

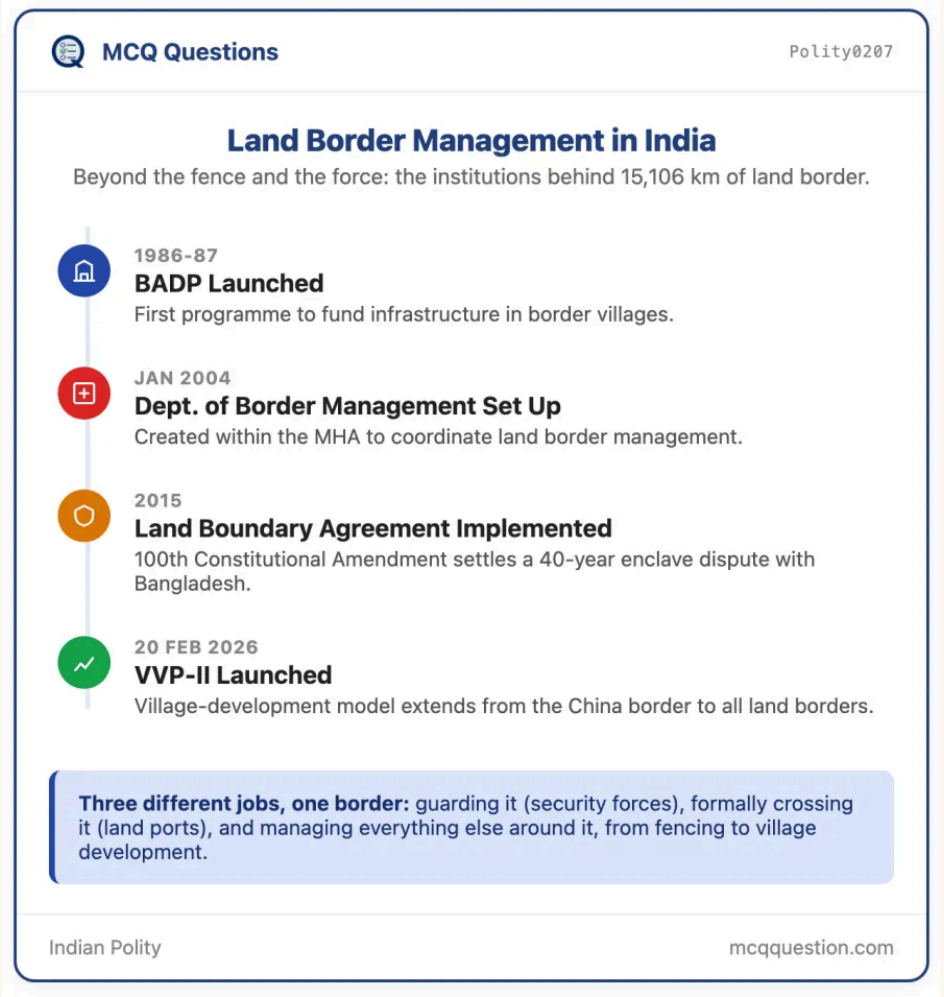
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Land Border Management in India: Beyond the Fence and the Force

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Land Border Management in India: Beyond the Fence and the Force

In 2015, India gave away more land than it received. It did this on purpose. The deal ended a border dispute that had run for over 40 years. It was one piece of a bigger system. That system manages India’s 15,106 km of land border. Guarding the line is only one job. This lesson covers the rest.



Land border management: key dates from 1986-87 to 2026.

1986-87 BADP launched. It funds infrastructure in border villages.
Jan 2004 Department of Border Management set up inside the MHA.
2015 100th Amendment settles the 40-year enclave dispute with Bangladesh.
20 Feb 2026 VVP-II extends village development from the China border to all land borders.

BADP: Border Area Development Programme.

CIBMS: Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System.

VVP: Vibrant Villages Programme.

Border haat: A small cross-border market for local goods.

1 Chapter 1: The Scale and the Coordinators

Must Know

How long is the line?

- India shares **15,106.7 km** of land border with seven countries.
- They are Pakistan, China, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Afghanistan.
- The border runs through 92 districts in 17 states.

Three different jobs

- The first job is **guarding** the border. Security forces do this.
- The second is **crossing** it in a formal way. Land ports do this.
- The third is **managing everything else** around the border. This means fencing, lights, roads and village development.

