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European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

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16.04.2025

## ***On the 75th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between China and India***

On April 1, 1950, India and the PRC, two of the handful of leading players in the modern phase of the Great World Game, established diplomatic relations. This was a notable positive development given the sharply aggravated international situation in general at that time.

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If you ask any, so to speak, “non-specialist” observers of current world political history to give examples of that sharp aggravation, they will most likely refer to the Korean War, which broke out three months after the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and India. However, they would not all cite another event of that time, namely the PLA’s march into Tibet, in October 1950, which ended half a century of legal ambiguity in that region. This, in turn, was a direct consequence of the weakening of China’s statehood in the 19th-early 20th centuries, a period which is now (quite rightly) referred to as the “century of humiliation.”

It would be a mistake to expect miracles in the further development of Sino-Indian relations, given the persistence of serious problems

The ambiguous status of Tibet suited not only the administration of British India but also the leadership of the independent Republic of India that replaced it in the summer of 1947. That is why the ending of that status immediately cast a dark shadow on the seemingly positive beginning of diplomatic relations between the two leading Asian powers that had just received, in very different ways, independent statehood.

**Current issues in relations between China and India**

Today, at the official level of Sino-Indian relations, the “Tibet problem,” as such, does not exist. But its various traces are still visible today. First of all, we should note the fact that about one hundred thousand Tibetan refugees live in India, as well as their descendants who were born there and who arrived in the country in several waves of migration. The occasion for one of the biggest waves of emigration was the unrest in Tibet, which occurred 10 years after the establishment of bilateral diplomatic relations.

Among them was the current spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism, the 14th Dalai Lama, who headed the Tibetan “government in exile” until 2011. The functioning on the territory of India of both that “government” and the 14th Dalai Lama himself serve as a source of considerable, to put it mildly, irritation in relations between Beijing and New Delhi. In particular, the issue relating to the procedure for identifying the next incarnation of the 14th Dalai Lama, who will be 90 years old next year. The above procedure is seen quite differently by Beijing and Dharamshala, the small town in northwest India, where both the Tibetan Buddhist leader and the Tibetan “government in exile” reside.

But an even greater irritant to bilateral relations is formed by the territorial traces that remain from the Tibet problem. The several disputed areas on the 4000-kilometer Line of Actual Control (LAC), which serves as the internationally recognized border between India and the PRC, together total an area of about 130,000 square kilometers. One of them, it turns out, is the entire Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh.

The current period of sharp deterioration in bilateral relations, on the other hand, was triggered by an unpleasant incident in another part of the LAC, [Ladakh](#). Once again, as in 1950, it coincided with an aggravation of the international situation in general, which emerged in the second half of 2019. The meeting between the leaders of both countries, Xi Jinping and Narendra Modi, which took place last October in Kazan on the margins of the most recent BRICS Summit, once again marked an important stage in this process.

Nevertheless, the whole system of Sino-Indian relations is becoming more and more important, not so much in terms of immediate bilateral issues, but rather with regard to the very fact of both countries’ emergence as leading global players. Moreover, both countries’ interests inevitably are beginning to extend to almost all regions of the world and, in particular, to manifest themselves in the Global South. And this process is becoming more and more competitive—it does not have to be, but that is the way it is so far. The same is true for China’s relations with [another leading Asian player, Japan](#).

As a direct consequence of the competitive positioning of both India and the PRC on the global stage, the former is participating in the Quad configuration, which also includes the

US, Japan and Australia. All countries which are, to varying degrees, geopolitical opponents of the PRC.

Moreover, to reiterate, competition between China and India is gradually becoming evident in all areas, including [in Europe](#) and in Africa, but it is particularly pronounced in areas adjacent to both countries. It should be noted that in general the leaders of these other countries have demonstrated a sensible approach to state policy and, as they maneuver in the field of the two Asian giants' overlapping interests, have tried not to provoke either of them. In this regard, New Delhi may have serious questions to put to [the new leadership of Bangladesh](#), which came to power [after the notorious events of last summer](#).

### **On the latest positive trends**

In the face of all sorts of complexities in relations between China and India, the importance of maintaining sanity and restraint in the behavior of the governing elites of both countries cannot be overemphasized. This is especially true in India, where, because of this positive policy, Narendra Modi is under attack from the main opposition party, Indian National Congress. One of that party's leaders, Rahul Gandhi, has periodically criticized the current government in no uncertain terms for, among other things, allegedly [not being firm enough on China](#).

In this regard, the exchanges of congratulations on the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Chinese leader Xi Jinping and Indian President Droupadi Murmu, and between Prime Ministers Li Keqiang and Narendra Modi are highly significant. These messages, among other things, noted the reduction of tensions in the LAC area and expressed the intention to continue the Dragon-Elephant tango.

The results of the talks held in Beijing in late January this year between India's Foreign Minister Vikram Misri and China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi are an important indication of the measures being taken to fulfill such intentions. In particular, the two governments, among other things, decided to resume direct air links (which had been suspended in 2020 after the incident in Ladakh), to launch expert groups on trade and economic issues and to promote pilgrimages to places of religious significance for citizens of both countries located in the neighboring territory.

It should be noted that the Trump factor has undoubtedly contributed to the easing of unnecessary tensions between India and China. In the tariff war launched by the current American president with the rest of the world, India has "raked in" 26%. Although New Delhi was previously aghast at the much lower rate, it seems that India did everything

possible to placate the leader of its extremely important overseas partner when he went on the rampage.

Nevertheless, once again, we must emphasize that it would be a mistake to expect miracles in the further development of Sino-Indian relations, given the persistence of serious problems.

Finally, the 75th anniversary of the establishment of formal relations between the two Asian giants provides a good occasion to briefly touch upon the popular concept of Yalta-2. This idea was first proposed by a certain “prophet of the Russian land,” who, along with various other nonsense, predicted the division of the global political space into spheres of influence led by Washington and Moscow. Not to mention the fact that this is obviously inconsistent with the concept of a “multipolar world,” it is extremely doubtful that present-day India and China (or Japan, Germany, Brazil, Indonesia or South Africa, for that matter) would agree to take sides based on sphere of influence drawn up by some other country without their knowledge.

And if they do not agree, then what? Shall we hit them with nuclear weapons, that is, shall we fulfill the dream of those paranoiacs who have lost their way in their search for problems in the current stage of the Great World Game which they can intervene in with their Sarmat-Poseidon-Hypersonic arsenals?

Such a division is a threat not only to peace, but also to any country that continues to send out mutually exclusive signals into the surrounding space. Meanwhile, a famous parable warned of such a prospect 2000 years ago.

[Vladimir Terehov](#), April 15, 2025

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