

JETTA VOICE

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Macroeconomic stability unachievable without another IMF programme: PM Shehbaz

NEWS DESK: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said that macroeconomic stability in the country needed to be advanced further, which he said would not be possible without another bailout programme with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

A day ago, while announcing the staff-level agreement (SLA) on the successful completion of an existing short-term facility, the IMF had confirmed that Pakistan was seeking a 24th medium-term bailout package for a permanent push towards longstanding structural reforms.

In its end-of-mission statement, the IMF had said that subject to the approval of its executive board, the staff-level agreement would enable Pakistan to access about \$1.1 billion — 828 million special drawing rights (SDR) — by late April.

While addressing a meeting of the Special Investment and Facilitation Council's (SIFC) Apex committee, PM Shehbaz congratulated the finance ministry for closing the SLA with the IMF, and expressed hope that the \$1.1bn tranche would arrive next month.

"[However], is this our ultimate achievement? The answer is a big no. We have to bring economic stability at the macro-level and we have to progress it for which it is decided that we cannot survive without another [IMF] agreement."

The prime minister questioned whether another programme would be able to bring economic stability, increase the growth trajectory and bring pros-



perity. He stressed that the newly elected government would have to work towards a medium-term programme which would have the duration of two-to-three years. "And during those years, the government will have to undertake deep rooted structural reforms," the premier added.

He further said: "To think that the economy will stop bleeding without undertaking those steps is a dream."

PM Shehbaz gave the example of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), citing the need to reform and digitise the institution.

The prime minister also credited the political parties for their role in the successful negotiations

with the IMF. "When Pakistan came to close to being a brink of bankruptcy, the political parties set aside their differences to work for the country," he said, adding that the reforms taken up by the incoming government helped achieve the successful IMF reviews.

He also expressed his gratitude toward the SIFC, stating that it had helped overcome bureaucratic hurdles without going into details.

The prime minister ended the meeting on emphasising the importance of political parties setting aside their differences to work towards the wellbeing of the country, highlighting that politics should be secondary to the state's interests.

A press release from the Prime Minister's Office said the army chief reassured the military's "full support to backstop the economic initiatives of the government" and to ensure the provision of a safe, secure and conducive environment to nurture the country's true economic potential.

It added that PM Shehbaz urged the federal cabinet to "join hands, keep political differences aside and work as a cohesive team" to keep the momentum of economic stability.

The combined leadership also vowed to ensure the continuation of policies and take tough decisions in the country's larger interest by setting correct economic priorities.

Terrorist killed in intelligence-based operation in Panjgur: ISPR



RAWALPINDI: The military's media affairs wing said on Thursday that a terrorist was killed during an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in Balochistan's Panjgur district.

According to a statement issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), security forces conducted the operation last night.

"During the conduct of operation, own troops effectively engaged the terrorists' location and resultantly terrorist Chakar Liaquat was sent to hell while two terrorists got injured," the ISPR said.

It added that a weapon and ammunition were also recovered from the killed militant, who "remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities."

"Sanitisation operation is being carried out to eliminate any other terrorist found in the area as the security forces of Pakistan are determined to wipe out the menace of terrorism from the coun-

try," the statement said. Pakistan has witnessed an uptick in terror activities in the past year, especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan after the banned militant Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan ended its ceasefire with the government in November 2022.

On Wednesday, two soldiers were martyred while eight terrorists were killed by the Pakistan Army after it thwarted an attack on the Gwadar Port Authority Colony.

According to an annual security report issued by the Centre for Research and Security Studies, Pakistan witnessed 1,524 violence-related fatalities and 1,463 injuries from 789 terror attacks and counter-terror operations in 2023 — marking a record six-year high.

KP and Balochistan were the primary centres of violence, accounting for over 90 per cent of all fatalities and 84pc of attacks, including incidents of terrorism and security forces operations.

Pakistan does not want armed conflict with Afghanistan, says Khawaja Asif

NEWS DESK: Days after Pakistan struck militant bases in Afghanistan, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif has said that Islamabad does not want an armed conflict with the neighbouring country.

