

AUSTRALIA URGES INDIA, CHINA TO SHOW RESTRAINT

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: India - China

Barry O'Farrell

Australia on Thursday urged India and China to maintain restraint along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and expressed support to the ongoing de-escalation efforts. It said it opposed any attempts to unilaterally alter the status quo, which only served to increase tension and the risk of instability.

"It is important that the bilaterally-agreed principles and norms that have helped prevent escalation or miscalculation in the border areas over many decades continue to be observed," Australia's High Commissioner to India, Barry O'Farrell, said in a statement.

Mr. O'Farrell pointed out that the Indo-Pacific region was grappling with the enormous challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and reiterated the Australian vision for an open, free, rules-based Indo-Pacific. "Territorial disputes and competing claims should be resolved peacefully by the claimant countries, and in ways consistent with international law," he observed.

Mr. O'Farrell, without naming any country, said Australia remained deeply concerned by actions in the South China Sea (SCS) that were "destabilising and could provoke escalation." On July 23, Australia lodged a note with the United Nations Secretary General, refuting China's unlawful maritime claims in the SCS.

On Tuesday, in a joint statement, Australia and the United States expressed "deep concern" over recent developments in Hong Kong, "repression of Uyghurs" in Xinjiang and China's maritime claims in the SCS.

The Chinese Embassy reacted sharply, warning that Australia should not "go further on the road of harming [bilateral] relations" and that "any attempt to pressure China will never succeed."

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