

INDIAN, CHINESE TROOPS CLASH OVER BORDER DISPUTE

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NEW DELHI : The Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) and the Indian Army clashed in Ladakh and Sikkim along the border recently in separate incidents, spiking tensions between the Asian neighbours.

The Indian Army on Sunday said its soldiers were engaged in a tense face-off with Chinese troops along the border in northern Sikkim over undemarcated boundary issues between the two countries.

The face-off, which involved "aggressive behaviour and minor injuries on both sides", said the Indian Army, took place after a long time. The Indian Army's statement comes after *Hindustan Times* reported Saturday's face-off involving scores of Indian and Chinese soldiers. The confrontation between the troops took place near the Naku La sector at over 5,000 metres, the *Hindustan Times* report said.

In Ladakh Indian and Chinese troops got into "a physical fight" late on Tuesday/early Wednesday, a person said, adding that the scuffle took place on the Indian side of the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

The last major stand-off between the two sides took place at Doklam in 2017 when the two armies faced off against each other for 73 days.

The development comes as India, like most of the world, is focused on arresting the spread of the novel coronavirus, which first surfaced in China in December.

According to the Indian Army statement on Sunday, "temporary and short duration face-offs occur as boundaries are not resolved". The reference was to the undemarcated India-China border seen as a legacy of the 1962 war between the two countries.

The Sino-India border dispute covers the 3,488-km-long Line of Actual Control. China claims Arunachal Pradesh as part of southern Tibet while India contests it. Many rounds of talks have been held between the two sides, but these are yet to yield any result.

Indian Army said troops "disengaged after dialogue and interaction at the local level". "Troops resolve such issues mutually as per established protocols.."

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