

Peaceniks call for resumption of India-Pakistan dialogue

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New Delhi, Jan 12 (IANS) South Asia should be made a visa free region and the stalled dialogue between India and Pakistan resumed - this was the urging of well-known peaceniks from both sides of the border at the end of a three-day conference Tuesday.



The discussions at the “India-Pakistan Conference: A Road map towards Peace”, which began Sunday, have shown “how far the public sentiment in both India and Pakistan is inclined towards peace”, a joint declaration issued at the end of the meeting said.

They said the dialogue and the composite peace process, when resumed, should be “uninterrupted and unintermittible” even if relations between the two countries break in future.

Pakistani participants included advocate Aitzaz Ahsan, human rights activist Asma Jahangir, defence expert Ayesha Siddiqa and Balochistan Senator Hasil Bizenjo.

From India, writer and former diplomat Kuldip Nayar, former minister and diplomat Mani Shankar Aiyar, former navy chief L. Ramdas, former foreign secretary Salman Haidar and Kashmiri leaders including Yasin Malik, Sajjad Lone and Mehbooba Mufti took part.

There should be coordination among various ministries of the government of India and concerned with India-Pakistan relations and policy.

The declaration recommended that “militarist, chauvinist statements from political or military leadership of the two countries” should be avoided.

“Demilitarize the border between India and Pakistan,” they said, adding that both countries should “work together to counter terrorism and fundamentalism which are common challenges”.

The peaceniks suggested that South Asia could be made a “visa free” region.

They also recommended joint India Pakistan committees to be set up on Kashmir, human rights, water resources, prisoners, military expenditure and confidence building measures.

Some of the highlights of the declaration:

- Free flow of goods and commodities and encouragement of joint business initiatives
- Stop hate speech, war mongering in the media
- Allow media houses to station journalists in each other's capital
- Roll back on the nuclear programme for a nuclear free South Asia
- Joint management of water resources
- Revisit the Indus Water Treaty in the light of new factors like climate change
- Reduce military spending by at least 10 percent per year
- Joint patrol of borders

Read more: http://www.thaindian.com/newsportal/south-asia/peaceniks-call-for-resumption-of-india-pakistan-dialogue_100302834.html#ixzz0cf4ZsqQ6