In an interview with Voice of America published on Wednesday, Asif said: "Force is the last resort. We do not want to have an armed conflict with Afghanistan."

On March 18, Pakistan struck Afghanistan's Khost and Paktika provinces in "intelligence-based anti-terrorist operations," which a Afghan authorities said killed eight people.

The Foreign Office had confirmed the strikes, saying they were aimed at the Hafiz Gul Bahadur group, which recently targeted security forces in North Waziristan, martyring seven soldiers. The airstrikes were responded to by Afghanistan forces which used heavy weapons, including mortars, to target troops across the border in Kurram and North Waziristan.

Tuesday remained relatively



calmer as guns on both sides of the boundary remained silent, barring the Angoor Adda border. Yesterday, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif asserted that the government would not tolerate any cross-border terrorism. He also invited "neighbouring countries" to "come and sit together" to devise a plan against terrorism.

Speaking about the Pakistan strike with VOA, Asif said: "A message needed to be sent that

this [cross-border terrorism] has grown too much." He added that Pakistan wanted to convey to the Afghan interim government in Kabul that "we cannot continue like this". Asif warned that Islamabad could block the corridor if provided to Afghanistan for trade with India. The defence minister asserted that Pakistan had the right to stop facilitating Kabul if it failed to curb anti-Pakistan terrorists operating on Afghan soil.

"If Afghanistan treats us like an enemy, then why should we give them a trade corridor?" he asked.

Recalling the February 2023 visit to Kabul by a high-level delegation led by him, Asif said he had told the Taliban ministers to not let banned militant Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan's (TTP) past "favours" tie Kabul's hands.

"If they [TTP] have done you a favour and you're grateful to them, then control them. Don't let them start a war with us while living in your country, and you become their ally," VOA quoted him as saying. "If they can harm us, then we'll be forced to [retaliate]," the minister said, while expressing hope that Afghanistan would meet the "single demand" of ceasing in the TTP, hence preventing the need for future military strikes from Pakistan. Asif alleged that Kabul was letting the TTP operate against Pakistan in a bid to prevent its members from joining the militant Islamic State group's local chapter, known as the IS-Khorasan chapter.

India's Congress party accuses Modi of 'crippling' it ahead of elections with tax case

WEB DESK: India's main opposition Congress party accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday of crippling it before the upcoming general election by freezing its accounts in an income tax case.

A part of the Congress' bank accounts was frozen last month pending a tax case that dates back to 2018-19, the party has said previously. Earlier this month, a tax tribunal dismissed its appeal to pause the recovery of 1.35 billion rupees (\$16.32 million) in income tax from its bank accounts.

On Thursday, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said all accounts belonging to the party had been frozen, leaving it with no access to funds for campaigning. "20 per cent of India votes for us and we can't even pay two rupees for anything. It has been orchestrated to cripple us in the elections," Gandhi said at a press conference. General elections are scheduled to be held in seven phases starting next month, with



most opinion polls predicting an easy win for Modi and his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The Congress, which leads a rag-tag bunch of bickering opposition parties in alliance for the general elections, is seen as Modi's main challenger. "We can do no campaign work. Our leaders cannot fly from one part of the country to the other. Forget about flying, they cannot even buy a rail ticket," Gandhi said about the tax case, which he said had caused all the party's bank accounts to be frozen. The BJP was quick to deny Gandhi's charges, saying the Congress was guilty of tax evasion and had to face action because of that.

FO says poll concerns raised during Donald Lu hearing 'misunderstanding of domestic situation'

NEWS DESK: The Foreign Office on Thursday said that concerns raised over the Feb 8 general elections during a US Congressional hearing "reflected a misunderstanding" of the country's domestic situation and electoral laws.

The comments come a day after US Assistant Secretary of State Donald Lu told a Congressional panel that the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) failed to investigate allegations of irregularities in the Feb 8 elections, it will "retard" America's relationship with Pakistan.

