

India's new High Commissioner arrives in Pakistan with message of friendship

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Islamabad: India's new High Commissioner to Pakistan Gautam Bambawale on Tuesday arrived in the country with a desire to improve Indo-Pak ties, amidst fresh strains between the two countries in the wake of the Pathankot terror attack.

Bambawale, who replaced T C A Raghavan after his retirement, crossed over through the Wagha border and was received by officials of the Indian High Commission. In an informal chat with reporters, the new High Commissioner expressed the "desire to improve relations" between the two countries, Geo TV reported.

Bambawale, who was earlier India's envoy to Bhutan, said he was coming to Pakistan with the message of friendship and the intentions of improving bilateral relations.

"We want to strengthen our relationship with Pakistan," said the senior diplomat, who has worked in Germany, US and China.

An IFS officer of 1984-batch, Bambawale faces a daunting task ahead amid fresh strains between the two countries and uncertainty over Indo-Pak Foreign Secretary-level talks after the Pathankot attack that left six terrorists and seven Indian soldiers dead on January 2.

After the attack, India had said it has provided to Pakistan actionable intelligence to act upon the perpetrators of the terrorist act.

India has identified Masood Azhar, chief of banned terror outfit Jaish-e-Mohammed, as the mastermind of the attack. India has called on Islamabad to act on the information if the Foreign Secretary-level talks are to take place as scheduled on January 15.

- PTI