

UPSC Mains Content Builder Series

Video 7



INDIA & CHINA BORDER ISSUE



Our Interests

- ▶ Diplomatic & Foreign relations.
- ▶ Security & Trade
- ▶ GS II - India and its neighborhood- relations.



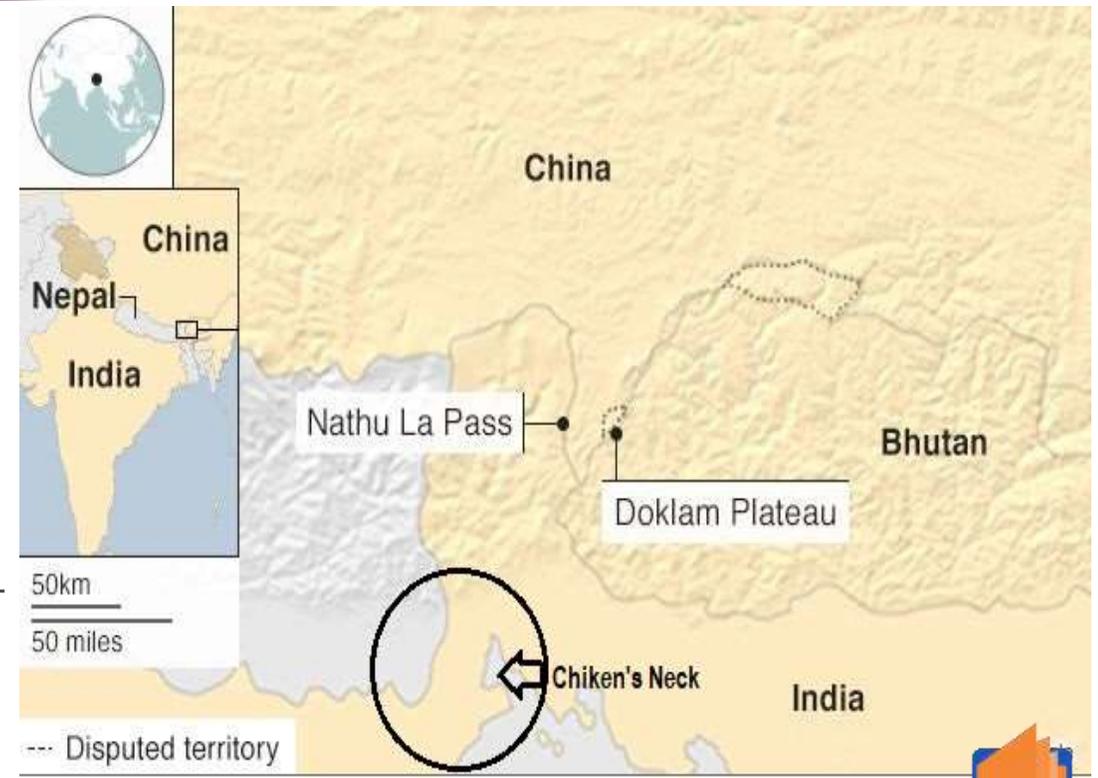
Context

- ▶ The India-China witnessed tensions at border during April-May 2020, with incidents reported in at least four different locations along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).
- ▶ Beginning early May, Chinese troops moved inside Indian territory with vehicles and equipment at several points along the LAC, including Pangong Tso, several points in Galwan Nalah area and Demchok in eastern Ladakh and Naku La in Sikkim,
- ▶ PLA soldiers also blocked Indian patrols and pitched tents.
- ▶ There have been multiple rounds of talks at the level of local military commanders (Colonel- and Brigadier-level), and three rounds of talks at the level of the division commanders (Major General).



Last major Stand off – Doklam 2017

- ▶ It erupted when India opposed China's attempt to extend a border road through a plateau known as Doklam in Bhutan and Donglang in China.
- ▶ The plateau, which lies at a junction between China, the north-eastern Indian state of Sikkim and Bhutan, **is currently disputed between Beijing and Thimphu.**
- ▶ **India supports Bhutan's claim over it.**
- ▶ India is concerned that if the road is completed, it will give China greater access to India's strategically vulnerable "**chicken's neck**", a 22km (14-mile) wide corridor that links the seven north-eastern states to the Indian mainland.



