How Can India Secure the Chicken’s Neck & Safeguard Its North-East Region?

Description

?? Introduction

The **Siliguri Corridor**, known as India’s **Chicken’s Neck**, is a narrow 20–22 km land strip in West Bengal that connects the north-east to mainland India. Surrounded by Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, and China, it’s a strategic chokepoint. Recent geopolitical shifts—Bangladesh’s tilt toward China, threats from Lalmonirhat airbase revival, and local provocations—have amplified the urgency: **How can India fortify this vital corridor?**

? What is the “Chicken’s Neck”?

The “Chicken’s Neck” is a narrow stretch between West Bengal and Bangladesh/Nepal that serves as the lifeline connecting India’s eight north-eastern states to the rest of the country. It’s critical for moving people, goods, and defence forces.

? Context

- Bangladesh’s interim regime and remarks by M. Yunus, supported by China, have labeled the Northeast “landlocked,” prompting India to enhance connectivity elsewhere
- China’s help to revive Lalmonirhat airbase just 12–15 km from the border raises strategic concerns
- India has deployed Rafales, MiGs, BrahMos, S?400 systems, Akash, MR?SAM, and MRSAM along with T?90s & Trishakti Corps
- Multi-agency security drills involve blackout simulations, camouflage, and evacuation in 17+ key areas
- North Bengal police have banned combat fatigues and unauthorized drone use near the corridor

? What India Can Do to Secure It

1. **Advance air defence layering**
   Deploy multi-tier systems—**S-400**, radar, and short/very short?range missiles
2. **Enhance air cover and radar**
   Station **Rafale/MiG squadrons** at Hashimara & integrated airborne warning systems
3. **Fortify ground defenses**
   Trishakti Corps with T?90s & BrahMos missile units offers rapid-response deterrence
4. **Conduct regular drills**
   Civil-military exercises (blackouts, evacuations) improve readiness
5. **Improve infrastructure redundancy**
   Develop **Shillong–Silchar Highway**, **Kaladan multimodal route**, and alternate rail lines via Nepal/Bangladesh
6. **Tighten border surveillance**
   Drone/photo bans, fatigue uniform restrictions, more BSF and police checkpoints
7. **Strengthen intelligence & presence**
   Track cross-border militants, update NRC, coordinate Assam-Meghalaya stability efforts
8. **Diplomacy with neighbours**
   Ensure Bangladesh’s neutrality, seek assurances, engage China diplomatically .
9. **Close proximity air threats**
   Monitor the revived Lalmonirhat airbase and contingencies near Bengal borders
10. **Local community integration**
    Train civil defense volunteers, invest in socio-economic development to foster grassroots resilience.

? Conclusion

India has robustly reinforced the Chicken’s Neck with air defence, troops, drills, and infrastructure. But long-term security will depend on sustained **connectivity alternatives**, **intelligence vigilance**, **border management**, and **neighbouring diplomacy**. Only a holistic strategy—combining military

readiness with political and economic resilience—can truly secure this vital lifeline.

? Quick Summary

- **What?** The narrow Siliguri Corridor connects India’s northeast and is its most vulnerable choke point.
- **Yes:** India has responded with layered defences—S-400, BrahMos, jets, drills, drones ban.
- **Next Steps:** Build alternate routes (Kaladan & Shillong–Silchar), strengthen intelligence, and secure diplomatic gains.

? FAQs

Q1. Why is Lalmonirhat airbase a risk?
China is reviving it just 12–15 km from the border; it could be dual-use for Bangladesh’s air force

Q2. What alternate routes reduce dependency on the corridor?
Projects like the Kaladan corridor via Myanmar and Shillong–Silchar Highway provide non-Bangladesh routes

Q3. How do security drills help?
Simulations (blackouts, evacuation, camouflage) with civil defense prepare for sudden threats

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