

India and China

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India and China: Between Diplomacy and Border Disputes

Context: India-China Diplomatic Engagement in 2025

India's **Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri** visited **China in January 2025**, signaling a **potential thaw** in relations. Despite diplomatic progress, key issues remain:

- **Border tensions** at the **Line of Actual Control (LAC)**.
- **Economic interdependence**, with **\$136 billion trade in 2023**.
- **Geopolitical factors**, including **Donald Trump's return** to the U.S. presidency.
- **China's economic slowdown** vs. **India's rapid growth**.

Though diplomatic channels are reopening, unresolved **border security issues** persist.

Diplomatic Developments

Misri met **Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi** and other officials, leading to:

- **Revival of Kailash Mansarovar Yatra**.
- **Increased media and think-tank exchanges**.
- **Enhanced air connectivity**.

However, these **do not confirm military disengagement** at the LAC.

Geopolitical and Economic Factors

1. U.S.-China Tensions & India's Role

- Trump's policies may **renew trade conflicts with China**.
- China seeks **regional stability**, including with India, to counter U.S. pressure.

2. China's Economic Slowdown

- **Real estate crisis (Evergrande collapse), falling FDI, and unemployment** weaken China.
- **India remains a key trading partner**, making stability beneficial for China.

3. India's Growth Strategy

- **Manufacturing expansion and FDI inflows** position India as a **China alternative**.
 - **Reducing border tensions** helps attract investment.
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Unresolved LAC Issues

Key **flashpoints** remain unresolved (**Depsang, Pangong Lake, Gogra, Hot Springs**).

- **India wants border stability first; China prefers broader engagement.**
 - **Lack of clarity on troop withdrawals** raises concerns about India conceding ground.
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Way Forward

- **Ensure transparency on LAC status.**
 - **Balance economic engagement with security priorities.**
 - **Avoid diplomatic compromises on territorial integrity.**
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Conclusion

India's **diplomatic outreach** is a positive step, but **border security concerns persist**. A **principled and strategic approach** is essential to ensuring a **stable, equitable relationship** with China.