- This lesson is about the third job.

Who coordinates it all?

- The Department of Border Management was created in **January 2004**.
- It sits inside the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- It coordinates fencing, floodlighting and infrastructure.
- It also looks after Integrated Check Posts along the land borders and coastlines.

Remember: Guarding, crossing and managing are three separate jobs. This lesson covers the managing layer.

> **Quick check 1.** The Department of Border Management sits inside the Ministry of Home Affairs. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

2 Chapter 2: Funding Life Near the Border

Must Know

BADP, the first programme

- The Border Area Development Programme began in **1986-87**.
- It funds roads, health, education, water and sanitation.
- The money goes to a defined band of villages near the border.
- The aim is better living conditions for people there.

Border haats

- A border haat is a small cross-border market.

- People near the India-Bangladesh border trade specified local goods there.
- They trade on fixed days and without full customs paperwork.
- The first one opened at **Kalaichar, Meghalaya**, on 23 July 2011.
- Read more: Meghalaya.

The BIM scheme

- The Border Infrastructure and Management (BIM) Scheme runs from 2021 to 2026.
- It is a Central Sector scheme with an outlay of **₹13,020 crore**.
- It pays for fencing, roads and surveillance infrastructure on all land borders.

Remember: BADP (1986-87) funds villages. BIM (₹13,020 crore) funds fencing, roads and surveillance.

> **Quick check 2.** India's first border haat opened in Assam. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

3 Chapter 3: A 1974 Deal That Took 41 Years

Must Know

The Land Boundary Agreement

- India and Bangladesh signed the agreement in **1974**.
- India could not hand over territory without changing the Constitution.
- That change came only in **2015**, through the **100th Constitutional Amendment**.
- India transferred **111 enclaves** to Bangladesh.
- It received **51 enclaves** in return.

Life inside an enclave

- Before the swap, enclave residents lived almost without a country.
- They had no proper identity papers.
- They had no easy access to schools, hospitals or electricity.
- In July 2015, the agreement gave every resident a real choice.
- They could take citizenship of the country they now lived in. Or they could move.

What people chose

- Most residents stayed where they were.
- Only **987** of the 37,369 people in India's former enclaves inside Bangladesh chose to stay Indian.
- **14,221** residents of Bangladesh's former enclaves inside India chose Indian citizenship.

Remember: Signed in 1974. Made possible by the 100th Amendment in 2015. 111 enclaves out, 51 in.

> **Quick check 3.** The 100th Constitutional Amendment is the number of enclaves India transferred. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

> **Think it through: Think it through: why did a treaty from 1974 need an amendment?**
>
> A treaty alone cannot hand over land that the Constitution counts as India. Parliament had to amend the Constitution first. That step took until 2015.

4 Chapter 4: Fences, Sensors and Their Limits

Good to Know

A system built after Pathankot

- The Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System (CIBMS) was sanctioned on **29 January 2016**.
- It came after the Pathankot terror attack.
- It pairs physical fencing with sensors, cameras and radars.
- These give round-the-clock watch.
- The first pilot projects went live in **September 2018**, along the India-Pakistan border in Jammu's Samba sector.

Where a fence cannot work

- Some stretches cannot be fenced in the usual way.

- Riverine and marshy sections are the main problem.
- The India-Bangladesh border in Assam has many of these.
- There, “smart fencing” projects like BOLD-QIT use sensors and technology instead.
- Read more: Assam.

5 Chapter 5: Vibrant Villages, Phase One

Good to Know

VVP-I, for the China border

- The Union Cabinet approved VVP-I on **15 February 2023**.
- It funds infrastructure and livelihoods in villages along the China border.
- These lie in Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh and Ladakh.
- The outlay was **₹4,800 crore**.
- Read more: Arunachal Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh.

Why keep people living there?

- Border villages often lose people to cities.
- A key goal of VVP is to make residents stay.
- A populated border area helps vigilance.
- Villagers also give better local intelligence.
- Read more: Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP).

