

Pakistan, India NSA meet may achieve little: Daily

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Islamabad: The upcoming meeting between the Pakistan and Indian NSAs will "follow the old template of talking past each other and achieving little", said a leading Pakistani daily, which exhorted them to get beyond the familiar template of trading accusations and discuss all issues related to terrorism.

An editorial "Long road ahead" in the Dawn said that there is a positive, mutually beneficial way to talk about terrorism-related issues.

"Then there is seemingly the Pakistan-India state approach: the two sides ritualistically meet to discuss terror; they accuse each other of fomenting terrorism in the other's country; they present dossiers of evidence - often vague, rarely specific; and then, once the meeting is concluded, they boast to their domestic audiences of having put their best case forward in no uncertain terms.

"The Pakistan-India approach achieves little and, worryingly, there are already signs that the upcoming meeting of national security advisors (NSA) will follow the old template of talking past each other and achieving little," it said.

The daily said it is possible to go into specifics of who is to blame and to what degree for each round that leads to nothing - "if indeed the Aug 23 meeting produces nothing of substance".

It observed that the Narendra Modi government "wants to appear tough on terrorism and Kashmir, but does not appear to have a firm grasp of the multi-dimensional policy issues as yet".

The editorial added that the Pakistani state does not appear interested in ratcheting up tensions with India, "even as it does not appear particularly keen to try and find avenues to peace".

"The problem, as ever, remains the misplaced notion that the Pakistani and Indian states can carefully calibrate the tensions - or indeed low-level violence - in the region. They cannot."

The daily went on to say that on the Pakistani side, it is "fairly evident that non-state actors can and have caused great convulsions through well-timed and frighteningly well-executed acts of violence".

"The Peshawar carnage last December and the Mumbai attacks of 2008 are the foremost examples of what just a few fanatics can do," the editorial said and added that militant elements and extremist groups remain worryingly well entrenched in society here and the long war against militancy and terrorism will take many years, perhaps even a generation, before it can be won.

"The NSA meeting on Aug 23 needs to get beyond the familiar template of trading accusations and do what the Ufa joint statement suggested it is meant to do: 'discuss all issues connected to terrorism'.

"That would mean establishing a common, mutually acceptable and inclusive definition of terrorism; identifying ways to cooperate to pre-empt and investigate terror attacks; and addressing the long-term problems that fuel instability in the region."

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