

National News

Kashmir issue bilateral: India's 'clear' message to US after Trump offer

Agency New Delhi August 2,

India on Friday once again underlined the bilateral nature of Kashmir issue with Pakistan and told the US in "clear terms" that any discussion on the subject will happen only with Islamabad.

New Delhi's comment comes just hours after US president Donald Trump once again stressed that he would "certainly intervene" if "they" asked. It was, however, not clear if "they" was used for India or Pakistan, or both. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, who is in Bangkok attending the ASEAN summit, tweeted that he had conveyed New Delhi's intent to his US counterpart Mike Pompeo.

"Have conveyed to American counterpart @SecPompeo this morning in clear terms that any discussion on Kashmir, if at all warranted, will only be with Pakistan and only bilaterally," Jaishankar wrote. Donald Trump, while answering a question from a reporter at the White House about his earlier offer to mediate on Kashmir issue, said: "If they wanted



sombody to intervene and I spoke to Pakistan about that... I spoke frankly with India about it... if they wanted me to I would certainly intervene".

Trump first made the offer, with the claim about Modi, on June 22 in response to a public appeal from the visiting Pakistani prime minister Imran Khan in joint remarks at the White House. India denied Modi had ever asked Trump to mediate and reiterated known Indian position that all issues with Pakistan can only be resolved bilaterally and after

Pakistan stops supporting terrorism.

The state department followed up, and reiterated old US position, and one very different from Trump, that India and Pakistan should resolve their differences bilaterally and that the United States stands ready to assist.

With that, both sides decided to move on. A senior state department official took pretty much the same line at briefing for reporters Wednesday on Khan's recent visit. "The US ability to encourage a constructive

dialogue between India and Pakistan whether on Kashmir or other bilateral issues will be a function of Pakistan taking sustained and irreversible steps against militants and terrorists on its territory," the official said. But it seems President Trump did not get an update on his offer, and was still waiting for response. When asked by a reporter Thursday, Trump replied with question: "Have they accepted the offer or not?"

When told they had not, he said, "Well it's really up to Prime Minister Modi."

'No agreement' on Ayodhya, mediation report submitted; SC takes it up today

Agency New Delhi Aug 2,

The three-member mediation panel looking into the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid dispute has been unable to get the various parties involved in it to come to an agreement, one of the persons aware of the development said on condition of anonymity. The panel submitted its report to the Supreme Court in a sealed envelope on Thursday, drawing the curtain on almost four-and-a-half month-long negotiations between Hindu and Muslim litigants to explore the possibility of an out-of-court settlement to the decades-long Ayodhya land dispute.

A five-judge constitution bench, comprising Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi, and justices SA Bobde, DY Chandrachud, Ashok Bhushan and S Abdul Nazeer, will on Friday go through the panel's report and decide on the future course of action in the

contentious case.

If the panel's report admits that mediation has failed, the court will start hearing the case.

On July 17, the Supreme Court, in response to a plea from one of the original petitioners in the case that the mediation panel wasn't making any progress, ordered the panel to "inform the Court the outcome of the mediation proceedings as on 31.7.2019 by 1.8.2019 to enable us to proceed further in the matter in terms of the present directions." Since March, the top court has put on hold all judicial proceedings in the case, giving mediation a shot. The title suit in the matter is pending before the Supreme Court since 2010 after the two sides approached it against the Allahabad high court's verdict dividing the disputed land into three equal portions - 1/3rd each for the Hindus, Muslims and the Nirmohi Akhara, a religious denomination. Hindus claim that the disputed

site in Ayodhya marks the birthplace of the Hindu warrior-god Ram, and that the 16th century Babri Masjid that stood there was built on the ruins of a temple razed by Mughal invaders. The mosque was demolished on December 6, 1992 by activists of Hindu organisations that had been campaigning for the construction of a temple on the site. The mediation panel, led by retired Supreme Court judge FMI Kalifullah, has as its members senior advocate Sriram Panchu and spiritual guru Sri Sri Ravi Shankar. It was appointed by the top court on March 8 to explore mediation in an attempt to "heal relationships" between communities. The Uttar Pradesh government and most Hindu parties opposed the initiative. The panel was initially given eight weeks to explore the possibility of a settlement, but on May 10, after the panel

submitted an interim report to the court, the SC granted it an extension of three months, till August 15.

Zafaryab Jilani, counsel for the Babri Masjid Action Committee, said, "I was not able to attend the final round of negotiations due to my prior commitments. But yes, I have come to know the panel has submitted its report. Representatives of four out of six Muslim litigants attended the last round of meetings." Last month, an application was filed by a plaintiff from the Hindu side seeking an early hearing on the matter, claiming the mediation proceedings had made no headway. "...in the three meetings participated {in} during a period of five months, neither any concrete proposal has come from anyone nor any headway is likely to be made," the application said.

Following the request, the court advanced the date for the panel to submit its final report from August 15 to August 1.

Decide by August 14, Supreme Court tells Centre on Justice Kureshi elevation

Agency New Delhi Aug 2,

The Supreme Court told the Centre on Friday to take a call on the elevation of Justice Akil A Kureshi's appointment as Madhya Pradesh high court chief justice by August 14. A bench led by Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi, which is hearing a petition about the delay in the appointment of Justice Kureshi, was told by the Centre that the government would need more time to arrive at a decision on elevating Gujarat High Court's senior-most judge.

