

China condemns Kovind's trip

Donning a new hat: Assam CM Sarbananda Sonowal presents President Ram Nath Kovind the 'Japi' in Guwahati. PTI

China on Monday strongly objected to President Ram Nath Kovind's visit to Arunachal Pradesh, saying India should refrain from "complicating" the border dispute when bilateral relations are at a "crucial moment".

President Kovind visited Arunachal Pradesh on Sunday.

"The Chinese government never acknowledged the so-called Arunachal Pradesh and our position on the border issue is consistent and clear," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang told presspersons when asked about Mr. Kovind's visit to Arunachal Pradesh, which China claims as Southern Tibet.

Repeated opposition

China routinely objects to visits of Ministers and senior officials to the area. On November 6, China raised objection to Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's visit to the border areas of Arunachal Pradesh.

India has dismissed Beijing's objections, maintaining that Arunachal Pradesh is an integral part of the country and Indian leaders are as much free to visit the State as they are to any other part of the country.

Both countries are "in the process of settling this issue through negotiation and consultation and seek to reach to a fair and reasonable solution acceptable to all", Mr. Lu said.

Pending final settlement all parties should work for peace and tranquillity, he said.

"China firmly opposes the Indian leader's relevant activities in the relevant region when China-India relations are at a crucial moment," he said.

"We hope India could work in the same direction and maintain a general picture of bilateral ties and refrain from complicating border issue and work to create favourable conditions for border negotiations and for the sound and stable development of bilateral ties," he said.

The Line of Actual Control (LAC) between India and China stretches to 3,488 km.

Bilateral meet in Dec.

Both sides held 19 round of talks by the Special Representatives to resolve the boundary dispute.

The 20th round is expected to be held next month in New Delhi, though dates have not yet been announced.

National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and his Chinese counterpart, Yang Jiechi, are the designated Special Representatives for the boundary talks.

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