Chinas Acts and aggressions

- ▶ Although no shots have been fired, as the de facto border code dictates, but the soldiers have fought fiercely with rocks, wooden clubs and their hands in a handful of clashes.
- ▶ With the world consumed by the coronavirus pandemic, China has **acted forcefully** to defend its territorial claims, including in the Himalayas.
- ▶ In recent weeks,
 - ▶ the Chinese have sunk a Vietnamese fishing boat in the South China Sea;
 - ▶ swarmed a Malaysian offshore oil rig;
 - ▶ menaced Taiwan;
 - ▶ and severely tightened their grip on the semiautonomous region of Hong Kong.



Indian Calculations & Signals

- ▶ To the west, the Chinese are working with Pakistan, India's arch-enemy, and recently agreed to help construct an enormous dam on the border of Pakistan-administered Kashmir, an area India claims.
- ▶ To the east, China's new friend, Nepal, just produced a map that challenges where the Indian border lies; India has blamed China for stirring up the trouble.
 - ▶ Nepal was once a close ally, but after India encouraged un-official trade blockade in 2015, Nepal drifted closer to China.
- ▶ To the south, deep in the tropics, the Chinese have taken over an island in the Maldives, a few hundred miles off India's coast. Indian military experts say China has brought in millions of pounds of sand, expanding the island for possible use as an airstrip or submarine base.



Indian Calculations & Signals

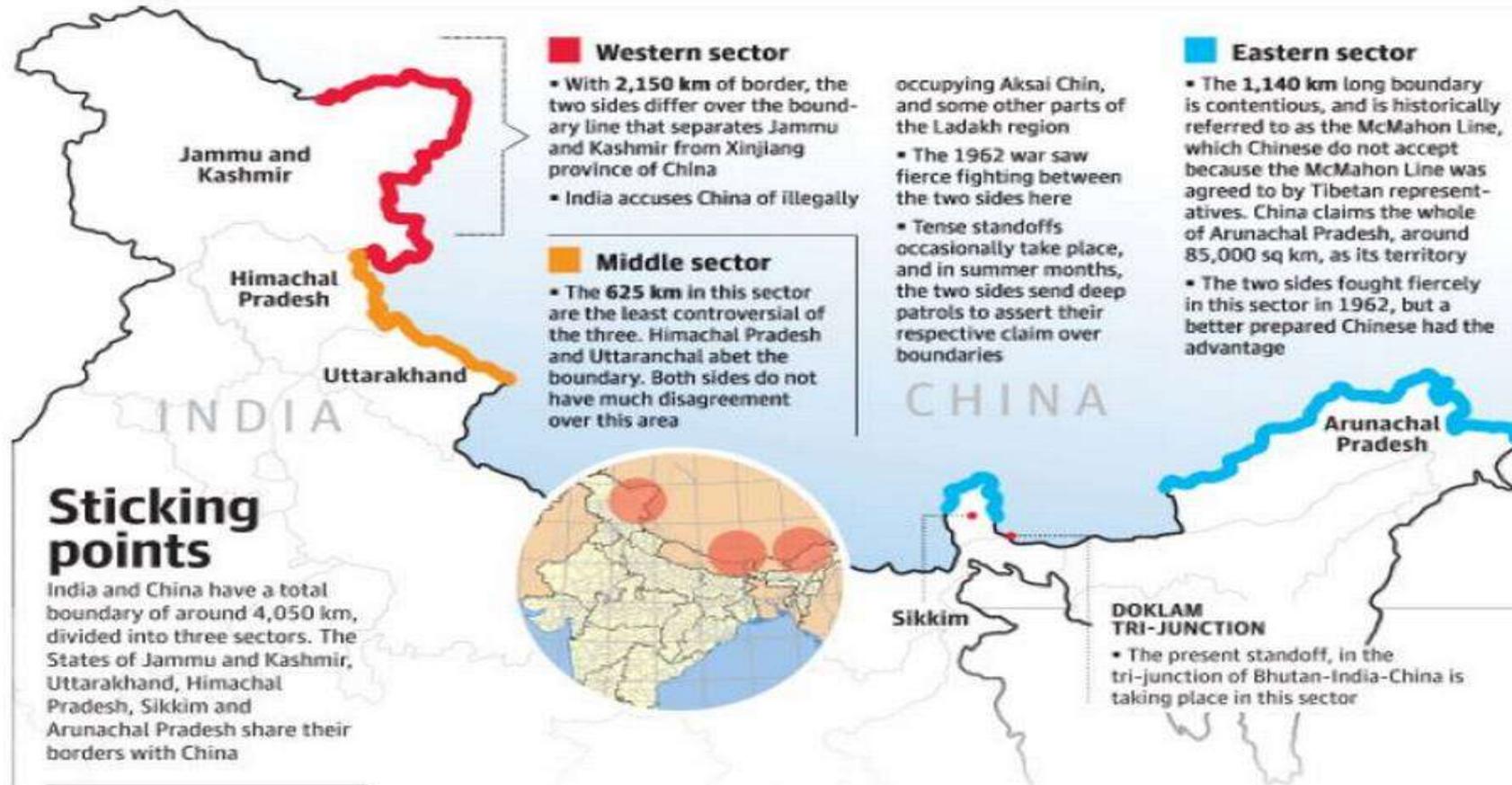
- ▶ The Chinese soldiers have mobilised into areas where there has historically been no dispute.
- ▶ Also the Covid-19 pandemic led India to cancel its annual training exercise in Ladakh, which brings a brigade to the area to react quickly.
- ▶ The Chinese too, conduct a training exercise in the area every summer, and they diverted their troops for this mobilisation while the Indians had to scramble troops from elsewhere to respond.

