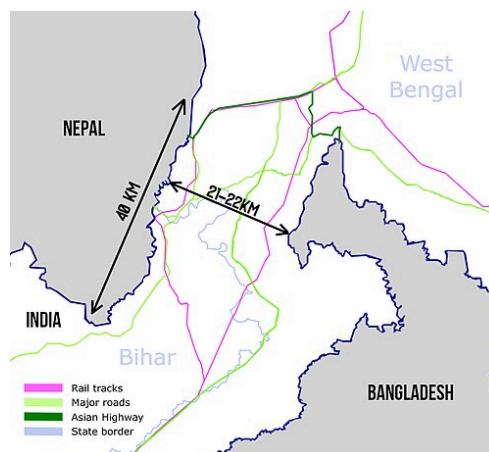


# Siliguri Corridor

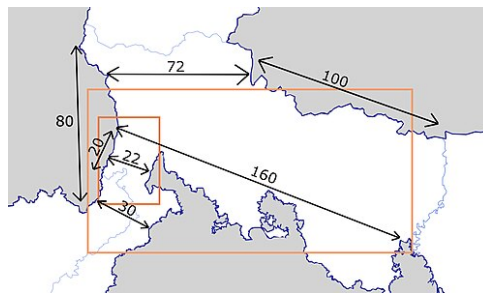
The **Siliguri Corridor**, often dubbed the "**Chicken's Neck**", is a stretch of land around the city of **Siliguri** in **West Bengal, India**.<sup>[1][2]</sup> 20–22 kilometres (12–14 mi) at the narrowest section, this geopolitical and geoeconomical corridor connects the seven states of **northeast India** to the **rest of India**.<sup>[1]</sup> The countries of **Nepal** and **Bangladesh** lie on each side of the corridor and the **Kingdom of Bhutan** lies at the northern end of the corridor.<sup>[3]</sup> The **Kingdom of Sikkim** formerly lay on the northern side of the corridor, until its merger with India in 1975.<sup>[4]</sup>



The Siliguri Corridor is the strip of Indian territory within the red highlighted circle.



AH2 of the **Asian Highway** goes through the Siliguri Corridor.



Dimensions of the corridor. Distances in kilometers.

The city of Siliguri is the major city in the area and the central transfer point connecting Bhutan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sikkim, [Darjeeling](#), Northeast India and mainland India.<sup>[3]</sup> According to the [Indian Army](#), the Siliguri Corridor is the Army's strongest defensive line.<sup>[5]</sup>

## History

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The [partition of India](#) led to the formation of the Siliguri Corridor through the creation of [East Pakistan](#) (now [Bangladesh](#)) after the [partition of Bengal](#) (into [East Bengal](#) and West Bengal) in 1947–1948.<sup>[6]</sup>

The [Kingdom of Sikkim](#) formerly lay on the northern side of the corridor, until its union with India in 1975 via a publicly held referendum.<sup>[7][8]</sup> From Sikkim, India consolidated its control of the [Chumbi Valley](#), along with Bhutan.<sup>[9][10]</sup>

## Location and dimensions

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The dimensions of the corridor are a matter of interpretation.<sup>[11]</sup> Descriptions give it an area of 170 by 60 km (106 by 37 mi) with the narrowest section being 20–22 km (12–14 mi).<sup>[1][2]</sup> [Kamal Jit Singh](#) places the length at 200 km (120 mi) with a width of 17 to 60 km (11 to 37 mi), giving it an area of approximately 12,200 km<sup>2</sup> (4,700 sq mi).<sup>[11]</sup> Another description places its dimensions as approximately 200 km (120 mi) in length and 20 to 60 km (12 to 37 mi) wide, also giving it an area of approximately 12,200 km<sup>2</sup> (4,700 sq mi).<sup>[12]</sup>

The corridor is located between Bangladesh to the southwest, Nepal on the northwest, and Bhutan to the north.<sup>[13]</sup> Between [Sikkim](#) and Bhutan lies the [Chumbi Valley Tibetan](#) territory.<sup>[14]</sup> The southern end of the Dolam plateau or Doklam tri boundary area slopes into the corridor.<sup>[15]</sup> At the narrowest stretch, the corridor is generally formed by the [Mechi River](#) in the east; Nepal's [Bhadrapur](#) lies on the banks of the river.<sup>[16]</sup> Further north the [Mechi Bridge](#) connects [Mechinagar](#).<sup>[17][18]</sup>

# Developments and strategic significance

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## Connectivity and Logistics

India has embarked on a slew of projects. These include the construction of [India-China Border Roads](#), where, as of 2024, multiple phases of border roads have been constructed, and Advance Landing Grounds (ALGs), such as the Nyoma Advanced Landing Ground, which is nearing completion as of 2024.<sup>[19][20][21]</sup> Other projects include [Northeastern India connectivity](#) and [Look-East transnational connectivity](#) projects including [BIMSTEC](#) and [BBIN](#) to create multiple alternatives to Siliguri corridor, including through Bangladesh and the sea.

