

India-Myanmar Territory Exchange, Reason, Controversy, Region

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India-Myanmar Territory Exchange refers to the proposed adjustment of a small section of the India-Myanmar border to resolve a long pending demarcation issue. At present, India and Myanmar are discussing a possible territorial adjustment to settle an unresolved section of their international boundary in Manipur. The proposed area is near border pillars 65-68 in Chandel district. The Ministry of External Affairs has confirmed that discussions on unsettled border sectors are ongoing, but no final territorial exchange has been announced.

India-Myanmar Territory Exchange Latest News

The India-Myanmar Territory Exchange proposal concerns a small disputed alignment near Manipur's border with Myanmar. MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal confirmed that discussions are underway to settle certain unresolved border areas but has not announced a concluded territorial exchange. Therefore, claims about a completed Swap or confirmed transfer remain premature.

India-Myanmar Territory Exchange Background

The India-Myanmar Border extends 1,643 km across four Indian states. Although much of the boundary is demarcated, important stretches remain unresolved, creating challenges for accurate border management and fencing.

- **1967 Boundary Agreement:** The present India-Myanmar boundary framework was defined through a bilateral agreement in 1967, but some boundary pillars and alignments remained unsettled.
- **Unresolved Boundary:** Around 1,472 km has been demarcated through boundary pillars, while nearly 171 km remains unresolved, mainly around Arunachal Pradesh's Lohit sector and Manipur's Kabaw Valley.
- **Nine Boundary Pillars:** In 2018, the government informed Parliament that the remaining sections would be addressed through a bilateral mechanism involving identification and installation of nine boundary pillars.
- **Free Movement Regime:** The 2018 FMR allowed eligible tribal communities near the frontier to travel up to 16 km across the border using border passes without conventional visas.
- **Border Management:** India announced in 2024 plans to fence the 1,643 km border and discontinue the FMR, citing concerns involving illegal immigration, insurgency and cross border crime.
- **Earlier Land Swap:** The India-Bangladesh Land Boundary Agreement ratified in 2015 involved India transferring 111 enclaves and receiving 51 Bangladeshi enclaves, settling a 41 year old boundary issue.

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India-Myanmar Territory Swap Regions

The reported India-Myanmar Territory Exchange is concentrated around Manipur, while the wider unresolved frontier also includes areas in Arunachal Pradesh. No confirmed Myanmar territory has been officially announced for incorporation into India.

- **Chandel District:** The reported exchange area lies in Manipur's Chandel district near Myanmar's Kabaw Valley in the Sagaing Region.
- **Molcham Sector:** The sensitive Molcham section lies between boundary pillars 64 and 68. The reported proposal specifically concerns the stretch between pillars 65 and 68.
- **Moreh Sector:** Another sensitive Manipur section lies between boundary pillars 75 and 79 near the important border trade and connectivity area of Moreh.
- **Choro Khunou Sector:** The Choro Khunou section, between boundary pillars 88 and 95, is another identified sensitive stretch along the Manipur frontier.
- **Arunachal Pradesh:** Nearly 171 km of the overall unresolved boundary includes the Lohit sector of Arunachal Pradesh, although no territorial exchange involving this area has been confirmed.
- **Myanmar Side:** The proposed Manipur alignment adjoins the Kabaw Valley in Myanmar's Sagaing Region. No specific Myanmar parcel to be transferred to India has been officially identified.

Is India Exchanging Land With Myanmar?

The reported proposal of India-Myanmar Territory Exchange seeks to resolve a roughly 2.8 km boundary stretch by exchanging about 1.4 square miles of territory. The objective is precise demarcation rather than territorial expansion.

- The proposal focuses on completing boundary demarcation between pillars 65 and 68, covering an approximately 2.8 km stretch in Manipur.
- Reports based on an official document indicate that around 1.4 square miles could be exchanged. The government has not publicly confirmed the exact contours.
- The two sides have reportedly considered additional and new boundary pillars in the Molcham sector to establish a clearer physical alignment.
- Discussions also reportedly examined a 2017 Ministry of External Affairs proposal concerning the alignment of the boundary in the Molcham area.
- The proposal remains under discussion. Therefore, the reported India-Myanmar Land Exchange should not be treated as a completed agreement or final transfer of territory.
- Recently, President of Myanmar U Min Aung Hlaing visited India from 30 May to 3 June 2026. Border management, security and bilateral cooperation were among the issues discussed during the visit.
- India and Myanmar also agreed to strengthen security cooperation and prevent the misuse of sovereign territory against either country's security interests.

India-Myanmar Territory Exchange Reasons

The proposed India-Myanmar Border Swap is linked mainly to boundary clarity, physical fencing and stronger management of a difficult frontier rather than a broader territorial dispute.

- **Clear Demarcation:** A territorial adjustment could help establish an agreed boundary where existing alignments remain difficult to determine accurately on the ground.
- **Border Fencing:** Resolving the alignment would support India's broader plan to fence the international border and create clearer physical control over frontier areas.
- **Illegal Immigration:** Better demarcation and fencing could strengthen measures against unauthorised cross border movement and illegal immigration.
- **Insurgency Control:** A clearly marked and better managed boundary could restrict movement of insurgent groups and reduce the possibility of cross border sanctuary.
- **Cross Border Crime:** Stronger physical border management could help address arms smuggling, narcotics trafficking, human trafficking and other transnational crimes.
- **Security Cooperation:** India and Myanmar have increased cooperation on intelligence sharing, counter insurgency, narcotics control and other security concerns affecting both countries.

India-Myanmar Territory Exchange Impacts and Controversy

The India-Myanmar Land Exchange could improve boundary management, but any transfer of territory has major political and public sensitivities, particularly because Manipur groups strongly emphasise territorial integrity.

- **Security Benefit:** A mutually accepted alignment could remove ambiguity from the frontier and make fencing, surveillance and security operations easier to implement.
- **Strategic Significance:** A clearly demarcated border is important for **India's Act East policy**, regional connectivity and security cooperation with Myanmar.
- **Local Concerns:** Civil society groups in Manipur have opposed any transfer of state territory, arguing that even a small reduction could affect Manipur's territorial integrity.

- **COCOMI Opposition:** The Coordinating Committee on Manipur Integrity, formed in 2019, warned against ceding any portion of Manipur to Myanmar and demanded that territorial concerns be treated seriously.
- **Historical Sensitivity:** COCOMI argued that Manipur had already lost parts of its historical territory following its merger with the Indian Union in 1949, making further territorial reduction unacceptable.

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