Chinese Calculations & Signals

- ▶ It was the fourth flare-up since China's authoritarian leader, Xi Jinping, rose to power at the end of 2012.
- ▶ The military skirmishes and standoffs with India seem to reflect Beijing's calculation that India's still increasing Covid-19 infections, coupled with its economic downturn, place it in no position to wage a border conflict,
- ▶ Beijing's way of sending a political message" to India not to get too close to the United States and to back off its criticism of the way China has handled the coronavirus.
- ▶ Recently **Atmanirbhar Bharat** & BJP leaders virtual participations in Taiwan's PM swearing in ceremony



India China Borders



- ▶ The disputed boundary between India and China, also known as the Line of Actual Control (LAC), is divided into three sectors: western, middle and eastern.
- ▶ The two armies try and dominate by patrol to the areas up to their respective perceptions of the LAC, often bringing them into conflict and leading to incidents such as those witnessed in **Naku La in Sikkim** earlier this month.
- ▶ The LAC mostly passes on the land, but **Pangong Tso** is a unique case where it passes through the water as well. The points in the water at which the Indian claim ends and Chinese claim begins are not agreed upon mutually.



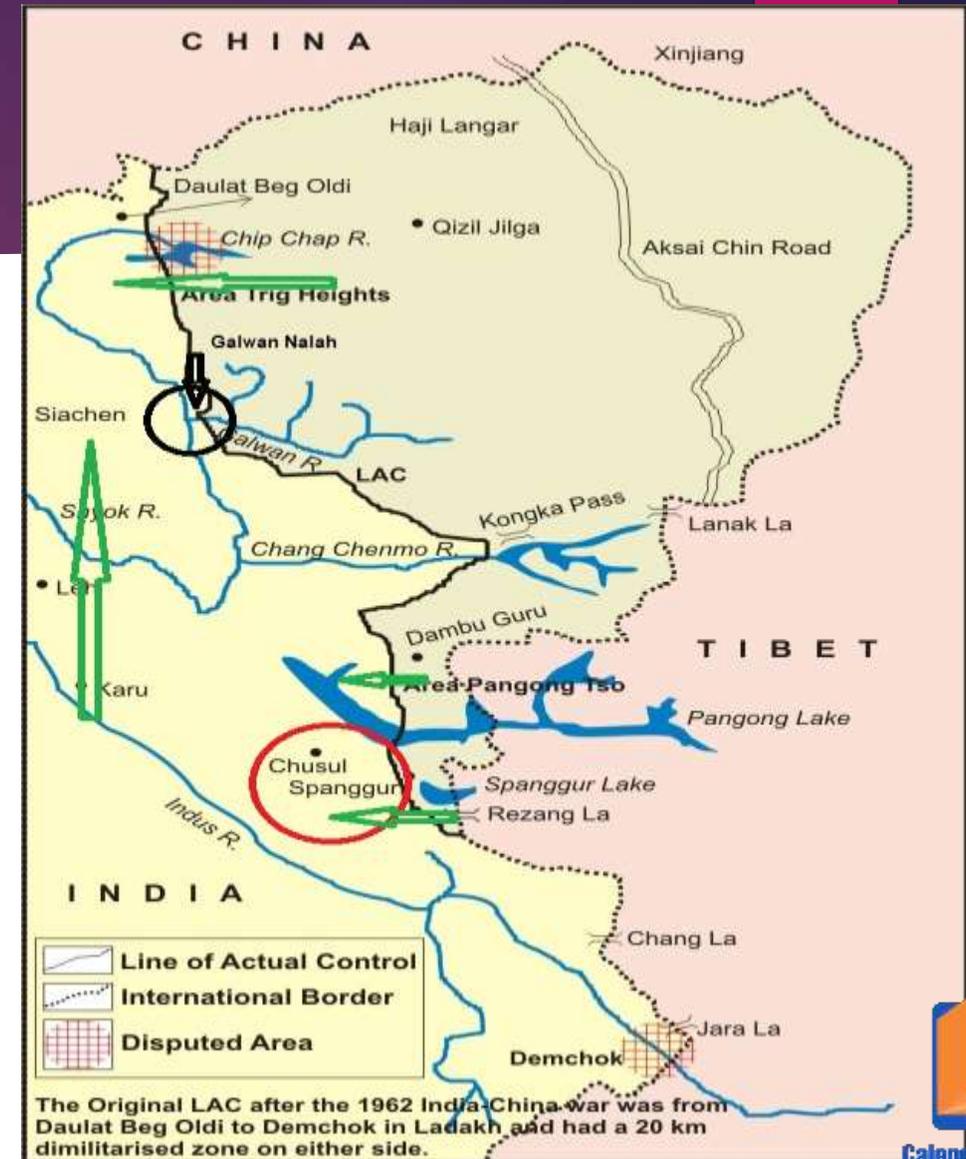
@ Pangong Tso

- ▶ The barren mountains on the lake's northern bank, called the Chang Chenmo, jut forward in major spurs, which the Army calls "fingers". India claims that the LAC is coterminous with Finger 8, but it physically controls area only up to Finger 4.
- ▶ Chinese border posts are at Finger 8, while it believes that the LAC passes through Finger 2.
- ▶ Chinese use light vehicles on the road to patrol up to Finger 2, which has a turning point for their vehicles.
- ▶ If they are confronted and stopped by an Indian patrol in between, asking them to return, it leads to confusion, as the vehicles can't turn back.
- ▶ The Indian side patrols on foot, and before the recent tensions, could go up to Finger 8.
- ▶ The fracas between Indian and Chinese soldiers earlier this month happened in this general area at Finger 5, which led to a "disengagement" between the two sides.

