

India strongly responds to Pakistan raising Kashmir issue at UN

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United Nations: India hit back strongly at Pakistan after it raked up the issues of Kashmir and LoC ceasefire violations at the UN, asserting that Islamabad is actually a victim of its own policies of breeding and sponsoring terrorism.

Exercising India's Right of Reply during the General Debate of 70th session of UN General Assembly here late yesterday, First Secretary in the Permanent Mission of India to the UN Abhishek Singh termed as "regrettable" Pakistan once again choosing to "misuse" the High Level Segment of the UN General Assembly session to "distort reality and portray a false picture of the challenges in our region".

Sharif, in his address to the General Assembly earlier in the day, had said that Pakistan is the "primary victim" of terrorism.

Singh retorted sharply that "in truth, it is actually a victim of its own policies of breeding and sponsoring terrorists. The heart of the matter is a state that regards the use of terrorism as a legitimate instrument of statecraft.

The world watches with concern as its consequences have spread beyond its immediate neighbourhood.

"All of us stand prepared to help, if only the creators of this monster wake up to the dangers of what they have done to themselves," Singh said, adding that Pakistan was seeking to mask its activities as though an outcome of domestic discontent in Jammu and Kashmir carries no credibility with the world.

On Sharif's remarks that Jammu and Kashmir is under foreign occupation, Singh said, "The occupier in question is Pakistan."

On Sharif's reference to ceasefire violations and exchanges of fire along the Line of Control and the International Boundary, Singh said the world knows that the "primary reason for firing is to provide cover to terrorists crossing the border.

"It needs no imagination to figure out which side initiates this exchange," he said.

He added that it is not uncommon for states, when confronted with serious challenges, to shift responsibility on others.

"That is the case with Pakistan and terrorism, reflecting the inability to recognise that this is a home grown problem that has begun to bite the hand that fed it. We agree that terrorism has underlying causes - in this case, poverty of wisdom and ignorance of consequences," he said.

He also pointed out that India's reservations about the proposed China-Pakistan Economic Corridor stem from the fact that it passes through Indian territory "illegally occupied" by Pakistan for many years.

On Sharif saying that the dispute over Jammu and Kashmir remains unresolved and that dialogue has not progressed, Singh said "this is because Pakistan has chosen to disregard its commitments, whether it was under the 1972 Simla Agreement, the 2004 Joint Declaration forswearing terrorism, or more recently, the understanding between our two Prime Ministers at Ufa".

Singh asserted that on each occasion, it is India that has extended the hand of friendship.

"India remains open even today to engage Pakistan on outstanding issues in an atmosphere free of terrorism and violence," he said.

Earlier Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Vikas Swarup had also reacted sharply to Sharif's remarks.

Sharif had used the podium of the UN General Assembly to propose a four-point peace initiative with India, which includes steps to demilitarize Kashmir and an unconditional mutual withdrawal from Siachen Glacier.

"To de-militarize Kashmir is not the answer, to de-terrorize Pakistan is," Swarup had tweeted after Sharif's address.

On Sharif describing Pakistan as the "primary victim" of terrorism, Swarup said "Pakistan is not primary victim of terrorism but of its own policies. It is in fact the prime sponsor of terrorism."

Swarup further tweeted that Pakistan's "instability arises from its breeding of terrorists. Blaming neighbours is not a solution."

Equating the suffering of Kashmiris with that of the Palestinians, Sharif had said in his address that are Muslims are suffering across the world with "Palestinians and Kashmiris oppressed by foreign occupation; persecuted minorities; and the discrimination against Muslim refugees fleeing persecution or war."

Swarup tweeted that the "Pak PM gets foreign occupation right, occupier wrong. We urge early vacation of Pak occupied Kashmir."

- PTI