



On Tuesday, Pakistan's newly elected Prime Minister Imran Khan for the first time made an offer to start dialogues with India to sort out the countries' historic differences. Ever since Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated Khan on emerging victorious in the 2018 Pakistan elections, Khan has expressed intentions and a desire to address the tense issues both the countries' have in their relations, notably the Kashmir conflict.

Khan, a former cricket star and prominent public figure in Pakistan, was sworn in last week after the conclusion of a controversial and eventful election. Recently, he had expressed intentions via his Twitter to focus on eradicating poverty in South Asia and enter into new trade agreements with India to help achieve the same.

Khan's inauguration ceremony saw the attendance of ex-Indian cricketer and politician Navjot Singh Sidhu, whose presence sparked widespread controversy and criticism upon his return to India. However, his move was praised by Pakistan and Khan, who called him an "ambassador of peace" and said his critics were doing a "disservice" to peace talks in the region. Khan has also pledged to work towards promoting the South Asian region as a place free of terror.

Modi had written to Khan soon after Khan's swearing-in to highlight the need to construct healthy neighbourly relations so citizens of both nations can benefit out of it. However, Indian officials clarified that the communication was not to be interpreted as an invite to restart the bilateral dialogue that was started in December 2015. This clarification was in the light of Pakistan's foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi stated that the letter "indicated the beginning of talks between the two countries. The statement from India was to clarify to plans had been made to formally start any bilateral dialogue.

**Rayan Bhattacharya is a Research Intern in The Kootneeti.*

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Kootneeti Team

Facebook Comments