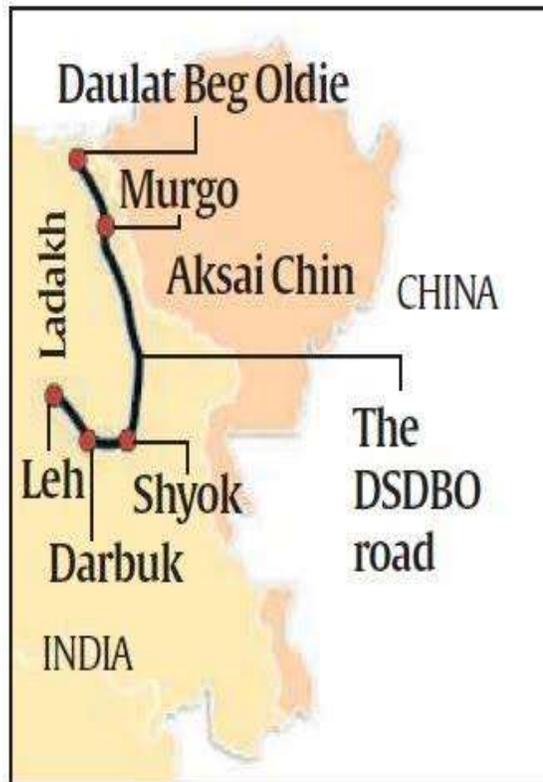


Significance of Lake

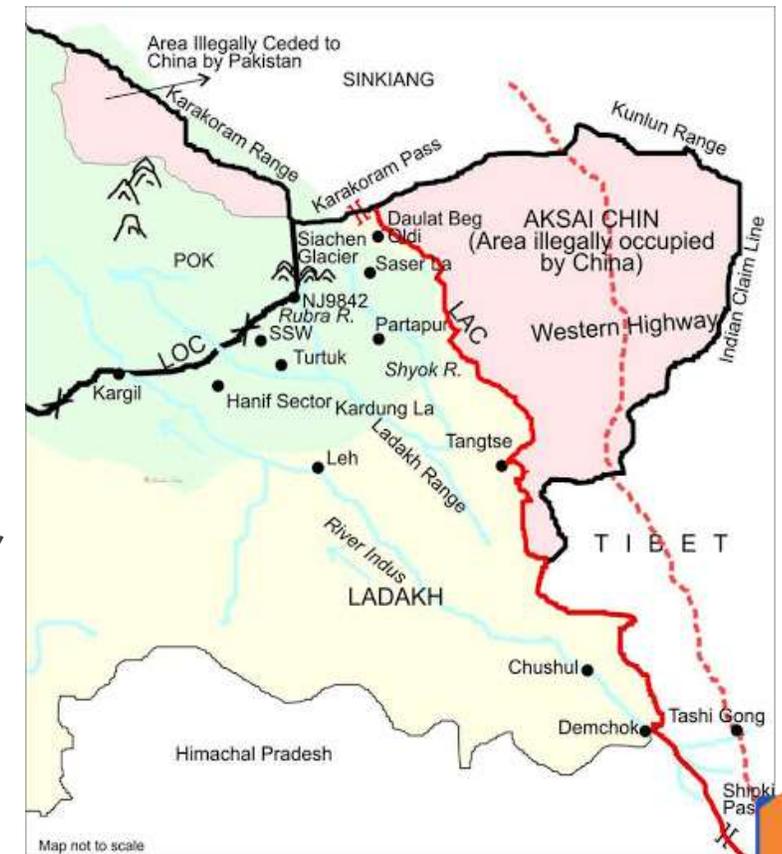
- ▶ By itself, the lake does not have major tactical significance. But it lies in the path of the **Chushul approach**, one of the main approaches that China can use for an offensive into Indian-held territory.
- ▶ Indian assessments show that a major Chinese offensive, if it comes, will flow across both the north and south of the lake.
- ▶ During the **1962 war**, this was where China launched its main offensive — the Indian Army fought heroically at Rezang La, the mountain pass on the southeastern approach to Chushul valley, where the Ahir Company of 13 Kumaon led by Maj. Shaitan Singh made its last stand.