Asked if the ECP's failure to investigate irregularities would impact US-Pakistan relations, Lu had said it would be an impediment to the relationship of 76 years if Pakistan did not have a democratic process that upholds its own Constitution.

"It will retard our ability to have the type of relationship we want, in security matters, on the business front and people to people. All that suffers if Pakistan is not a full democracy," the diplomat had replied.

"We have never used the term 'free and fair' in characterising these elections," Lu had said in response to a question from Congressman August



Pfizer, a Texas Republican. Responding to a query during a weekly media briefing today, Foreign Office spokesperson Muntaz Zahra Baloch said "some statements made there (during the hearing) reflected [a] misunderstanding of Pakistan's domestic situation and electoral laws".

According to state broad-

caster Radio Pakistan, the spokesperson expressed the hope to "engage in meaningful discussion with the United States to address these misunderstandings". Zahra emphasised that Pakistan valued its close relations with the US and believed in constructive engagement with it.

While noting that Pakistan

US Congressional hearing a "blatant intervention in the internal affairs" of Pakistan.

In a statement issued today, he said, "Taking up the issue of general elections in Pakistan is a blatant intervention in the internal affairs of a sovereign country." The seasoned politician said, "My head as a proud Pakistani, citizen of a free and sovereign country, hung in shame as I watched the proceedings of the subcommittee of the US House yesterday."

"The proceedings left an impression that Pakistan is not even a client state but one of the states of the USA," he said.

He expressed the concern that "if today interference in internal affairs of Pakistan goes un-noticed, tomorrow it can be matters of our national security that can be taken". "Bartering of our financial sovereignty to the IMF does not mean that we have become a client state of the West and any country can meddle in our internal affairs," Rabhani asserted. Noting that elections had been held in other countries as well but were not brought into question, he urged the Foreign Ministry to take a "belated notice and warn the US against such intervention."

Separately, former Senate chairman Raza Rabhani termed the

"If it is a question of an elected House acting on its own, then tomorrow our Parliament should discuss the US policy on Palestinians, which is creating a destabilising effect in the world, or the various proceedings against Trump," Rabhani said. Lu is the diplomat whose supposed warning to former Pakistan Ambassador to the US Asad Majeed was the subject of a cipher sent by the envoy to Islamabad. The same document was the basis of ex-premier Imran Khan's allegation of a US conspiracy to oust his government in 2022. The PTI founder is currently on trial for mishandling the same confidential document.

During the US Congressional hearing on Wednesday, Lu termed the allegations against him by Imran Khan the "crux of the 'cablegate' cipher controversy — a "conspiracy theory, lie and complete falsehood".

When asked if the election results would have been different if alleged irregularities were not committed, Lu said that was for the ECP to decide. However, the diplomat agreed with the suggestion that the ECP should hold re-election if it found evidence of substantial rigging in some constituencies.

Targeting peace of Gwadar aims to disrupt Pakistan's economic progress: PM

ISLAMABAD (INP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif underscored that those who targeted the peace of Gwadar, Balochistan, aimed to disrupt Pakistan's economic progress and cause suffering to its people, Gwadar Pro reported.

He expressed his heartfelt appreciation to the security forces for their successful thwarting of the attack on Gwadar Port Authority (GPA) complex.

In a statement, he highlighted the exceptional bravery and professional prowess displayed by security forces in confronting attackers, emphasizing that such actions deserve the utmost praise.

The Prime Minister conveyed deep respect for the security forces personnel who made the ultimate sacrifice during the operation against terrorists.

He emphasized that these courageous individuals, who laid down their lives in the battle against terrorism, are upholding the integrity of Pakistan.

Shehbaz Sharif extended solidarity and heartfelt condolences to the families of the martyrs.

He commended the commendable bravery of the security forces and their timely response, which led to the failure of the attack and the elimination of the attackers.

Shehbaz Sharif expressed firm resolve that, with the grace of Allah Almighty and the unwavering support of the nation, all internal and external conspiracies against Pakistan will be thwarted.

