

# INDIA, CHINA AGREE TO ENSURE PEACE

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Monday's clash was reported to have been triggered by a dispute over the disengagement process that had been agreed to on June 6.

The Indian Minister said Chinese forces continued building activities in the Indian side of the LAC in violation of the agreement reached at the Corps Commander talks on June 6, and attacked Indian soldiers in a planned manner. He told Mr. Wang the Chinese forces went back on a commitment despite continuing dialogue throughout last week.

"The Chinese side sought to erect a structure in the Galwan Valley on our side of the LAC," he said. "While this became a source of dispute, the Chinese side took pre-meditated and planned action that was directly responsible for the resulting violence and casualties."

In Beijing, the Chinese Foreign Minister accused India of "deliberately provoking" the clash and "openly breaking the consensus" of June 6.

"Once the situation in the Galwan Valley had calmed down, the Indian front-line troops crossed the LAC again, and deliberately provoked and violently attacked the officers and soldiers who negotiated on the spot, leading to fierce physical clashes, resulting in casualties. This dangerous act of the Indian Army seriously violated the agreement reached between the two countries on the border issue and seriously violated the basic norms of international relations," he said.

The MFA said he conveyed China's "strong protest" and "demanded that the Indian side conduct a thorough investigation, severely punish those responsible for the incident, strictly control the frontline troops, and immediately stop all provocative actions to ensure that such incidents cannot occur again."

He also called on both sides to "strengthen the communication and coordination on the proper handling of the border situation through the existing channels such as the meeting mechanism between the special representatives of the Sino-Indian border and the meeting mechanism of the border defence force, so as to jointly maintain peace and tranquillity in the border area".

On Wednesday, China's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian declined to provide details of Chinese casualties from Monday's clash, although reports have confirmed that there were casualties on both sides.

Asked about China's casualties, Mr. Zhao said, "I have stated that the Chinese and Indian border troops are now jointly dealing with relevant matters on the ground. I have nothing to add at the moment." Asked about the likelihood of further escalation, he said, "From the Chinese side, we do not wish to see more clashes."

China was unlikely to confirm the number of dead and injured, said M. Taylor Fravel, an expert on the Chinese military at MIT. "I can think of no armed conflict involving China where it has released casualty figures publicly at the time of the conflict," he said. "Usually, they are published years or decades later," he noted on Twitter, pointing out that casualties from the 1962 were only revealed for the first time in an internal history published in 1994.

On Wednesday, both the *People's Daily*, the Communist Party's official mouthpiece, and the *PLA Daily*, the Army's official paper, made no mention of the clash, although it marked the first

combat casualties for the PLA possibly since a 1989 clash with Vietnam.

The clash was, however, discussed widely on Chinese social media. On the Twitter equivalent Sina Weibo, the China-India border clash topic had 1.05 billion views and 1,10,000 comments as of Wednesday evening.

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