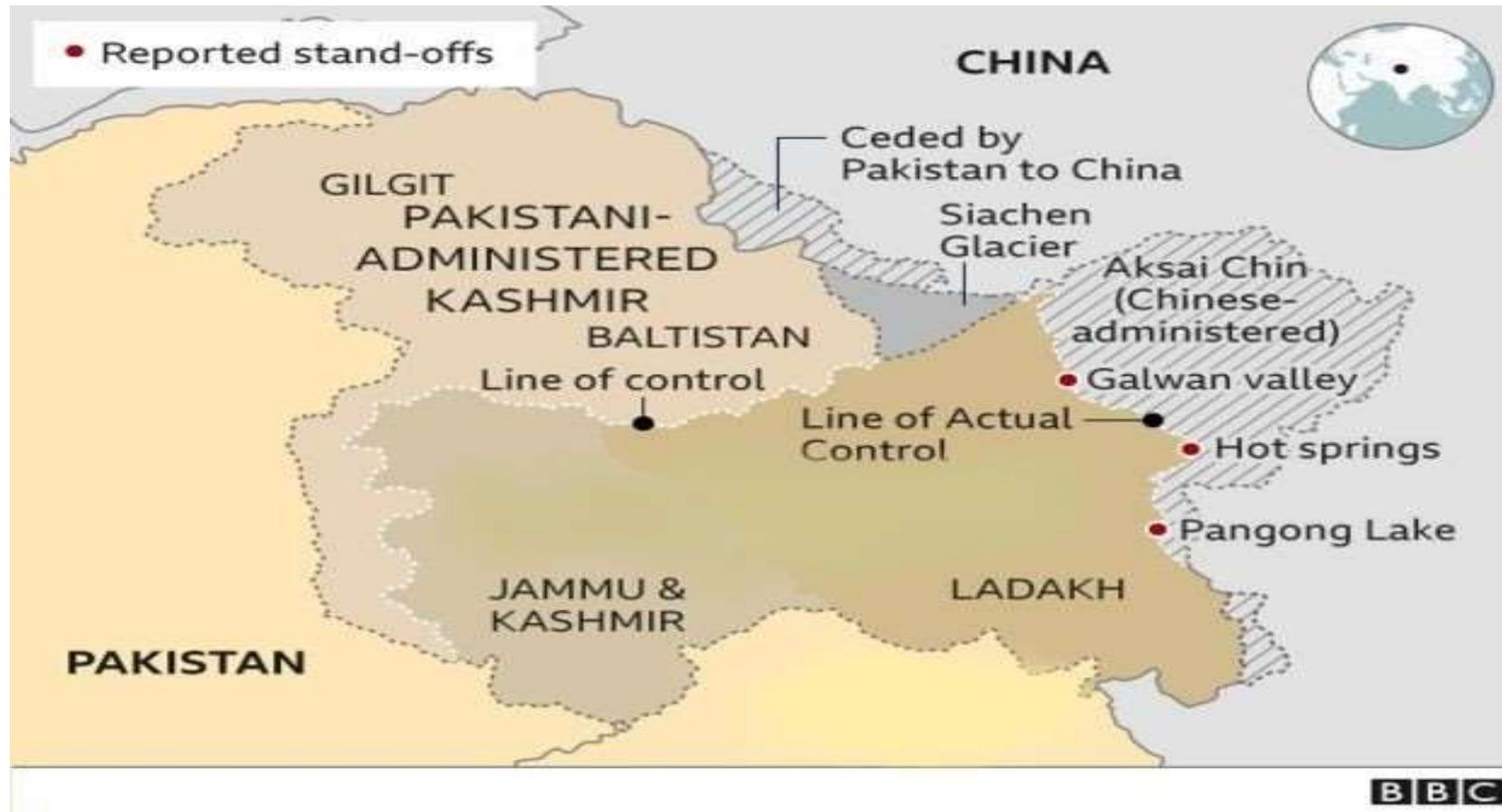
The DSDBO Road



- ▶ The 255-km Darbuk-Shyok-Daulat Baig Oldie (DSDBO) road which was constructed last year by India is apparently the cause behind the flare-up.
- ▶ However, the road is very much inside the Indian territory and has given all-weather access to the DBO, Depsang plains and the Karakoram pass.