Earlier, security forces successfully neutralized insurgents affiliated with the banned Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) who attempted to breach the Gwadar Port Authority (GPA) complex on Wednesday afternoons.

Official reports indicated that the eight militants, armed with guns and explosive devices, initiated gunfire while attempting to infiltrate the Gwadar Port Authority complex.

Swiftly responding, security forces cordoned off the area surrounding the GPA complex to secure the premises and ensure the safety of residents.

A retaliatory operation was swiftly launched, with reinforcements summoned.

An intense exchange of gunfire ensued for over half an hour, resulting in the death of all eight insurgents.

At the heart of the city, the GPA Complex serves as a vital hub housing various offices crucial to the operations of the Gwadar Port Authority, alongside facilities for law enforcement agencies and staff residences.



QUETTA: TB control program Provincial Manager Dr Asif Anwer addressing a press conference.

Australia tightens student visa rules as migration hits record high

PERTH (INP): Australia will begin enforcing tougher visa rules for foreign students this week as official data showed migration hit another record high, which is likely to further exacerbate an already tight rental market.

From Saturday, English language requirements for student and graduate visas will be increased, while the government will get the power to suspend education providers from recruiting international students if they repeatedly break rules.

"The actions this weekend will continue to drive migration levels down while delivering on our commitment in the migration strategy to fix the broken system we inherited."

Home Affairs Minister Clare O'Neil said in a statement.

A new "genuine student test" will be introduced to further crack down on international students who look to come to Australia primarily to work, while the imposition of "no further stay" conditions will be used on more visitor visas.

The moves follow a raft of actions last year to close off COVID-era concessions introduced by the former government, including unrestricted working hours for international students.

The government at the time said rules would be tightened for students that could halve migrant intake over two years.

Australia boosted its annual migration numbers in 2022 to help businesses recruit staff to fill shortages after the COVID-19 pandemic brought strict border controls, and kept foreign students and workers out for nearly two years.

But the sudden influx of foreign workers and students has exacerbated pressure on an already tight rental market.

US unveils draft UN resolution seeking immediate Gaza ceasefire

JEDDAH (INP): The United States has circulated a draft UN Security Council resolution calling for an "immediate ceasefire" linked to the release of hostages in the Gaza Strip, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said.

The diplomat made his announcement whilst on a tour of the Middle East that will include a stop in Israel.

Key Israel backer the United States has vetoed previous UN Security Council votes on the nearly six-month war, objecting as recently as in February to the use of the term "immediate" in a draft submitted by Algeria.

In recent weeks, however, Washington has upped the pressure on its ally, while insisting that Hamas must immediately release the hostages seized during its October 7 attacks on Israel. "Well, in fact, we actually have a resolution that we put forward right now that's before the United Nations Security Council that does call for an immediate ceasefire tied to the release of hostages, and we hope very much that countries will support that," Blinken said in Saudi Arabia.

"I think that would send a strong message," he told Saudi media outlet Al Hadath on Wednesday. "Of course, we stand with Israel and its right to defend itself... but at the same time, it's imperative that the civilians who are in harm's way and who are suffering so terribly... that we focus on them, that we make them a priority, protecting the civilians, getting them humanitarian assistance," Blinken said.

US officials had been negotiating an alternative text, since blocking an Algerian draft resolution calling for an "immediate humanitarian ceasefire" in Gaza at the end of February. That alternative, focusing on support for a six-week truce in exchange for the release of hostages, had little chance of winning approval, according to diplomatic sources.



ISLAMABAD: President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari presenting shield to Ambassador of Belarus Andrei METELITS.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs special session of the Apex Committee of Special Investment Facilitation Council.

Naqvi directs FIA to launch countrywide crackdown against power, gas theft

ISLAMABAD (INP): Federal Minister for Interior and Narcotics Control, Mohsin Naqvi has directed the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) to launch a countrywide crackdown against power and gas theft.

While chairing an important meeting at his office here on Thursday, he gave instructions to the Agency for taking strict legal action against those involved in electricity and gas thefts.

