

Pakistan ready to improve ties with India, says Imran

Pakistan is ready to improve its ties with India, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief Imran Khan said on Thursday. His government would like leaders of the two sides to resolve all disputes, including the “core issue” of Kashmir, through talks, the former cricketer-turned-politician said and asserted that the blame game between the two neighbours, detrimental to the subcontinent, should stop.

“If they [India] take one step towards us, we will take two, but at least (we) need a start,” 65-year-old Mr. Khan said in his first public address after leading his party to victory in the Wednesday’s general elections.

The PTI has emerged as the single largest party in the National Assembly elections, amid claims by rival political parties “blatant” rigging in the counting.

Blame game

“I am a person who arguably knows the most people in India because of my days in cricket. We can resolve the poverty crisis in South East Asia. The biggest problem is Kashmir,” Mr Khan said.

“We want to improve our relations with India, if their leadership also wants it. This blame game that whatever goes wrong in Pakistan’s Balochistan is because of India and vice versa brings us back to square one,” he said.

“This is not how we will grow, and it is detrimental to the subcontinent,” he added.

Mr. Khan said good India-Pakistan relations will be beneficial for the entire region and suggested to increase trade ties between the two neighbours.

India-Pakistan ties nose-dived in recent years with no bilateral talks taking place.

Mr. Khan also said he was very disappointed with the Indian media which had projected him like a “Bollywood villain” in recent weeks. On ties with the U.S., he said Pakistan wants a balanced relations with America which should be mutually beneficial, not one-sided. Additionally, Mr. Khan said he and his party wanted stronger ties with both Iran and Saudi Arabia.

“We will strengthen our relations with China. They have provided us an opportunity by investing in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor,” he said. Pakistan can learn from China, which has effectively tackled corruption and also improved people’s lives, he said.

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