

Don't be aggressive at China border, India tells troops

By Sudhi Ranjan Sen

The Indian Army has told all its formations deployed along the 3,488 km-long Line of Actual Control (LAC) - de facto boundary between India and China - not to be aggressive when guarding the border. The directions to reduce aggression comes days after Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping met at Wuhan for an informal summit to reset ties between the two countries that had soured and turned somewhat frosty after a 72-day long stand-off at the Doklam Plateau in Bhutan last year. Earlier today, National Security Advisor Ajit Doval met Chief of Army Staff General Bipin Rawat. It is understood that instructions to army formations along LAC flowed from this meeting. Top sources aware of the development told India Today that "all formations have been told to strictly follow established procedure."

Conflicts and disagreements

India and China share one of the most disputed borders but the two sides have worked out procedures to handle conflicts and disagreements. India and China signed the Border Defence Cooperation Agreement in 2013 which details on how the two armies should conduct themselves to avoid a flare-up when they come face to face along the border.

Top sources said formations have been specifically warned about jostling and heckling along the border. "The sanctity of LAC can be maintained, patrolling of borders can be carried out without being aggressive. An aggressive posture is unnecessary and proves to be counter-productive," sources aware of the development told India Today and added that protocols agreed to by two sides account for all possible situations. "The need to be aggressive leading fist fights, heckling and jostling is uncalled for," sources said. Last year, even as the stand-off at Doklam continued troops on both sides came to blows at the disputed Pangong Tso Lake in Ladakh - a designated disputed spot.