

NSA talks: Pakistan strategizes to counter India

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Islamabad: Pakistan army chief Gen Raheel Sharif and director-general Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) Lt Gen Rizwan Akhtar called on Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on Tuesday to discuss the upcoming visit of Prime Minister's adviser on National Security and Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz to New Delhi.

Resumption of foreign secretary-level talks, issue of bail granted to main accused in Samjhauta blasts and India's alleged interference will be high on Pakistan's agenda for the first NSA-level talks in New Delhi next week.

Government sources said it was decided at the meeting that Indian intelligence agency RAW's alleged interference in Pakistan would be among the top agenda items during the talks.

They said the ISI chief briefed Sharif about RAW's activities in the country and repeated ceasefire violations by Indian troops along the LoC.

Aziz will travel to India on August 23 for talks with his counterpart Ajit Doval.

Sharif's discussions with the military top brass came a day after he chaired a high-level meeting to discuss the agenda of the NSA-level talks.

Interior minister Chaudhry Nisar, finance minister Ishaq Dar, Aziz, Prime Minister's Special Assistant on Foreign Affairs Tariq Fatemi and other officials were present during the meetings on both the days.

Dawn News quoted sources as saying that Pakistan will stress on laying out a counter-terrorism mechanism between the two countries during the talks.

Talking about Monday's meeting, Pakistani government sources also said that different aspects of the NSA-level talks and agenda were discussed.

Issues like start of foreign secretary-level talks and concerns over RAW's activities will be on the agenda, according to officials privy to the meeting.

India had cancelled foreign secretary-level talks in August last year after the Pakistan high commissioner in New Delhi held consultations with Kashmiri separatists.

The issue of bail to the main accused in the Samjhauta train bombing will be taken up by Pakistan, officials said.

The Pakistani officials said the regular skirmishes on the Line of Control (LoC) will also be part of discussions.

Officials said Pakistan is well prepared to counter India on the alleged delay in the completion of trial of those alleged to be involved in Mumbai attacks and granting of bail to Zakiur Rehman Lakhvi.

Earlier, Sharif was also briefed about the points of agenda prepared by the foreign office.

India had proposed August 23-24 for the meeting which was agreed between Premier Sharif and his counterpart Narendra Modi in Ufa, Russia, last month.

- PTI