



## Depsang Plains

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### Why in News

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Recently, India and China have held talks at the **Major General-level** to discuss issues concerning the **strategic Depsang Plains**.

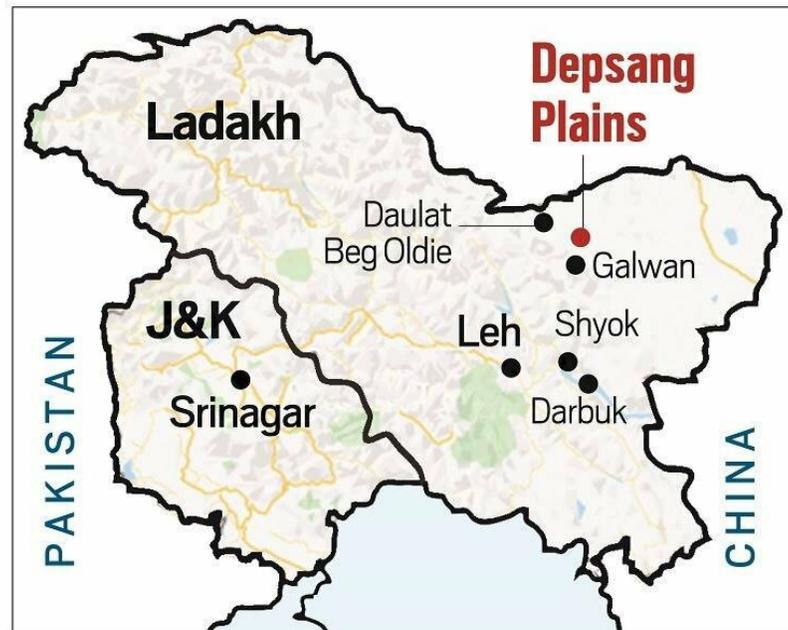
The talks were held at **Daulat Beg Oldie (DBO)** and were limited to Depsang to discuss issues of varying claims and also blocking patrols by each other.

### Key Points

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- **About the Meeting:**
  - This was the first high level talks post **Galwan clash** of 15<sup>th</sup> June 2020. Military talks since then have been limited to Corps Commander level.
  - The meeting **only discussed routine patrolling patterns** by both sides as part of border management **leaving aside disengagement or de-escalation**.

- **Depsang Plains:**



- The Depsang Plains along with **Pangong Tso** are the **two major areas** of concern in the ongoing standoff along the **Line of Actual Control (LAC)** in **eastern Ladakh**.
- Despite the strategic importance of the Depsang Plains, the series of military talks held so far have focussed on the standoff areas at **Galwan, Gogra Hotsprings and Finger area of Pangong Tso**.
- Depsang is one of the few places on the LAC where **tank manoeuvres are possible**.
  - During the **1962 war**, Chinese troops **occupied the Plains**. In **2013**, Chinese troops **came 19 km inside and pitched tents** resulting in a 21-day standoff.
- **Issues:**
  - There is a **heavy Chinese presence** at a crucial area called the **Bulge**, in the Depsang Plains.
  - Chinese troops have **blocked the Indian Army patrols** from reaching the various patrolling points.
  - There has also been a **build-up of tanks and armoured vehicles** on the Chinese side very close to the LAC.
- **Threats:**
  - It **threatens Indian positions** at Burtse and Raki Nala inside Indian territory and further DBO by bringing Chinese troops closer to the 255 km long crucial **Darbuk-Shyok-DBO road**.
  - Depsang is also close to the **Karakoram Pass**, overlooking the very strategic **Salto Ridge** and **Siachen glacier**.

- **Challenges:**

- While addressing the **[email protected] Summit** organised by the **Confederation of Indian Industries** (CII), the External Affairs Minister of India held that **reaching an understanding with China** is a huge challenge before Sino-Indian relations.

Both countries are **demographically very unique** with the billion-plus populations.

- There is a **parallel but differential rise** happening at a time when both are **neighbours as modern states** which puts a huge premium on reaching some kind of equilibrium or understanding between the two.

## **Way Forward**

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- Finding a balance or equilibrium is very central and crucial for Indian foreign policy calculation.
- At this moment, it is particularly important to revisit the original aspiration of establishing **diplomatic relations** 70 years ago and carry forward the spirit of good neighbourliness and friendship, unity and cooperation.
- India and China are amongst the largest economies, demography, markets and militaries of the world. Therefore, it is in the interests of both the countries to align their energies for the growth and development of their people, region and global peace.

**Source: TH**