

# INDIA, CHINA AGREE NOT TO SEND MORE TROOPS TO THE FRONTLINE

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**NEW DELHI:** India and China on Tuesday said they had agreed to strengthen communication, refrain from sending more troops to the border and avoid actions that would worsen tensions between the two countries.

The points of agreement, put out in a joint statement, after the sixth round of talks between senior military commanders on Monday, struck all the right notes but analysts warned that it would be actions on the ground that would show whether the situation was stabilising or not.

According to the statement issued by the Indian side, the two sides agreed to “avoid misunderstandings and misjudgments, stop sending more troops to the frontline, refrain from unilaterally changing the situation on the ground, and avoid taking any actions that may complicate the situation.”

“The two sides also agreed to hold the 7th round of Military Commander-Level Meeting as soon as possible, take practical measures to properly solve problems on the ground, and jointly safeguard peace and tranquility in the border area.”

This is the first time that India and China have issued a joint statement after military level talks to ease tensions between the two countries that had spiked after India in May detected multiple intrusions by Chinese troops in Ladakh along their undermarked Line of Actual Control.

The sixth round of senior military commander level talks on Monday lasted almost 15 hours and focused on ways to defuse tensions along the high-altitude friction points in eastern Ladakh. The current levels of tensions are seen as unprecedented in recent times. A violent clash between the two countries on 15 June, left 20 dead on the Indian side and unknown number of Chinese casualties.

The commander level talks came after a meeting on 10 September between the foreign ministers of India and China in Moscow. That paved the way for a temporary truce that still holds though the tens of thousands of soldiers are ranged against each other with tanks, missiles and air support. At some points, the troops are less than a kilometre apart.

At the talks, the Indian delegation conveyed its position that the onus was on China to move back from the positions it was occupying. The agenda for the meeting was to chart out a specific timeline for the implementation of the five-point agreement reached between India and China on 10 September when foreign ministers of India and China -- S Jaishankar and Wang Yi – met in Moscow. India also insisted on a time-bound implementation of the agreement finalised the talks between India’s S Jaishankar and China’s Wang Yi in Moscow.

“The points in the joint statement are general --the reference to peace and tranquility, refrain from unilaterally changing the situation on the ground, and avoid taking any actions that may complicate the situation,” said Srikanth Kondapalli, a professor of Chinese Studies at the New Delhi based Jawaharlal Nehru University.

“The proof of the pudding is in the implementation. We have had previous agreements but then we had the 15 June incident” which was a violent clash between India and China in which 20 Indian troops and an unknown number of Chinese troops were killed. “So we need to be careful. The question is the implementation at the local level and whether India's bottom line -- that the status quo ante is restored -- is met or not,” he added.

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