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India-China Dispute Over Arunachal Pradesh

Published On: 26-11-2025

The incident at the Shanghai airport, where an Indian citizen was reportedly detained because Chinese officials refused to recognize her Indian passport listing **Arunachal Pradesh** as her birthplace, is a direct manifestation of the long-standing and unresolved **India-China boundary dispute**.

The McMahon line

China's Claim: China claims approximately 90,000 sq km of territory in the eastern sector of the boundary, corresponding to nearly the entire state of **Arunachal Pradesh**, which it calls "**Zangnan**" or "**South Tibet**." China asserts that the territory was historically part of Tibet and, therefore, is now part of China.

India's Position: India regards Arunachal Pradesh as an "**integral and inalienable part of India**" (as reiterated by the MEA). India bases its boundary claim on the **McMahon Line**, which was negotiated during the **1914 Simla Convention** between British India and Tibet. India considers this line the legal and geographical border.

A "Strong Demarche": India's issuance of a "strong demarche" is a formal, diplomatic note of protest, signifying that the issue is considered a serious breach of international norms and an affront to India's sovereignty.

The policy of stapled VISAs

This incident is not the first time China has challenged India's sovereignty over the state. In the past, China has sometimes issued "**stapled visas**" to residents of Arunachal Pradesh and Jamm& Kashmir.

What are Stapled Visas? Instead of stamping the visa onto the passport, China attaches it on a separate sheet of paper that is stapled to the passport.

The Intent: China does this to avoid giving implicit recognition to the Indian passport holder as a citizen of Arunachal Pradesh, thereby signaling its non-recognition of the region as Indian territory. This specific airport detention, where the passport itself was allegedly called "invalid," is seen as a more aggressive escalation of this policy.

VIOLATION OF INTERNATIONAL AIR TRAVELS CONVENTION

The detention also raises questions about adherence to international law and regulations governing air travel and transit

Transit Rules: MEA Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal pointed out that the Chinese action violates "**several conventions governing international air travel**" and China's "**own regulations that allow visa-free transit up to 24 hours for nationals of all countries.**"

Convention on International Civil Aviation (Chicago Convention, 1944): This convention sets the fundamental principles governing international air transport. While it deals mostly with safety and air traffic rules, the spirit of international air travel encourages smooth transit. The actions by the Chinese immigration officials and airline, which allegedly refused to recognize a valid Indian passport, contravene established norms of international civil

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aviation.

Treaty Obligations: Detaining a foreign citizen in transit without clear legal grounds, especially for a political reason concerning their place of birth, violates the basic courtesy and legal obligations countries owe to each other under international conventions