The Supreme Court's collegium, which comprises three senior-most judges of the top court,

on May 10 recommended names of four judges for appointment as high court chief justices. The names included that of Kureshi who was recommended as chief justice of the Madhya Pradesh high court. But in its petition, the Gujarat High Court Advocates' Association pointed out that the government had notified other appointments except the one relating to Justice Kureshi.

When the case came up for hearing last month, the Centre had asked for two weeks to finalise its stand.

On Friday, the Centre's lawyer told the court that the government would need 10 more days from the last day of



Parliament's Budget session. The budget session was recently extended till 7 August. The Chief Justice responded to the request, saying it expected the government to come back to the court with a concrete decision on August 14.

To the Centre's assertion that it would convey its decision to the collegium, the Chief Justice quipped that the collegium (which is also headed by the CJI on the administrative side) would place it before the court on the judicial side.

North East news

UDP to decide on new president next week

Courtesy Northeast Now Shilong Aug 2,

The United Democratic Party (UDP) of Meghalaya will meet next week to elect a new leader. The move has been necessitated after the sudden demise of Dr Donkpar Roy Dkhar who passed away on July 28 last.

Late Dr Donkpar Roy has been the president of the UDP since 2003 till he breathed his last. The meeting may also discuss

with the six MLAs of the party on the need to nominate one of its MLAs for the Assembly Speaker's post.

This was informed by UDP working president and minister Methab Lyngdoh to the media on Thursday.

Lyngdoh also said that everything would depend on the collective decision of the party MLAs and along with the approval of the party as a whole.

Dr Donkpar was the

Speaker of the State Assembly from March 12, 2018.

The UDP has at present Bindo M Lanang as the senior most leader besides young leaders like Paul Lyngdoh, Jemino Mawthoh and few others.

There were speculations that UDP MLA from Amlarem who is also the education minister, Lahkmen Rymbui may be offered the Speaker's post.

NGOs want gov's nod on registers bill to detect foreigners

Agency Aizawl August 2,

The umbrella organisation of all the major civil societies and student associations of Mizoram on Thursday urged the state government to give assent to a bill that seeks to detect foreigners illegally residing in the state.

The Mizoram Maintenance of

Household Registers Bill, 2019, was passed by the state Assembly on March 19.

In a statement, the NGO Coordination Committee expressed regret that the governor was yet to give assent to the bill after four months of being passed in the Assembly.

Chief Minister Zoramthanga had earlier said the influx of foreigners into the state that shares over 700-km border with Bangladesh and

Myanmar has remained a serious concern for several decades.

The Committee also expressed unhappiness over Mizoram being without a regular governor for a long period of time.

Mukhi, who is also governor of Assam, has been given additional charge of Mizoram in March after resignation of Kumanam Rajasekharan from the post.

Sport News

CM congratulates Jeet kune do Gold Medalists



DIPR Imphal, August 2,

Chief Minister Shri N. Biren Singh congratulated the five Jeet Kune Do players who clinched gold medals in the recently concluded International Championship Jeet Kune Do held at Dhaka, Bangladesh from 27th - 30th July, 2019.

In his congratulatory message, the Chief Minister said that the whole State feels proud of the three Jeet Kune Do players for their feat in the Championship. Such achievement has once

again proved to the world that Manipur is the Sports Powerhouse of India and the State can be rightfully claimed to be the Sports Capital of the country.

Expressing hope that the Jeet Kune Do players would bring more laurels to the country and the State, the Chief Minister conveyed his best wishes for their future career and competitions.

Ningshung Hungyo, Mashungngam Horam and Nimreng Khodang from Ukhrul won gold medals in senior weight category while Keisham Lanchenba Singh

and Omnivash Oinam from Thoubal won gold medals in sub-junior weight category. Around 600 athletes from nine countries participated in the championship. India was represented by 8 players of which 5 were from Manipur. The team from Manipur was led by Dr. M. Ibomcha. All the 5 players from Manipur won gold medals in the championship.

It may be mentioned that Shri Ningshung Hungyo is presently working as a coach for Wushu and Jeet Kune Do and is also a certified National Referee for the said disciplines.

Thailand Open: Sai Praneeth to face Kanta Tsuneyama of Japan in quarters

Agency New Delhi August 2,

In Badminton, B. Sai Praneeth will face Kanta Tsuneyama of Japan in the men's singles quarterfinals of the Thailand Open in Bangkok today. Praneeth stormed into the last-eight defeating compatriot Shubhankar Dey 21-18, 21-19.

He is lone India left in the singles event of the tournament.

Kidambi Srikanth, Parupalli Kashyap, H.S. Prannoy and Saina Nehwal crashed out of the tournament after losing their second-round matches yesterday.

In the men's doubles event, pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy

and Chirag Shetty will also play their quarter-final match today. The India duo will face Choi Solgyu and Seo Seung Jae of Korea.

In Mixed Doubles, Ashwini Ponnappa and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy will take on Japanese pair of Arisa Higashino and Yuta Watanabe in the last eight.