The FIA officials informed the minister that special teams were already constituted for crackdown on electricity and gas thieves on the past instructions given in the last meeting.

Upon receiving a detailed report on Greece boat accident submitted by the FIA officials, Mohsin Naqvi directed that all the elements involved in this tragedy must be brought to book.

He also directed strict action against all the elements involved in human trafficking to curb this evil from the society.

The minister also directed to further tighten the cordons against those involved in the Hundi/Hawala business.

The action against those involved in the Hundi/Hawala business has improved the value of the Pakistani rupee, the FIA officials informed the minister.

Mohsin Naqvi also reviewed the progress on pending promotions of FIA officials and directed to deal with pending promotion cases on urgent basis. All pending promotion cases should be disposed off within the prescribed period of one month, he directed the Agency's top leadership.

In the meeting, progress on the orders issued on the occasion of the visit of the Interior Minister to the FIA headquarters last week was also reviewed.

Interior Secretary Aftab Durran, Additional DGs and Directors of all regions of FIA participated in the meeting.

Belarus President to ink trade, economic agreements in visit to Pakistan: Envoy

ISLAMABAD (INP): Ambassador of Belarus to Pakistan, Andrei METELITS said that Belarus was exporting heavy machinery along with fertilizers, agriculture equipment, synthetic filament tow, chemicals, malt extract etc. to Pakistan whereas importing textiles, rice, citrus, leather apparel, leather footwear and medical instruments.

The envoy further stated that he was well aware of the fact that Chamber Houses always play an important role in promotion of ties among the countries and that his Embassy will be ready to cooperate with Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry in identifying Belarusian and Pakistani businessmen with a coinciding interest and connectivity.

Speaking on the occasion, ICCI President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that Belarus was an important country of Eastern Europe with which Pakistan's Free Trade Agreement was negotiable and that exchange of business delegations was needed to explore the untapped potential of both the countries. He said that in this regard, he will take the initiative to lead a delegation of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry to Belarus.

Meanwhile, Secretary General of United Business Group, Zafar Bakhtawari and Chairman Founder Group, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Khalid Iqbal Malik, while discussing the nature and strength of economic relations between Pakistan and Belarus, said that private sectors of both the countries will have to come forward to strengthen trade ties.

ICCI executive and representative of Belarus Chamber of Commerce and Industry Jurabek Kirgizbekov also shared his experiences for the needful. Chairman ICCI Khalid Iqbal Malik and Executive members Sheikh Mohammad Ejaz, Ch. Masood Tabish, Akhtar Hussain were also present in the meeting.



ISLAMABAD: Esteemed Grand Mufti of the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Dr. Husain Kavazovic, calls on the Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, Chaudhry Salik Hussain.

FM Dar lands in Brussels to attend First Nuclear Energy Summit

BRUSSELS (INP): Foreign Minister (FM) Ishaq Dar has arrived in Brussels to attend the First Nuclear Energy Summit.

As per details, the foreign minister was received by Ambassador of Islamabad in Brussels.

Atomic Energy's first session will kick off on Thursday in Brussels. In this session, Ishaq Dar is representing Pakistan. On this occasion, Dar will also meet the leaders and foreign ministers of the countries participating in the meeting.

In the meeting, nuclear energy and ways to help advance sustainable development will be discussed among all the leaders.

Yesterday, Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said that economic diplomacy will make Pakistan stronger asking the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry to prioritize investment opportunities in the country.

Addressing participants of a meeting held at the Pakistan High Commission in London on Wednesday, Ishaq Dar said that in the current circumstances, Pakistan needs to prioritize economic diplomacy in addition to conventional diplomacy.

TENDER NOTICE

TSE 2240282983 Note: In All Procurements of GOB Whether Through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, it is Mandatory For All Bidders to Get Registered At Electronic Public Procurement System of BPPRA GOB. The Divisional Forest Officer Control number 206 from, Elgaba, Bidders for avocation of following works for the Year 2024 based on Composite schedule rates 2019.

