summit in Bishkek (13 June 2019), 14th G-20 Summit in Osaka (30 June 2019) and the 11th BRICS Summit in Brasilia (13 November 2019). Thereafter, the two leaders had a brief interaction during the G20 Summit in Bali on 15 November 2022.

6. Bilateral relations have been adversely impacted by incidents along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Eastern Ladakh in April-May 2020.

Other high-level visits and mechanisms

7. India and China have more than thirty dialogue mechanisms in place at various levels, across bilateral political, economic, cultural, people-to-people and consular matters, along with dialogues on regional and global issues. However, the current state of bilateral relations and

strict travel restrictions due to China's Zero COVID-19 policy have impacted the frequency of meetings in these mechanisms.

8. On 25 March 2022, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi visited India and held meetings with EAM and NSA.

9. The Foreign Ministers have also met on the sidelines of multilateral events. Recently, both Foreign Ministers met on the sidelines of the SCO Foreign Ministers' Meetings in Moscow (10 September 2020), Dushanbe (14 July 2021 and 16 September 2021), and G-20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Bali (07 July 2022). State Councilor and then Foreign Minister Qin Gang visited India for the G20 Foreign Ministers' meeting (02 March 2023) and the SCO Foreign Ministers' meeting (04 May 2023) and had bilateral meetings with EAM on both occasions. EAM had also met with Director of Office of Central Commission for Foreign Affairs, Wang Yi on 14 July 2023 along the sidelines of the ASEAN Regional Forum in Jakarta.

10. The Special Representatives (SR) mechanism on the India-China Boundary Question was established in 2003, and 22 rounds of talks have been held so far. The 22nd round of talks between Mr. Ajit Doval, National Security Advisor and Mr. Wang Yi, Foreign Minister & then State Councilor were held in New Delhi on 21 December 2019. An Agreement on the Establishment of a Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC) had been signed during the 15th Round of SR talks in New Delhi in January 2012. Since June 2020, the two sides have engaged in discussions through WMCC and Senior Commander's Meeting (SCM) for disengagement in the border areas along the LAC in Eastern Ladakh. The WMCC has held 27 meetings so far, and the latest one was held on 31 May 2023. So far, 19 rounds of Senior Commanders' Meeting (SCM) mechanism have been held, with the latest one being 13-14 August 2023.

11. Regular exchanges on cooperation in water resources have been maintained between China and India. An Expert-Level Mechanism to discuss interaction and cooperation on provision of flood season hydrological data, emergency management and other issues regarding trans-border Rivers was set up in 2006. Fourteen meetings of ELM have been held so far and the last one was held on 20-21 June 2023.

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