

India, EU Likely to Sign a Pact on Counter-Terrorism

Keen on substantially raising their cooperation in counter-terrorism, India and the 27-nation European Union are likely to sign an agreement on enhancing cooperation in the field when both sides meet for the summit level talks here this week.

"An agreement to enhance security cooperation may be signed between the two sides during the summit," Lars-Olof Lindgren, Ambassador of Sweden told *PTI*.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh will hold summit talks with his Swedish counterpart Fredrik Reinfeldt whose country is the current chair of the European Union.

He said EU's Counter-Terrorism Coordinator Gilles de Kerchove had held wide ranging talks with Indian officials here last month to explore possibility of broadening cooperation between the two sides on security related issues.

Intelligence sharing, research and development of skills of counter-terror security forces are some of the areas identified by Kerchove. The EU also wants to learn from India about how to curb financing of terrorists considering its experience in working against Hawala channels.

"The threats of terrorism and ways to tackle it will feature prominently in the discussions at the summit," the Ambassador said.

Kerchove was here last month to "hear the lessons learned" from 26/11 and discussed the security issues with National Security Adviser M K Narayanan, Home Secretary G K Pillai and intelligence agencies including RAW.

Daniele Smadja, Ambassador of the EU here, said the two sides are also looking at the possibility of an agreement between CBI and its European counterpart Europol for effective coordination between the two agencies tackling crime and security related issues.

"We will be negotiating an agreement between Europol and India's central investigation," Smadja said.

Asked whether extradition of criminals will also be featured in the agreement, the top official of the EU said the bloc has the intention to include it in the pact.

She also listed a number of areas for cooperation including training of police personnel and sharing of technology and equipment for counter terrorism measures.

Lindgren said the EU and India are major global powers and there is "huge scope" for enhancing mutual cooperation between the two sides in combating terrorism. "Some individual members already have bilateral cooperation with India on security issues. That cooperation could be broadened now."

On India's concern over Pakistan misusing aid given by international community, Smadja said the European Union is "extremely vigilant about the way its assistance is used."

The EU is a major provider of humanitarian assistance to Pakistan.

She said India is well placed to share information about misuse of funds and the EU listen carefully to it.

Smadja said the India-EU summit will discuss issues like concluding the proposed FTA between the two sides, enhancing cooperation to meet the challenges of climate change, reform of international financial institutions and the state of the world economy.

FILED AT: NOV 05, 2009 16:25 IST