



India and China speed up efforts to restart Kailash Mansarovar pilgrimage

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

Indian and Chinese officials are speeding up efforts to reach an agreement on restarting the annual Kailash Mansarovar Yatra, which has remained suspended since 2019. The deadline for choosing pilgrims for the Yatra is coming up in a few weeks.

Sources said that the two sides have discussed the resumption of the pilgrimage in detail in the last few weeks, and expect a breakthrough "shortly".



Clearing the way: The Yatra was suspended during the pandemic and had remained so over border tensions. RADHIKA SANTHANAM

after the Galwan killings in 2020.

'Narrowing gaps'

tation (WMCC) on India-China border affairs.

Charges for the Yatra this year will also increase



KEY POINTS

- India and China are close to restarting the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra, suspended since 2019 due to COVID-19 and border tensions. Talks focus on infrastructure and logistics.
- The pilgrimage, via Lipulekh (Uttarakhand) and Nathu La (Sikkim), is spiritually significant for Hindus, Buddhists, and Jains, and its resumption signals improved bilateral ties.





THE HINDU



GS Paper 2-IR

Northeastern region is gateway to Southeast Asia, says Jaishankar

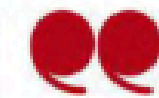
Kallol Bhattacharjee

NEW DELHI

Weeks after the Chief Adviser of Bangladesh's interim government, Muhammad Yunus, referred to India's northeastern region as "landlocked", External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on Wednesday highlighted the region as a "gateway to Southeast Asia".

In a virtual address to the Ambassadors' meet of the North East Investors Summit, 2025, Mr. Jaishankar spoke about the potential of the region and encouraged investors to take advantage of what it had to offer.

"The northeastern re-



It is at the heart of many key Indian policies — it could be 'neighbourhood' first, Act East or BIMSTEC. The northeast adjoins five of our neighbours on land

S. JAISHANKAR
Minister of External Affairs

Its boundaries are the interface between the Indian subcontinent and the ASEAN. Many of our recent initiatives involving immediate neighbours emanate from this very region," Mr. Jaishankar said.

The remarks from the External Affairs Minister

the Chinese market. The Ministry of External Affairs had not made an official response, though India terminated transshipment of cargo from Bangladesh through India's land and airports citing "congestion" following the remarks.

Mr. Jaishankar in a remark on X.

"We are seeking to address long-standing challenges, some emanating from our past history," Mr. Jaishankar said, highlighting the 'Purvodaya' scheme of the Government of India that he described as an "endeavour in that regard". Mr. Jaishankar also said the government had highlighted the tourism potential of northeastern States during the run-up to the 2023 G-20 summit in Delhi when some of the preparatory meetings had been held there. He also spoke of the trilateral highway that aims to connect India and Thailand through

KEY POINTS

- S. Jaishankar called India's northeastern region a "gateway to Southeast Asia" at the North East Investors Summit 2025, countering Bangladesh's "landlocked" comment. He highlighted its strategic role in policies like 'Act East' and BIMSTEC, and its potential for investment, tourism, and key infrastructure projects.





THE HINDU



GS Paper 3-Environment



Leptobrachium aryatium, a new-to-science frog recorded from a reserve forest on the edge of Guwahati. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

*Studied over
21 years, new
species of frog
named after*



KEY POINTS

- A 21-year study discovered a new frog species, *Leptobrachium aryatium*, named after Arya Vidyapeeth College in Guwahati, Assam. Found in the Garbhanga Reserve Forest, the frog is noted for its unique appearance and call. The discovery highlights the biodiversity of the forest, which is threatened by urbanization.



GS 3-Economy

Silkyara tunnel breakthrough, 2 years after collapse, rescue

AISWARYARAJ
DEHRADUN, APRIL 16

At a ceremony on Wednesday to mark the Silkyara tunnel's breakthrough—the meeting of the two ends of a tunnel being excavated from both sides—Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami recalled the 2023 collapse at the construction site and the efforts that led to the rescue of all 41 workers who had been trapped for 17 days.

"We all remember the unfortunate day of November 12, 2023, when the tunnel collapsed during the construction. The Prime Minister was in contact three times a day. His principal secretary was here. Technology was made available for us. I thank every expert across the country who contributed with their experience. I had announced that a temple of Baba Bhauknath ji will be built, and today, we have conducted the pran pratishtha of the temple," Dhami said at the event.



The 4.5-km Silkyara tunnel is being constructed at an estimated cost of ₹853 crore. PTI

Dhams by 25 km, resulting in a reduction of travel time to five minutes from 50. The construction of the tunnel, in the shape of a modified horseshoe, is estimated to be completed in 2026.

Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari called the breakthrough a historic milestone. "Today marks

ity – Provide all-weather access for pilgrims," Gadkari wrote on X.

Dhami said the 2023 rescue effort at the tunnel site was "the longest and hardest" rescue operation. He recalled that during the rescue, when the rescuers were just 10 metres from the trapped workers, the machinery got stuck. "All our engineers and officials of

other five days. You will be able to stay for the next five-seven days, right? They told me that they were fine enough to stay for fifteen days... They encouraged us to keep working," Dhami said.

The National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL) is the implementing agency for the

KEY POINTS

- Uttarakhand CM Pushkar Singh Dhami commemorated the Silkyara tunnel breakthrough, recalling the 2023 rescue of 41 workers trapped for 17 days. The 4.531 km tunnel, part of the Char Dham yatra project, will reduce travel time between Gangotri and Yamunotri by 45 minutes and provide all-weather connectivity.





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GS3-Defence

Ministry of Defence



INDIA- UZBEKISTAN JOINT MILITARY EXERCISE DUSTLIK-VI COMMENCES AT FOREIGN TRAINING NODE, AUNDH

Posted On: 16 APR 2025 2:39PM by PIB Delhi

KEY POINTS

- The 6th India-Uzbekistan Joint Military Exercise DUSTLIK-VI began on April 16, 2025, in Pune, focusing on joint counterterrorism and sub-conventional operations. It aims to boost interoperability and defence ties between the two nations.