J&K LOC and LAC



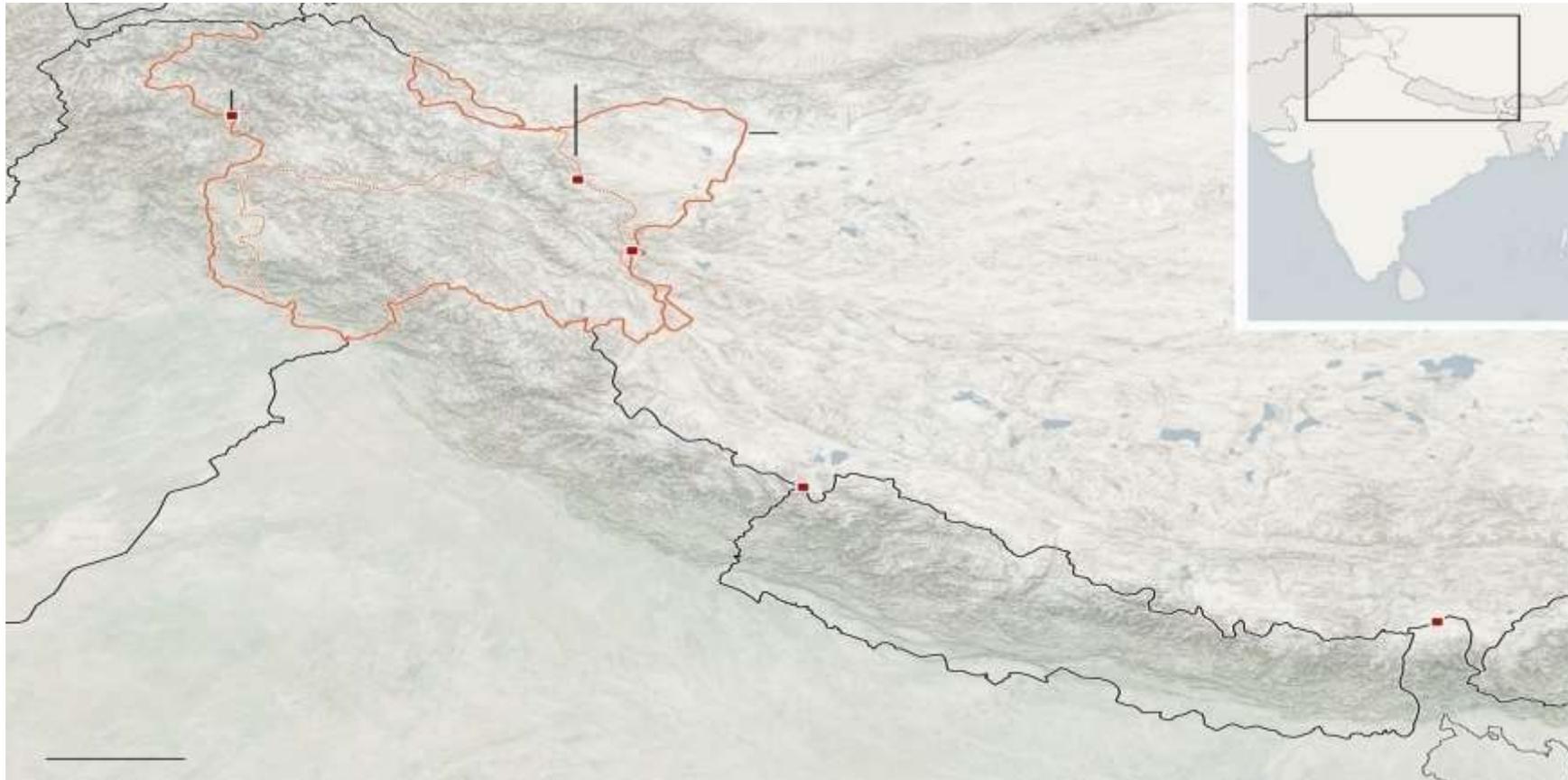
Implications for India

- ▶ Chinas CPEC plan gets bolstered.
- ▶ And once China gets **control of the southern side of the Karakoram** it can easily approach Siachen Glacier from the **Depsang corridor**.
- ▶ That would be disastrous for Indian defence, leaving the **strategic Nubra vulnerable**.
- ▶ It is quite possible that China is eyeing the waters of the Shyok, Galwan and Chang-Chenmo (tributary of the Shyok) rivers , to divert them to the arid Aksai Chin.

Proposed China Pakistan economic corridor



Name the points in the Map



Courtesy

- ▶ *The Hindu*
- ▶ *The Indian Express*
- ▶ *Outlook India*



Time to Share, Care, Like & Subscribe

- ▶ Thanks for Watching ...
- ▶ You can leave topic suggestions at **info@calendarstudy.com**

