

Indo-Pak meet to focus on Kashmir

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In an attempt to improve India- Pakistan relations, peace activists from both countries will discuss a range of issues, including autonomy to Kashmir and Balochistan, at a three- day conference, beginning in New Delhi on Sunday.

Former Indian Prime Minister I. K. Gujral is scheduled to inaugurate the ' India Pakistan conference - A road map towards peace', to be held at the India International Centre. Eminent personalities and former ministers, including 22 from Pakistan, are expected to take part in the conference.

Key speakers from Pakistan include former minister Iqbal Haider, advocate Aitzaz Ahsan, human rights activist Asma Jehangir and defence expert Ayesha Siddiq.

From India, the conference will be addressed by Kuldip Nayar, former foreign secretary Salman Haider, former minister Mani Shankar Aiyar, former navy chief L. Ramdas, Peoples Democratic Party chief Mehbooba Mufti and Kamal Chenoy of Jawaharlal Nehru University.

One of the sessions will be devoted to the issue of autonomy to Balochistan and Kashmir. It will be addressed by human rights activist Jahangir and Balochistan senator Bizenjo Hasil Khan from Pakistan and Kashmiri separatist leaders Yasin Malik and Sajad Lone. "

Activists from India and Pakistan will suggest a mechanism for peace between the two countries," Nayar, a senior journalist and one of the organisers, said at a press conference on Thursday.

Nayar said they don't know whether the two countries would consider their suggestions. " We will continue our efforts towards peace. Ours is a continuous process which was started a decade ago," he said.

Indo- Pak relations plummeted in the aftermath of 26/ 11. India has ruled out resumption of dialogues with Islamabad unless the terrorists are brought to justice. But Nayar felt that India should resume talks with Pakistan as " distrust, suspicion and hostility go against the interests of the people".