Quick check 4. A key goal of the Vibrant Villages Programme is to encourage residents to stay in border villages. *(True or False?)*

See answer ↓

6 Chapter 6: In the News, 2026

Current Affairs

VVP-II launches in Assam

- On **20 February 2026**, Union Home Minister Amit Shah launched VVP-II.
- He did so at Nathanpur village in Assam's Cachar district.
- The outlay is **₹6,839 crore**, up to the 2028-29 financial year.
- It covers 1,954 villages across 334 blocks in 17 states and Union Territories.
- It extends the vibrant villages model from the China border to all land borders.
- The method is **saturation-based** and convergence-driven.
- It improves infrastructure, services and livelihoods together in each village, in line with the Viksit Bharat @2047 vision.
- (Source: The Tribune, 20 Feb 2026.)

Fencing the Myanmar border

- On 9 July 2026, Amit Shah spoke at the Land Border Districts' Superintendents of Police Conference-2026.
- He said the government is fencing the **1,610 km** India-Myanmar border.
- The cost is ₹31,000 crore.

- (Source: Central Chronicle, 9 Jul 2026.)

> **Quick check 5.** VVP-II covers villages along all of India's land borders. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

7 Chapter 7: Do Not Mix These Up

Great to Know

Border security is a different layer

- Polity0013 covers the forces that guard the border. These are the BSF, ITBP, SSB and others.
- This lesson covers the framework around those forces.
- Read more: Border Security: Management, Organizations and Regional Challenges.

Land ports are different too

- The Land Ports Authority of India (LPAI) manages formal crossing points.
- These are for legal trade and travel.
- Land border management is wider. It covers the whole border, not just official crossings.
- Read more: Land Ports Authority of India (LPAI).

A telling change in three years

- VVP-I in 2023 covered only five China-border States and a Union Territory.
- VVP-II in 2026 covers 17 States and Union Territories.

- This is a real shift from a China-specific plan to development along every border.

Quick Q&A

- **BADP started?** 1986-87.
- **Department of Border Management?** January 2004, in the MHA.
- **Enclaves transferred?** 111 out, 51 in.
- **CIBMS sanctioned?** 29 January 2016.
- **VVP-II outlay?** ₹6,839 crore.

Practice MCQs

1. The Department of Border Management was created within which ministry, and in which year?

A. Ministry of Home Affairs, January 1987

B. Ministry of External Affairs, January 2004

C. Ministry of Home Affairs, January 2004

D. Ministry of Defence, January 2004

See answer ↓

2. The Land Boundary Agreement, originally signed in 1974, was finally implemented in 2015 through which mechanism?

A. A Supreme Court judgment

B. A Presidential Ordinance

C. The 111th Constitutional Amendment Act

D. The 100th Constitutional Amendment Act

See answer ↓

3. Where did India's first border haat with Bangladesh open, and when?

A. Kamalasagar, Tripura, on 15 August 1998

B. Attari, Punjab, on 26 January 2005

C. Moreh, Manipur, on 1 April 2015

D. Kalaichar, Meghalaya, on 23 July 2011

See answer ↓

4. The Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System (CIBMS) was sanctioned in January 2016, in the aftermath of which event?

A. The 2008 Mumbai attacks

B. The Pathankot terror attack

C. The Kargil War

D. The Uri attack

See answer ↓

5. Vibrant Villages Programme-II (VVP-II), launched in February 2026, marked a major expansion over VVP-I. What changed?

A. It was merged entirely into the BADP

B. Its total budget was cut by half

C. It was restricted to only Ladakh

D. Coverage expanded from the China border alone to all of India's land borders

See answer ↓

Answer Key

1. **C.** It was set up within the MHA in January 2004, to coordinate fencing, floodlighting, infrastructure, and Integrated Check Posts along India's land borders. ↑ Q1
2. **D.** Transferring territory needed a Constitutional Amendment; this came only in 2015, via the 100th Amendment Act — not the 111th, which is instead the number of enclaves transferred. ↑ Q2
3. **D.** The answer is Kalaichar, Meghalaya, on 23 July 2011. A news report datelined 23 July says two ministers inaugurated it that Saturday. Kalaichar is one of the four border haats that a 2017 Rajya Sabha reply listed as working. ↑ Q3
4. **B.** CIBMS was sanctioned on 29 January 2016, after the Pathankot attack, combining physical fencing with sensors, cameras, and radars. ↑ Q4
5. **D.** VVP-I (2023) covered only 5 China-border States/UT; VVP-II (2026) covers 17 States and Union Territories across all land borders. ↑ Q5

Quick-check answers

1. **True.** ↑ 1
2. **False.** ↑ 2
3. **False.** ↑ 3
4. **True.** ↑ 4
5. **True.** ↑ 5

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