

CHINA'S PLA BEGINS MAJOR MILITARY DRILL IN TIBET

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A file photo of PLA soldiers during a military drill in Tianjin. AP/Andy Wong

The Chinese army has begun major military exercises in the high-altitude Tibet bordering India, deploying latest weapons, including the Type 15 light battle tank and the new 155-MM vehicle-mounted howitzer, a media report said on Sunday.

The People's Liberation Army (PLA) Tibet Military Command started its New Year exercises in which it has deployed helicopters, armoured vehicles, heavy artillery and anti-aircraft missiles across the region from Lhasa, capital of Tibet, to the border defence front lines with elevations of more than 4,000 m, state-run *Global Times* reported.

India-China Line of Actual Control (LAC) covered 3,488 km, including the border along Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim. China claims Arunachal Pradesh as part of South Tibet.

Both the tank and howitzer, which were revealed to the public on October 1 last year, are specifically designed with advantages for plateau regions and can play important roles in safeguarding border areas, the report said. Their deployment in the Tibet Military Command will enhance PLA's capability in the plateau regions, it quoted an expert as saying.

Both were equipped with powerful engines, enabling them to manoeuvre efficiently in Tibet's terrains.

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