

# 'Political dialogue needed for de-escalation of tension between India and Pakistan'

Enough evidence indicating Chinese technology in Pak nuclear weapons, says Lt Gen (retd) Prakash Menon

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THE HEIGHTENED levels of tensions between India and Pakistan will continue till a dialogue was initiated between the two nuclear-armed neighbours, said Lieutenant General (retired) Prakash Menon at an event in Pune on Tuesday. The former Army officer was speaking at the Yashwantrao Chavan Memorial Lecture, organised by the Department of Defence and Strategic Studies of the Savitribai Phule University (SPPU). The Lt Gen's book — *Strategy Trap: India and Pakistan under Nuclear Shadow* — was also released by SPPU Vice-Chancellor Nitin Karmalkar at the event.

Referring to the events that unfolded after the Pulwama terror attack on February 14 and the subsequent air strikes carried out by India, Lt Gen Menon said that defence establishments on both sides of the border continue to remain at the highest level of alertness.

He said, "Large number of defence forces of both countries have been mobilised and the de-escalation can't happen immediately. For the tensions to ease, there is a need for political dialogue that will now happen only post general elections. India cannot remain in the 'no-talks' mode for ever."

Termining the air strikes in Balakot as a 'brilliant use of air power' taken up by India in self-defence, the former infantry officer said India cannot com-



Lt Gen (retd) Prakash Menon (second from right) and SPPU V-C Nitin Karmalkar during the Yashwantrao Chavan Memorial Lecture, in Pune on Tuesday. *Express*

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**LT GENERAL (RETIRED)  
PRAKASH MENON**

pletely prevent Pakistan from emanating terrorism from its soil, but India can reduce the extent.

"Pakistan's crackdown on terrorist organisations is not enough to convince India, as they have taken similar steps in the past which have not yielded positive results to curb terrorists from operating on their soil," said Menon.

Stating that China has be-

come aggressive towards India's growing engagements with western countries in the recent years, Menon said, "India's biggest threat is China and we will need a long-term strategy to deal with them. The Chinese are investing in Pakistan, which then gets powered to keep tensions with India always running high."

Although Pakistan rakes up its nuclear-armed status every time there are tensions with India, Menon ruled out its actual use. "The use of nuclear weapons will lead to an existential crisis for Pakistan. But India has enough evidence indicating Chinese technology in Pakistan's nuclear weapons," said the former Army officer.

Menon, who has served in Jammu and Kashmir, said, "A lot of youth are getting indoctrinated and the situation there is too bad."

