
IMRAN KHAN CRITICISED FOR OFFERING TO HOLD TALKS WITH INDIA

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Opposition lawmakers have criticised Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan for offering to re-start talks with India on key issues, including terrorism and Kashmir, without taking parliament into confidence, a media report said Tuesday.

Senate, the upper house of parliament, met Monday evening and among other issues discussed the government's efforts to revive talks with India. In the letter dated September 14, the cricketer-turned-politician, who became the prime minister last month, proposed a meeting between Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi and his Indian counterpart Sushma Swaraj on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York this month.

Khan had written the letter in response to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's letter to him on August 18 in which the Indian leader had conveyed commitment to pursue "meaningful" and "constructive" engagement with Pakistan and emphasising the need to work for a terror-free South Asia. Pakistan Senate's former chairman Mian Raza Rabbani of Pakistan Peoples Party said that Khan's offer for talks to India was incomprehensible given the situation in Kashmir.

He said Prime Minister Narendra Modi's letter to Khan was ceremonial in nature, but an offer of dialogue was made in the letter written in response to it. He also objected to the language used in Khan's letter that Pakistan was "ready to discuss terrorism". Senator Abdul Ghafoor Haidri of the Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-Fazl questioned as to how a single individual could offer dialogue to India.

He criticised Khan for writing a letter to his Indian counterpart without taking parliament into confidence. He advised Khan to tread carefully, saying that the prime minister was taking decisions in haste which lacked vision.

Responding on behalf of government, Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry explained that Khan's letter to the Indian prime minister was in response to a communication he received from him.

He said Pakistan wanted to find a solution to all bilateral disputes with India, including the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir. "The two countries have been fighting for seventy years and we can continue to fight for another seventy years if India wants,"

he remarked and warned that a nuclear war □ if it broke out □ would mean devastation in the subcontinent. Faisal Javed of Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf regretted that efforts were being made for point-scoring on the issues which required a complete unity in the ranks of the political

class. "We need to project Pakistan's narrative," he stressed.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/world-news/imran-khan-criticised-for-offering-to-hold-talks-with-india/articleshow/65947097.cms>

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