

India, China open new meeting point for armies

Guwahati: This Independence Day, India and China opened a new point for officers of the armies of the two countries to meet. The move is being hailed as an “ice-breaker” by Indian defence officials and signalling the beginning of positive relations between the two countries.

The officials met at the relatively low-altitude Kepang la (1,915 m), northwest of Gelling village, where the Yarlong Tsangpo river from Tibet enters India as the Siang river which later joins the Lohit to form the Brahmaputra in Assam. The defence PRO, Col C Konwer, told TOI, “At the new location at Kepang la Indian Army and People’s Liberation Army (PLA) troops met on August 15, marking a historic day in the India-China relationship. The Indian Army delegation was led by Col Manish Joshi and the PLA delegation by Col Chen Sau Feng. The two sides had eight members each and both sides welcomed the opportunity for the opening of this new location and allowing for a better contact process to resolve any issues in times to come.”

“Gifts were exchanged. Both sides affirmed their resolve to enhance mutual understanding and cooperation for maintaining peace and tranquility along the Line of Actual Control,” the PRO added. It was in this sector that the Chinese PLA had brought in bulldozers to build a road last January, prompting a build-up of Indian military there.

Defence sources said efforts were on to put the past behind and engage in improving bilateral ties at the political level. “The Kapeng la meeting was to break the ice between the two armies.”