

INDIA PULLS OUT OF KAVKAZ DUE TO CHINA

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India has withdrawn its participation in Kavkaz 2020 multinational exercise in Russia in September due to the participation of Chinese troops.

“Russia and India are close and privileged strategic partners. At Russia’s invitation, India has been participating in many international events. However, in view of the pandemic and consequent difficulties in exercise, including arrangements of logistics, India has decided not to send the contingent to Kavkaz 2020. The same has been informed to the Russian side,” a Defence Ministry official said late on Saturday. Other reasons include participation of Chinese troops and the Georgian breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia which have been recognised only by Russia and a few other countries, sources said.

The invitees to Kavkaz 2020 strategic command-post exercise, also referred to as Caucasus-2020, to be held in Astrakhan in Southern Russia from September 15 to 26 include Pakistan, Turkey and other member-states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).

As reported by *The Hindu* on August 7, India had confirmed its participation and a tri-service contingent consisting of 150 Army personnel and a small number of Navy and Air Force personnel had been identified. “All planning has been completed, funds were allocated and the personnel started practising for the exercise,” the source said.

In June, India and Chinese military contingents marched at the Victory Day Parade at the Red Square in Moscow to mark the 75th anniversary of the World War II.

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