

# INDIA, CHINA AGREE TO EXPAND MILITARY TIES

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Chinese President Xi Jinping in Wuhan. APJu Peng

India and China are set to expand their military ties, in tune with the spirit of the Wuhan informal summit between Chinese President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Narendra Modi in April.

During talks between visiting Defence Secretary Sanjay Mitra and his Chinese counterpart Shao Yuanming, both sides agreed to add another layer of exchanges between the military personnel of the two countries.

## Wuhan spirit

For the first time, cadets from Indian and Chinese military academies, as well mid-level officers, will meet each other regularly. "We are expanding military exchanges between our personnel at all levels in the aftermath of the Wuhan summit," official sources told *The Hindu*. The two senior officials also agreed to continue with visits at the level of military commands and civilian officers of the Ministry of Defence.

"The atmosphere during Tuesday's talks was excellent, which reflected the visible and gradual easing of tensions following the Doklam crisis and the Wuhan informal summit," the source said. "During the dialogue, a decision has been taken to add new confidence-building measures to maintain peace and tranquillity on the borders," the official said.

An Indian Embassy statement noted that "specific additional confidence-building measures at the operational level" have been included in view of the importance of maintaining peace and tranquillity in the India-China border areas. These decisions have been taken for "implementing the consensus of Prime Minister Modi and President Xi Jinping" — an obvious reference to the Wuhan informal summit.

The Defence Secretary's visit precedes the arrival of National Security Adviser Ajit Doval later this month for boundary talks with State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi. Mr. Xi and Mr. Modi are then expected to meet on the sidelines of the G-20 summit in Argentina next month.

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