

By Sidharth Mishra



Former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti has advised Prime Minister Narendra Modi to accept Pakistan's Prime Minister-elect Imran Khan's offer of friendship and add a positive dimension to tense relations between New Delhi and Islamabad.

Mehbooba feels that a better relationship with Pakistan means the ending of bloodshed in Jammu and Kashmir. Cricketer-turned politician Khan, in his first public address after leading his party to victory in the general elections, had said Pakistan is ready to improve its ties with India and his government would like the leaders of the two sides to resolve all disputes including the 'core issue' of Kashmir through talks. Khan, whose party emerged as the single largest party in the National Assembly elections, has also asserted that the blame game between the two neighbours should stop.

Imran Khan's offer for talks with India however must first be followed up with some concrete steps on his part. In the past every prime minister of Pakistan has made such commitments, but things never improved either for Islamabad or New Delhi. In fact, none of the political leaders in Pakistan has shown enough courage to take things forward. It remains to be seen how Khan proves himself different from his predecessors in view of the fact that he has been 'propped' by the Pakistani military. Pakistan's powerful military is likely to continue its hostile approach towards India. He is the Army's man and will do what the Pakistani Army tells him to do. In his first public address to the nation after leading the PTI to victory in the elections, Khan said Pakistan was willing to improve its ties with India. "If they take one step towards us, we will take two, but at least we need a start," Khan said. He also said Kashmir was the 'core' issue between the two countries and it should be resolved through talks.

Ties between India and Pakistan have nose-dived in the last few years over cross-border terrorism. Relations worsened after terror attacks by Pakistan-based groups on several military bases in India. New Delhi has been maintaining that Pakistan must stop terror activities from its soil for any meaningful talks between the two countries to resolve the outstanding issues. With

Expecting Too Much From Imran Khan

Written by Administrator

Tuesday, 31 July 2018 03:26

the general elections scheduled in India in the next 10 months, the NDA government is unlikely to reach out to Islamabad for any engagement. It is, in fact, too early to talk about the impact on India-Pakistan ties with Khan as Pakistan's Prime Minister. A lot will also depend upon who he chooses as coalition partner. It will depend on shape of his government. Most of experts do not expect Pakistan to stop its proxy war with India under Khan's leadership. They believe he will continue with the proxy war. The Pak establishment would continue to create disturbances in Jammu and Kashmir. Needless to say that the Pakistani Army played a role in elections in that country but if Khan shows the courage favouring good relations with India, it will be in the larger interests of the people of Pakistan.

One must not forget that Prime Minister AtalBihari Vajpayee had extended a hand of friendship to Pakistan and also agreed for ceasefire on the borders. However, this was followed by Pakistan's back-stabbing in Kargil. Ending violence in Jammu and Kashmir has remained the biggest challenge for the PMs of India and the prime minister who resolves the issue of Jammu and Kashmir ending bloodshed in the state will have his name written in golden letters in the history. Having said that, it's also to be remembered that finding resolution to the Kashmir tangle is easier said than done. One hopes that the new regime in Pakistan adopts a positive approach towards Jammu and Kashmir and resolves all other outstanding issues in an amicable manner. But isn't that thinking too much and expecting too much from Mr Khan, Mr Imran Khan.