Tender Fee Rs. 1000/- and Bid Security 2%

S.No.	Name of works	Est.Cost
1.	Construction of Eco-Tourism Hut at Killi Zangar, Hadoze	3,000,000

Procurements shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules - 2014. Eligibility of Bidders: Presence in Active Tax Payee List. The tender form must be filled by any procuring agency of Pakistan, Balochistan Revenue Authority. The tender must have complete Assignment of similar work on or over Term over of at least 7 (07) GOB. PNR Amount in subsequent previous years showing financial capacity of the firm. Procedure of Procurement: Single Stage One Envelope Bidding Procedure. Bid Security: The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Bank Guarantee Deposit of Call of 2% specified above in the name of the under signed on a valid tender. Tender Documents: The bid documents can be obtained from the office of the under signed 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM on working days. Last Date of bid submission: The tenders must be submitted latest by 01 April, 2024 at 10:00 AM. Tender opening: All tenders will be opened on same day at the office of the under signed at 11:00 AM Address: Divisional Forest Officer Control number 206 from, Elgaba, B. Email: Invoiceman00136@gmail.com

PRO No. 1699/24-2024
DIVISIONAL FOREST OFFICER LORALAI

Senate Polls: PTI candidates challenge nomination papers rejection

PESHAWAR/LAHORE (INP): PTI candidates Murad Saeed, Azam Swati, Khuram Zeeshan and Sanam Javed have filed appeals in election tribunals against rejection of their nomination papers on Thursday.

"The election commission has challenged nomination papers over baseless allegations," Murad Saeed, Azam Swati and Khuram Zeeshan pleaded in their appeals filed in Peshawar election tribunal.

They requested in appeals filed by Aftab Advocate, for approval of their nomination papers and allowing them to contest the Senate elections.

PTI's Sanam Javed challenged the election commission's decision of rejecting her nomination papers at Lahore's election tribunal.

"The election commission has rejected nomination papers of Sanam Javed for Senate election against the facts," Javed pleaded in her appeal.

"They objected that the plot was not declared in nomination papers, while Sanam Javed doesn't have any plot," according to the plea.

Sanam Javed pleaded to the tribunal to approve her nomination papers.

"The election commission has continued its tradition to

reject the nomination papers," Azam Swati was talking to media after filing appeal against rejection of his nomination for the Senate election.

"I have remained member of various house committees including the judges committee," Swati told media. "If I am not eligible for technocrat seat then cigarette sellers and property dealers will become senators," he said.

"I have remained senator for 18 years, perhaps a few senators would have that time in the Senate," PTI leader said.

"I have sided with the PTI founder and being punished for it," he said.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in a group photo with Chief Ministers of all the Provinces in Islamabad.

Pakistan reaffirms commitment to Iran Pakistan gas pipeline project

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan has reaffirmed its commitment to Iran Pakistan gas pipeline project.

Responding to the queries of the media persons regarding the pipeline project during a weekly news briefing in Islamabad on Thursday, Foreign Office Spokesperson Murtaza Zuhra Baloch said it is the sovereign decision of Pakistani government to move forward on the project.

"She made it clear that at this point there is no room for any discussion or waiver from any third party for the construction of the pipeline inside Pakistan's territory. She said Pakistan has also conveyed to the US authorities the importance of this project for its energy security."

When asked about the concerns raised at the US congressional hearing over the alleged rigging in the general elections, the spokesperson said some statements made there reflected misunderstanding of Pakistan's domestic situation and electoral laws. She hoped to engage in meaningful discussion with the US to address these misunderstandings. She said Pakistan values its

close relations with the US and believes in constructive engagement with it. She said Pakistan respects the prerogative of legislative bodies to discuss international issues.

She, however, said the deliberations of these legislative bodies should contribute promoting positive dynamics in bilateral ties based on mutual respect and understanding.

Responding to volley of questions regarding Pakistan's recent targeted and intelligence based operation inside Afghanistan, the spokesperson clarified it was not directed against the government and the institutions or people of Afghanistan but it was against terrorist hideouts and sanctuaries.

