

Pak PM wants peaceful ties with India

AGENCIES

Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said that Pakistan desired peaceful relations with India and resolution of the Kashmir issue and urged the international community to play its role in this regard.

According to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), Sharif expressed these views during a meeting with newly appointed Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan, Neil Hawkins.

The PMO quoted the prime minister as saying: "Pakistan desires peaceful ties with India, based on the principles of equity, justice and mutual respect. In this context, a just and peaceful resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the relevant UNSC resolutions and the wishes of the Kashmiri people, was indispensable."

Meanwhile PTI yesterday reported that Sharif reiterated his view on India when a group of students from Harvard University visited the Pakistan PM on Saturday.

Pakistan wants to have "permanent peace" with India through dialogue as war is not an option for either of the countries to resolve the Kashmir issue, PTI quoted the PM as saying.

"Pakistan resolves to maintain peace in the region and that sustainable peace in the region was linked to the resolution of the Kashmir issue as per the UN resolutions," he said.

"We want permanent peace with India through dialogue as war is not an option for either of the countries," he was quoted as saying in the report.

Relations between India and Pakistan have often been strained over the Kashmir issue and cross-border terrorism emanating from Pakistan.

However, the ties between the two countries nosedived after India abrogated Article 370 of the Constitution, revoking the special status to Jammu and Kashmir and bifurcating the State into two Union Territories on August 5, 2019.

India's decision evoked strong reactions from Pakistan, which downgraded diplomatic ties and expelled the Indian envoy.



Children attend classes outdoors amidst the rubble of their destroyed school on the first day of the new academic year in Yemen's war-torn western province of Hodeida, yesterday. Since 2015, when a Saudi-led coalition intervened against the Iran-aligned Houthis, Yemen's economy and basic services have collapsed, leaving 80 percent of the population of around 30 million needing help.

PHOTO: AFP

HEAVY RAIN IN NORTHERN, EASTERN INDIA

Floods, landslides kill dozens

Rescue operations launched; thousands evacuated

REUTERS, Lucknow/Bhubaneshwar

Floods and landslides triggered by intense monsoon rains killed at least 50 people in northern and eastern India over the last three days, officials said yesterday.

The rains overwhelmed hundreds of villages, sweeping away houses and leaving residents stranded as rescue crews have been racing to evacuate survivors.

Earlier this month the federal weather office had predicted that India was likely to receive an average amount of rain in August and September, pointing to overall good crop yields in Asia's third-biggest economy that relies on farming to boost growth and generate jobs.

Farming contributes around 15 percent to India's \$2.7 trillion economy while sustaining more than half the population of 1.3 billion.

Heavy showers followed by landslides and flooding in the Himalayan state of Himachal Pradesh over the past three days killed at least 36 people, a state government official told Reuters.

In the neighbouring mountainous state of Uttarakhand, an official government release said that four were dead and 13 were missing due to continuous rainfall.

"We have deployed choppers to rescue people who are stuck in remote areas due to rain related incidents. The rescue operation is happening on full swing," said Ranjit Kumar Sinha, an official in

Uttarakhand's disaster management department.

In the eastern state of Odisha, at least six people were dead amid ongoing torrential rains, a state official said.

Floods have affected nearly 800,000 people and displaced thousands from their homes in Odisha, with rains disrupting electricity and water supply, and damaging road infrastructure.

The state has evacuated 120,000 people so far from the affected areas.

Authorities in the Ramgarh district of the eastern state of Jharkhand said five people had been swept away by the waters of the swollen Nalkari river on Saturday.

Four bodies have been recovered so far, said Madhvi Mishra, a district official in Ramgarh.

Another high US official visits Taiwan

REUTERS, Taipei

Indiana governor Eric Holcomb arrived in Taipei yesterday, becoming the latest US official to visit Taiwan and defying pressure from China for such trips not to happen. China, which claims democratically governed Taiwan as its own territory despite the Taipei government's strong objections, has been carrying out war games and drills near Taiwan since US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi made a two-day visit to Taipei earlier this month. Last week a second group of US lawmakers visited Taiwan. Taiwan's presidential office said he would meet President Tsai Ing-wen today morning.

