

Agra to host Bangladesh, Pakistan, India peoples' meet

An organisation working towards 'unification of the subcontinent' and bringing the peoples of India, Bangladesh and Pakistan closer will meet in Agra in August to take forward the movement.

The Bangladesh-Pakistan-Bharat Peoples' Forum, a leftist outfit, had held its last conference in November in Lucknow. It believes that the partition of the subcontinent was a 'grave blunder' and that there can be no peace in the subcontinent unless there is unification.

Forum national president Ram Kishore said Sunday evening that the 'momentum for unification has to be maintained, rather stepped up to ensure peace and progress in the region which has seen many conflagrations in the past 60 years that have only helped the imperialist powers to entrench their tentacles'.

The Agra meet will be attended by members from the parallel organisations in the other two neighbouring countries.

Ram Kishore said the Lucknow declaration had demanded easing of the visa norms between the three countries, promotion of cultural and trade ties, opening up of communication facilities through reduction in tariff, academic collaboration and to significantly reduce budgetary allocations on defence.

'Of late there have been some welcome shifts in perspectives and approaches of the various political parties in the subcontinent. This process of better understanding should be accelerated. Trade can be a major leveller, therefore business interests should be promoted,' he said.

The forum wants the share markets of the three countries opened for cross border investors. It has also decided to jointly hold functions to mark the 250th year celebrations of the Battle of Plassey (June 23, 1757) along with the 1857 mutiny celebrations this year, Ram Kishore told IANS.

He warned of the increasing inroads corporate imperialism was making in all the three countries that were also facing grim challenges from fundamentalists. 'Democracy and free society alone can address the twin problems of extremism and socio economic backwardness,' he added.

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