

Sushma to meet Pakistan's Foreign Minister in New York

New Delhi responds positively to Imran Khan's proposal for talks

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE
NEW DELHI

India on Thursday accepted Pakistan's proposal for talks between the Foreign Ministers on the sidelines of the ongoing annual UN General Assembly session in New York.

"On the request of the Pakistani side, a meeting between External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi will take place on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly at a mutually decided date and time," said Raveesh Kumar, spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs.

'No dialogue'

India's response came within hours of the news that Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan proposed talks between the two senior Ministers. However, India said the talks would not be aimed at a broader scheme of dialogue.

The MEA spokesperson emphasised that despite agreeing to the meeting, In-

Stop-start process

A timeline of the Indo-Pak. peace process in the last three years



December 9, 2015: Comprehensive bilateral dialogue announced by Sushma Swaraj in Islamabad. The dialogue was the first in seven years since the 9/11 attacks

December 25, 2015: PM Modi visits Lahore for family event of PM Nawaz Sharif

January 2, 2016: Pathankot attack occurs. Foreign Secretary-level talks delayed

March 3, 2016: Pakistan claims Kulbhushan Jadhav arrested, produces video footage

July 8, 2016: Burhan Wani killed. India blames Pakistan for escalating situation in Kashmir

19th SAARC summit delayed



August 2018: Imran Khan takes charge as PM, makes the first move for peace by seeking SAARC summit

dia stuck to its position that talks and terror could not go together.

He said, "This [the upcoming meeting] does not indicate any change as far as our policies on terrorism and cross-border terrorism are concerned."

However, the issue of Pakistan facilitating visits by Indian pilgrims to the Kartarpur Sahib gurdwara is expected to feature at the meeting.

"The External Affairs Minister will raise this issue at

her meeting with the Pakistan Foreign Minister," said the spokesperson.

'Desire for peace'

Mr. Khan proposed the new round of talks in a letter to his Indian counterpart, handed over on September 17.

"Building on the mutual desire for peace between our two countries, I wish to propose a meeting between Foreign Minister Qureshi and External Affairs Minister Swaraj, before the informal

meeting of the SAARC Foreign Ministers on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York," he said, seeking resumption of the dialogue started by his predecessor Nawaz Sharif. The Comprehensive Bilateral Dialogue stalled after the January 2016 terror strike on the Pathankot airbase.

(With inputs from Nistula Hebbar)

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Sushma to meet Pak. Foreign Minister

In the letter, Mr. Khan also suggested that the Foreign Ministers discuss the holding of the SAARC summit in Islamabad, which has been delayed by India's reluctance to join.

However, the MEA spokesperson said India's position on joining the SAARC summit in Islamabad remained unchanged.

"Time and again we have said that the atmosphere in the region is not conducive. Under the shadow of cross-border terrorism, it is difficult to hold the summit that is to be hosted by Pakistan."

Minister of State for Agriculture Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, while addressing a presser at the BJP headquarters in New Delhi, responded to questions on the proposed meeting between the Foreign Ministers of the two countries, announced a day after the body of a Border Security Force jawan was found with obvious torture marks.

"We must have faith in the Indian forces that they would retaliate at an appropriate time. There should not be any politics on the bodies of martyrs," he said.