Japan PM Covid positive

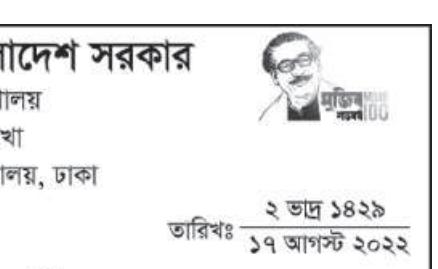
AFP, Tokyo

Japanese PM Fumio Kishida has tested positive for Covid-19, his office said yesterday, a week before the leader was expected to attend an African development conference in Tunisia. Kishida took a PCR test "after experiencing a mild temperature and a cough" from Saturday evening, an official from the Prime Minister's Office of Japan told AFP. Reports said he may now attend the August 27-28 Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) remotely.

Pak media watchdog bans live telecast of ex-PM's speeches

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan's media watchdog has banned television channels from broadcasting live addresses by former prime minister Imran Khan, ahead of his rally. The ban, effective immediately, was issued late Saturday night – the same day Khan held a rally in the capital Islamabad in which he criticised police officials and the judiciary over the arrest of one of his party's leaders. In a notice to television channels seen by AFP, the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) said Khan was levelling "baseless allegations and spreading hate speech". "His provocative statements against state institutions and officers... is likely to disturb public peace and tranquility," it added.



Does a PM have a right to party?

AL JAZEERA ONLINE

In a leaked video, Finland's Prime Minister Sanna Marin is seen dancing and singing with friends at a private party. The 36 year-old leader poses for the camera. She sits on her knees, hands behind her head. She is entangled in a group hug. She is having a good time.

Countless similar videos are shared daily on social media by young and not-so-young people partying in Finland and all over the world. But the leak has triggered a debate among Finns about what level of revelling is inappropriate for a prime minister, especially considering neighbouring Russia's attack on Ukraine, which prompted long-neutral Finland and Sweden to apply for Nato membership.

Marin, who leads the centre-left Social Democratic Party, has faced a barrage of questions about the party: Were there drugs? Alcohol? Was she working or on summer vacation? Was the prime minister sober enough to handle an emergency had one arisen?

The video, clearly shot by someone at the party, was leaked on social media and caught the attention of Finnish media this week. Marin said she attended the party in recent weeks, but refused to say exactly where and when.

She also acknowledged that she and her friends celebrated in a "boisterous way" and that alcohol – but, to her knowledge, no drugs – was involved. She said on Friday she took a drug test to put an end to speculation about illegal substances.

"I hope that, in the year 2022, it's accepted that even decision makers dance, sing and go to parties," Marin told reporters. "I didn't wish for any images to be spread, but it's up to the voters to decide what they think about it."

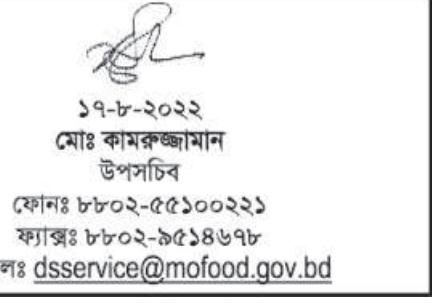
In Helsinki on Friday afternoon, opinions were split. Josua Fagerholm, who works in marketing, said the episode was potentially damaging to Finland's reputation and to the public's confidence in Finnish politicians. Minttu Kylliainen, a student in Helsinki, disagreed. She said everyone was entitled to their opinion, but she felt the leaked video was getting too much attention.

Some supporters have said the criticism against the prime minister smacks of sexism.

Anu Koivonen, a professor of gender studies at Finland's University of Turku, said she did not think gender was a decisive factor in the uproar over the leaked video. She said the partying itself was not a big issue, but the fact the video leaked could be viewed as a judgement lapse by the prime minister in terms of the people she surrounded herself with.

"That she didn't restrain herself in a company where she cannot trust everyone in the room," Koivonen said. "I think that's the main issue at the moment."

REUTERS, Helsinki



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