She said Pakistan has on multiple occasions shared concrete evidence and intelligence with the Afghan authorities about the presence of terrorist sanctuaries inside Afghanistan. She said it is a reality that terrorists especially the TTP have their bases in Afghanistan.

This is not just Pakistan's assertion but also confirmed by the international observers including

reports by the United Nations. The spokesperson said Pakistan respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Afghanistan and looking forward to work together to find joint solutions in countering terrorism and preventing any terrorist entry from sabotaging bilateral relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

She emphasized we should be partners in peace and partner against terrorism. To a question, the spokesperson said Pakistan is committed to protecting CPEC related projects including Gwadar port.

When asked about the Indian Home Minister Amit Shah recent remarks that Azad Kashmir is part of India, the spokesperson said these are unwarranted and based on fallacy.

She said Jammu and Kashmir is an internationally recognized dispute whose final disposition is to be made by the Kashmiri people in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions. She emphasized that instead of staking claim on Azad Kashmir, it is important for India to respect the rights of the people of illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

Sherry Rehman assails PTI over cipher narrative after Donald Lu's statement

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan People's Party Senator Sherry Rehman has said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insan's (PTI) narrative about cipher has proved false after US Assistant Secretary of State Donald Lu's statement in the US Congress.

Senator Sherry in her statement issued here on Thursday said Donald Lu in the Foreign Affairs Committee of the US Congress has clearly called the cipher statement a lie.

Sherry Rehman said that now it has been formally cleared that the PTI had used US cipher's narrative falsely to protect its political objectives in the country.

The PPP senator said that PTI founder Imran Khan and his associates had already been heard planning to play politics on cipher in the audio leak some time ago. Senator Sherry Rehman added that Imran Khan's principal secretary Azam Khan has also given a detailed explanation in the cipher case hearing.

She said a diplomatic document was distorted for political and personal interests, adding that the false cipher narrative of PTI will be remembered as the worst example of putting domes-

tic and foreign interests at stake for achieving their petty political goals. US cipher issue and Donald Lu.

Lu is the diplomat whose supposed warning to former Pakistan Ambassador to the US Asad Majeed was the subject of a cipher sent by the envoy to Islamabad.

It was the same document [cipher] that the PTI founder used to allege a US conspiracy to oust his government in 2022. Imran is currently on trial for mishandling the same confidential document. Donald Lu's statement in US Congress Committee.

On Wednesday, US Assistant Secretary of State Donald Lu termed the allegations against him by former prime minister Imran Khan as a "conspiracy theory, lie and complete falsehood".

Testifying before the subcommittee of the US House Committee on Foreign Affairs, at a hearing titled "Pakistan After the Elections: Examining the Future of Democracy in Pakistan and the US-Pakistan Relationship", Lu was questioned about the allegations and his assessment of them.

In response, Lu said: "I want to be very clear on this point. These allegations — this con-

spiracy theory — is a lie. It is a complete falsehood. I have reviewed the press reporting related to this, what is called the cipher in Pakistan, the alleged leaked diplomatic cable from the embassy here.

"It is not accurate. At no point does it accuse the US government or me personally of taking steps against Imran Khan. And thirdly,

the other person in the meeting, the then-ambassador of Pakistan to the US, has testified to his own government that there was no conspiracy."

During Lu's response, he was heckled by a person attending the proceedings who called him a "liar" while chanting of "Free Imran Khan" were also heard. Lu said that the US respected Pakistan's sovereignty and the principle of the Pakistani nation choosing its own leaders through a democratic principle.

In his address to the Congress hearing, Lu reiterated the US State Department's observations regarding the general elections and elaborated on them.

Islamabad Airport outsourcing: CAA extends bid submission date

Islamabad (INP): The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) on Thursday extended the bid submission date for outsourcing of Islamabad International Airport.

As per details, the decision to extend the tender date came in the wake of a lack of interest from the bidders in the outsourcing of the Airport.

Hereby, the CAA extended the bid submission date for two months to May 15 and applications were sought from the investors who are interested in the outsourcing of the Islamabad Airport.

