

## **Narendra Modi has tried to improve ties: Pakistan daily**

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**Islamabad:** Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has sought to improve ties with Pakistan, said a leading daily which noted that Modi's meeting with his Pakistani counterpart Nawaz Sharif has produced "several specific breakthroughs".

An editorial in the Dawn on Saturday over the meeting that took place on Friday between Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Modi in Russia said that "progress in the India-Pakistan relationship depends on whether the political leadership is invested in it".

"Sharif clearly is, but has not demonstrated the ability to convince other institutions, particularly the army, of the imperative to improve ties. Meanwhile, Modi has actually done the opposite of seeking to improve ties," it said.

The daily said that both sides need to demonstrate they aren't talking just to show the outside world that they are.

The editorial said that Friday's meeting "produced several specific breakthroughs that must surely be welcomed in the context of a deteriorating regional security and diplomatic climate".

"The headlines will focus on Modi accepting the Pakistani premier's invitation to attend next year's Saarc summit in Islamabad and if the visit does take place, it would be worth a great deal of symbolism at least, given that Modi's predecessor Manmohan Singh was unable to visit in his 10 years as prime minister despite ardently wanting to," it said.

The daily added: "There is reason to hope the visit will actually take place because Modi has made furthering regional relationships, especially with Saarc countries, a foreign policy priority, even if that approach has thus far tended to exclude Pakistan."

It noted that a refusal to attend the Saarc summit would also deal a significant blow to the organisation, setting it back even further. "Yet, there is, as always, many a slip between cup and lip in the India-Pakistan relationship."

The daily went on to say that the decision to focus on how to further the Mumbai-related anti-terrorism trial in Rawalpindi and the mention of specific potential evidence such as the provision of voice samples is also a positive shift from the status quo, which has essentially involved India demanding that Pakistan do more and Pakistan claiming that the trials are in limbo because of India's non-cooperative approach.

- IANS