

Tuting row resolved, says Army chief

Keeping watch: A file photo of Army personnel at the Bum La pass in Arunachal Pradesh. AFP

India and China held a Border Personnel Meeting (BPM) last week to resolve the incident of road building by Chinese civilians at Tuting in Arunachal Pradesh.

“The Tuting issue has been resolved. A border meeting was held two days back,” the Chief of the Army Staff, Gen. Bipin Rawat, said on Monday.

He was speaking to presspersons on the sidelines of an Army-industry seminar on indigenisation.

In December last week, a group of Chinese civilians were noticed undertaking track alignment activity about one kilometre inside the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Tuting.

On December 28, a joint team of the Army and the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) stopped them and sent them back during which some civil construction equipment, including two excavators, were left behind. Officials had said that there was no face-off at the site.

There are five BPM points along the LAC — Bum La and Kibithu in Arunachal Pradesh, Daulat Beg Oldi and Chushul in Ladakh and Nathu La in Sikkim.

Troops withdrawn

In a separate development, China has withdrawn a large part of its troops deployed near the Doklam tri-junction in the Chumbi Valley. “There is a major reduction in the Chinese troop strength,” Gen. Rawat said in response to questions.

Last year, the two Armies were engaged in a 73-day standoff at Doklam after Indian soldiers prevented the Chinese from building a road in the disputed territory. After prolonged diplomatic negotiations, the two sides announced disengagement on August 28. China, which does not have forces close to the LAC, had deployed additional soldiers near Doklam on its side which were not withdrawn even after the end of the standoff and their annual exercises in Chumbi.

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