All land transportation between the rest of India and its far northeastern states uses this corridor. The route has a major [broad gauge](#) railway line. Electrification of this double-track corridor is in progress with assistance from the [Central Organization for Railway Electrification](#) (CORE). Additionally, the old [metre gauge](#) line (recently converted to a 1.676 metres (5 ft 6.0 in) broad-gauge line) connects [Siliguri Junction](#) with Islampur in the [North Dinajpur district](#) of West Bengal, via [Bagdogra](#) (the only airport of national interest in the corridor) and the bordering towns of Adhikari, [Galgolia](#), [Thakurganj](#), [Naxalbari](#) and Taiabpur with Nepal. As of 2024, to reduce dependence on the Siliguri Corridor, India is planning to build railway lines through [Jogbani](#) in [Bihar](#), which would enter [Biratnagar](#) in Nepal and then connect with [New Mal Junction](#) in West Bengal.<sup>[22]</sup> India is also developing railway lines through Bangladesh, which includes constructing new railway tracks and the [gauge conversion](#) of existing railway tracks, in order to reduce dependence on the Siliguri Corridor, as of 2024.<sup>[23]</sup>

As of 2024, there is no free-trade agreement between Bangladesh and India.<sup>[24]</sup> The [Tetulia Corridor](#), an alternative to the Siliguri Corridor, is proposed under Article VIII of the India–Bangladesh Trade Agreement 1980, which states that "The two governments agree to make mutually beneficial arrangements for the use of their waterways, railways and roadways for commerce between the two countries and for passage of goods between two places in one country through the territory of the other".<sup>[25]</sup> However, the opening of the [Tetulia Corridor](#) is still being discussed politically as of 2019.<sup>[25]</sup>

## Security

India has several forces stationed on the borders, the [Indian Army](#) and [Indo-Tibetan Border Police](#) man the border with China; [Sashastra Seema Bal](#) is deployed along the border with Nepal and

Bhutan and the [Border Security Force](#) for Bangladesh.<sup>[11]</sup> The strip is also patrolled by the [Indian Army](#), the [Assam Rifles](#), and state police forces including the [West Bengal Police](#).<sup>[11]</sup> The security threat posed by the corridor decreased following the creation of Bangladesh in 1971.<sup>[26]</sup> Internal threats to the corridor are numerous.<sup>[26]</sup> Militant groups known to have used the corridor include the [United Liberation Front of Assam](#) (ULFA) and the [National Socialist Council of Nagaland](#) (NSCN).<sup>[12]</sup>

The threat of a Chinese advance is still considered by Indian planners.<sup>[26]</sup> A Chinese military advance of less than 130 km (81 mi) would cut off Bhutan, part of [West Bengal](#) and all of [North-East India](#), an area containing almost 50 million people. This situation arose during the [war between India and China](#) in 1962.<sup>[14]</sup> The security threat to this corridor was heightened during the [2017 Doklam incident](#).<sup>[27]</sup> The probability of China cutting off seven states in northeast India has been questioned.<sup>[28]</sup> The Indian Army has said that the Siliguri Corridor is the Army's strongest defensive line.<sup>[5]</sup> The Army's Trishakti [Corps](#) ([XXXIII Corps](#)) has a strategic role in the region's security.<sup>[5]</sup> The Siliguri Corridor's security also includes [air defense systems](#), a [BrahMos missile regiment](#) and a [squadron](#) of the Indian Air Force's Rafale fighter aircraft based at [Hasimara Air Force Station](#).<sup>[5]</sup>

## In popular culture

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[Humphrey Hawksley](#), in his 2000 novel *[Dragon Fire](#)*, briefly authors a situation where China cuts off India's land route to its northeastern territories.<sup>[12]</sup> *Assassin's Mace* (2011) by Brigadier Bob Butalia also involves such a situation involving [Doklam](#) and [Jaldhaka River](#).<sup>[11]</sup>

## See also

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- [Suwātki Gap](#)

## Notes

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