

Indian and PLA tanks Only 400 Meters Apart, Report Claims

Indian Army's North Command has massed T-72 tanks on high ground, outmanoeuvring Chinese forces

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Did Indian soldiers outsmart their Chinese counterparts?

According to a report by [Indian news outlet Swarajya](#), India has strategically deployed tanks and other equipment on crucial high ground in the Ladakh Valley, giving it a potential advantage over Chinese forces along the [Line of Actual Control](#) (LAC).

The Indian Army's North Command has placed numerous T-72 tanks on some of the heights south of Pangong Tso, catching The People's Republic of China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) off guard, the report said.

Those upgraded MBTs (Main Battle Tanks) are believed to have moved to higher ground in August and likely have spent the past months hardening those positions, the report said.

The PLA quickly responded by sending in tanks opposite the Indian positions. By some accounts, Indian and Chinese tanks could be as little as 400 meters apart, the report said.

On the intervening night of 29 and 30 August, the Indian Army, along with troops from the Special Frontier Force, preempted the Chinese by occupying heights in the Chushul sector south of the Pangong Tso lake, the report said.

The next day, the Army moved its T-72 tanks to some of these heights, the report from Ladakh by prominent Indian defence journalist Nitin Gokhale reveals.

The Indian Army's move, which was approved by the Narendra Modi government, surprised the PLA, the report adds.

"The next day, after a quick clearance from Delhi, Indian Army's Northern Command also deployed T-72 tanks on some of the above mentioned peaks, once again catching the Chinese unawares," the report reads.

"Of course, in the next few days, the PLA also moved tanks close to Indian positions in this sector. Now, in what must be a first anywhere in the world, tanks from both sides are some 400 metres apart at an altitude of 16,000-plus feet, ranged against each other, their barrels facing backwards," the report reads.

The report adds that the Chinese side has shown “an eagerness to de-escalate and disengage” after India called its bluff and refused to budge.



India has deployed more than fifty thousand troops armed with heavy weapons, as well as large numbers of its Soviet/Russian-designed T-72 (shown above) and T-90 tanks along with the BMP-2 Infantry Combat Vehicle — and all have been equipped with special fuels to operate at temperatures up to minus 40C. Credit: Handout.

According to [The National Interest](#), tensions have been high since some 20 Indian Army soldiers, including infantry Colonel B. Santosh Babu, were killed in a [violent face-off](#) with Chinese troops in the Ladakh’s Galwan Valley in June.

There have been several high-level meetings conducted between military leaders of both nations to deescalate the situation, with the most recent one held on October 15.

Even as both sides have tried to allow cooler heads to prevail, over the summer and early autumn both sides have essentially been preparing for war, The National Interest reported.

In July China moved artillery pieces, heavy vehicles and construction materials in key positions close to the LAC that separates one Indian union territory, the Kashmiri Himalayan region of Ladakh, and four Indian states, from the Chinese-controlled Tibet Autonomous Region.

India has countered the Chinese build-up and the Indian Air Force has ferried in equipment via heavy-lift aircraft, and that included numerous [T-72 and T-80 tanks](#), along with BMP-2 armored personnel carriers (APC), National Interest reported.

All of the vehicles have been modified and adapted to run on a special fuel mix designed specifically for the high altitudes and low temperatures of the region.

India has operated the T-72, powered by 780 horsepower diesel engines, since the early 1980s and has subsequently been produced domestically under license in India, National

Interest reported.

These are based on the export versions of the T-72 and were originally armed with a 125 millimeter D-81T smoothbore tank gun, but many have been retrofitted with the French 155-millimeter F-1 turret or the British 155-millimeter Vickers T6 turret.

Some 310 T-90S MBTs entered service with India in 2001. It was chosen as it was a direct development of the T-72 that India already was producing with 60% commonality, which simplified both training and maintenance, National Interest reported.

The T-90 was actually selected over the domestically developed Arjun MBT to counter the Pakistan military's Ukrainian-made T-80 tanks.

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Featured image. According to a report from an Indian journalist, Indian tanks have taken the high ground in the Ladakh LAC standoff. Credit: Handout via Asia Times

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