

India will raise cross-border terror with Pakistan next week

India will raise with Pakistan the issue of cross-border terrorism and the dramatic increase in infiltration across the Line of Control when the two sides hold talks in Islamabad next week, Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon said here Wednesday.

Unlike the July 11, 2006 [Mumbai](#) blasts, which India blamed on Pakistan-based terrorists, Menon refrained from commenting on the involvement of foreign-based terrorists in the serial blasts that shook [Jaipur](#) Tuesday, killing over 60 people and injuring at least 216.

"This will be certainly high on the agenda. Stopping cross-border terror is very high on our priority," Menon told reporters when asked whether India will raise the issue of terrorism with Pakistan.

"We will certainly raise the issue," he stressed.

Menon will hold talks with Pakistan's Foreign Secretary Salman Bashir May 20 to review the fourth round of composite dialogue and hold discussions on a wide range of bilateral issues, including security and Jammu and Kashmir.

India and Pakistan will launch the fifth round of composite dialogue after the talks.

This will be followed by talks between External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee and his Pakistani counterpart Shah Mehmood Qureshi.

This will be the first formal engagement between India and Pakistan since a civilian government was installed in Islamabad last month.

"The stopping of violence is in some ways a necessary condition for what we are trying to achieve," Menon said ahead of the talks between foreign secretaries and foreign ministers of India and Pakistan May 20-21.

India has spoken about a 'foreign hand' behind the Jaipur blasts. But it has scrupulously refrained from naming Pakistan or any other country for the serial bomb attack that killed at least 63 people and injured over 200.

"We are in the process of investigating the incident. Let's not jump to conclusions," Menon replied when asked whether India suspected the involvement of Pakistan-based terrorists in the Jaipur blasts.

"I don't want to start speculating. The fact of infiltration is a problem. We will deal with it on the ground and raise it with Pakistan," he replied when asked about a steep increase in infiltration across the Line of Control over the past few months.

Like many other leaders in the world, Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf and Pakistan Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gillani have condemned the Jaipur blasts.

The increasing infiltration came under the spotlight last week after heavy firing by the Pakistan Rangers along the LoC to allegedly provide cover to infiltrators.

The Border Security Force (BSF) has already lodged a 'strong protest' with its Pakistani counterparts at the first major incident of firing after India and Pakistan agreed November 26, 2003 to observe a ceasefire along the LoC.

Menon, however, refused to comment on whether India will raise the issue of cross-border terrorism - a contentious issue that has dogged India-Pakistan ties - under the anti-terror mechanism it set up with Pakistan two years ago to share information and intelligence on terror attacks.

"It's a mechanism through which we share information on combating terrorism. It's an available channel of communication. But let's find out more about the blasts. Then we will decide," Menon said when asked whether India will raise the issue under the anti-terror mechanism.

The fate of Indian death row prisoner Sarabjit Singh and the promotion of cross-border trade and travel will also be high on the agenda of India-Pakistan talks next week.

Dates for the next meeting of a joint India-Pakistan anti-terror mechanism are also likely to be discussed, reliable sources said.

The last meeting of the anti-terror mechanism was held in [New Delhi](#) October last year.

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