Earlier, the federal government issued tenders to seek applications for outsourcing Islamabad International Airport for 15 years.

According to the Civil Aviation Authority, the interested bidders were directed to submit their applications in favor of CAA a Rs5,000 fee by November 8.

Prior to this, the government decided to outsource Karachi, Lahore, and Islamabad International Airports. Sources said the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Turkey, China and Saudi Arabia are taking special interest in

outsourcing all three airports? Following the decision to outsource, the CAA unions launched a protest movement. After continued protest, Aviation Minister, Khawaja Saad called on the leaders of the unions for negotiations, but talks failed.

The CAA employees are adamant in their stance and declare that they will not allow the outsourcing of airports.

Addressing the media during the protest, a spokesperson for the CAA Union asserted that the protest movement will continue until their demands are met.



ISLAMABAD: Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong called on Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Atta Tarar.

Pakistan Day parade preparations enter final stage

ISLAMABAD (INP): Preparations for Pakistan Day celebrations reached their peak as the armed forces conducted a final rehearsal parade, drawing crowds eager to witness the grand event.

Citizens gathered at the parade ground to catch a glimpse of the full dress rehearsal, expressing their fervent patriotism as they soaked in the sights.

"The parade is being organized uniquely this year, showcasing the discipline and passion of our armed forces," remarked one spectator.

Another attendee ex-

claimed, "It was an incredibly attractive and thrilling parade, a testament to the strength of our nation."

Muhammad Kabir, Advocate Supreme Court, echoed the prevailing sentiment, observing, "The display of discipline and passion here reflects the unity of Pakistan."

Citizens, deeply moved by the event, voiced their admiration for the sacrifices made by the nation's martyrs. "We honor the brave souls of our armed forces who have shed their blood to safeguard our homeland," one citizen affirmed solemnly.

Amidst the crowd, a parent proudly proclaimed, "My daughter serves in the army, and I am prepared to sacrifice everything for the sake of our beloved country."

An impassioned plea resonated among the onlookers: "Let us nurture love for our country in our hearts, for our nation's prosperity is intertwined with our devotion."

Optimism for Pakistan's future radiated throughout the gathering, with one citizen expressing, "Pakistan's trajectory is one of progress and promise, ensuring a bright future for generations to come."



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Molsin Naqvi chairing a meeting on matters related to Federal Investigation Agency in Islamabad.

Karachi's educational institutes at the mercy of drug smugglers

KARACHI (INP): An organized network of drug supply has been revealed in educational institutions of Karachi wherein women drug dealers are also key members of the underground network.

As per investigation, drug orders are received from social media groups while drugs are delivered like pizza and burgers being delivered via delivery services.

All types of drugs were used earlier only in remote areas and slums but with time, smugglers grew their network in the educational institutions of the port city — Karachi.

As per estimates, cocaine use and ice addiction have massively increased among the students of Karachi.

How much does it cost? Cocaine — the silent killer — costs Rs15,000 to Rs17,000 per gram while ice started fetching Rs2,500 to Rs3,500 per gram. A token of Rs5,000 for hashish and Rs300 rupees for heroin is being given.

According to police, organized drug smuggling networks are run by 'Dr. Baloch' and 'Pinky group' in educational institutions of Karachi.

Dr. Baloch Group is being operational from Nushki Balochistan while Pinky Group is run by a woman called 'Anmol' aka Pinky — hailing from Rahim Yar Khan (RYK).

Those students who have completed their education at the university on condition of anonymity made surprising

reveals about the delivery of drugs in the schools.

Abdullah who works for anti-narcotics showed his concern about the rise in drug addiction among the youth.

Faisal Edhi, Head of Edhi Foundation also expressed his concern on the rise of drugs usage among youth of Karachi.

Karachi Police is aware of the trap. And claimed to arrest over 25 suppliers of drugs in educational institutions. But still, the network of the drug dealers could not be broken.

Police officers said that they alone could not stop the use of drugs in educational institutions and urged teachers and parents also to play their roles.