

India, Pakistan FMs trade scathing remarks against each other at Goa

May 6, 2023

Online Desk: Indian External Affairs minister S Jaishankar launched a scathing attack on his Pakistani counterpart Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Friday, saying that “as a promoter, justifier and a spokesperson of the terrorism industry, his position on the menace was called out at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) meeting at Indian city of Goa.” In a savage jibe, Jaishankar said that “Pakistan’s credibility in dealing with terrorism is depleting even faster than their forex reserves.”

“Victims of terrorism do not sit together with perpetrators of terrorism to discuss terrorism,” Jaishankar said in response to a question whether there could be talks between India and Pakistan on combating the menace of terrorism. He made these remarks on the second day of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) meeting was going on.

SCO foreign ministers’ meeting was also attended by Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, among others. Following the SCO summit talks, the Indian External Affairs minister also asserted that Jammu and Kashmir “was, is and will” always be part of India. On the other hand, The Dawn reported that Pakistan Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari said the onus was on India to build a “conducive environment for talks”, as he contended that dialogue between the two countries was hurt by New Delhi’s decision to end occupied Kashmir’s special status.

Speaking to journalists after the meeting, Bilawal said that the Pakistan People’s Party had always advocated normalisation of relations with India but the latter’s “unilateral and illegal” actions pertaining to held Kashmir on August 5, 2019, had violated international law, United Nations resolutions and bilateral agreements. Hence, he stated, it was Pakistan’s “principled position” that the status quo of August 4, 2019, was withdrawn as India’s actions had “really undermined the environment and now the onus is on India that they create the conducive environment in which talks can be held.”

Talking about the ongoing tensions between the two countries in the realm of sports, particularly India’s refusal to visit Pakistan for Asia Cup 2023 and its demand for a neutral venue, Bilawal said: “I believe we shouldn’t hold sports hostage to politics or foreign policy and the purpose of sports is that you keep it away from such issues.”

At the same time, the foreign minister also said that the two countries could not be held hostage by history. “In our heart of hearts, most Pakistanis ... and most Indians ... want us to live in peace and peace is our destiny,” he said. “God willing, what could not happen in the past, our generation will not be held by history but we will create our own history.”