

Pakistan, Afghanistan, US discuss stalled Afghan peace talks

Afghanistan, Pakistan and the US began deliberations here on Wednesday on the resumption of the stalled Afghan peace process.

The deliberations, on the sidelines of the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process conference, saw Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Afghan President Ashraf Ghani leading their respective country's delegations while Deputy Secretary of State Tony Blinken led the US delegation at the meeting, the Daily Pakistan Urdu newspaper reported.

The trilateral meeting was being held in the aftermath of a brief dialogue between the leaders of Afghanistan and Pakistan in which they took up several issues of mutual interest, including the resumption of talks with the Afghan Taliban.

Ghani is on a daylong visit to Pakistan for the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process conference which aims to promote peace and stability in Afghanistan and strengthen regional economic cooperation and connectivity. Nawaz and Ghani jointly inaugurated the process in Islamabad.

The trip follows a trilateral meeting between Sharif, Ghani and British Prime Minister David Cameron in Paris where the three agreed on cooperation-based regional relationship.

Ghani had, however, maintained that Kabul will not compromise its sovereignty and independence at any cost.

Relations between the two neighbours received a hit after Ghani blamed Pakistan of supporting the Afghan Taliban for carrying out suicide blasts in Kabul.

His statement was followed by Islamabad's accusation that an attack on Pakistan Air Force's Badaber airbase was planned and controlled from Afghanistan.

The governments of both the countries were communicating through 'backdoor channels' to get bilateral ties back on track.

The Heart of Asia conference was a platform to repair the stalled relations between the two neighbouring countries.

Indian External Affairs Minister also arrived in Islamabad to attend the conference which was established in 2011 at the initiative of Afghanistan and Turkey.

Sushma will later on Wednesday hold bilateral meetings with Sharif.

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