

Ties with India, Pakistan stand on their own

Says US after F-16 row

AGENCIES

India and Pakistan are both partners of the US with different points of emphasis, the Biden administration said Monday, a day after visiting External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar questioned the rationale behind the latest American F-16 security assistance to Islamabad.

Referring to the argument made by the US that F-16 sustenance package is to fight terrorism,

on Sunday, Jaishankar said everybody knows where and against whom F-16 fighter jets are used. "You're not fooling anybody by saying these things," he said in response to a question during an interaction with Indian-Americans.

Asked about the F-16 deal, US State Department spokesperson Ned Price said that the US had independent relations with India and Pakistan.

"The relationship we have with India stands on its own; the relationship we have with Pakistan stands on its own," Price told a news conference. "We also want to do everything we can to see to it that these neighbours have relations with one another that are as constructive as can be possible."

Early this month, the Biden administration approved a USD 450 million F-16 fighter jet fleet sustainment programme to Pakistan, reversing the decision of the previous Trump administration to suspend military aid to Islamabad for providing safe havens for the Afghan Taliban and the Haqqani network.



Guests stand at the start of the state funeral of former Japanese prime minister Shinzo Abe at the Nippon Budokan in Tokyo, Japan, yesterday. Japanese and foreign dignitaries paid tribute to Abe at the funeral that drew both mourners and protesters to central Tokyo. Abe was Japan's longest-serving prime minister and one of the country's most recognisable political figures. He was killed by a lone gunman on July 8 while campaigning for his ruling party.

PHOTO: AFP

Japan bids farewell to Abe

REUTERS, Tokyo

With flowers, prayers and a 19-gun salute, Japan honoured slain former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe yesterday at the first state funeral for a former premier in 55 years - a ceremony that has become as controversial as he was in life.

The ceremony started at 2:00 pm (0500 GMT), with Abe's ashes carried into the Nippon Budokan Hall in central Tokyo by his widow, Akie, to music from a military band and the booms of the honour guard salute, which echoed inside the hall.

Thousands of mourners flooded to designated spots near the venue from early

morning to pay their last respects.

About 4,300 people attended the funeral ceremony itself, along with at least 48 current or former government figures, including US Vice President Kamala Harris and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Abe's killing at a July 8 campaign rally set off a flood of revelations about ties between lawmakers in the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) he once ran and the Unification Church, which critics call a cult, sparking a backlash against current premier Fumio Kishida.

With his support ratings dragged to their lowest ever by

the controversy, Kishida has apologised and vowed to cut party ties to the church.

But opposition to honouring Abe with a state funeral, the first such event since 1967, has persisted, fed by an \$11.5-million price tag to be borne by the state at a time of economic pain for ordinary citizens.

Japan's longest-serving prime minister was a divisive figure who was dogged by scandals.

An unapologetic nationalist, Abe pushed the country toward a muscular defence posture that many now see as prescient amid growing concern about China, but others criticised as too hawkish.



Let me be clear -- the era of nuclear blackmail must end. The idea that any country could fight and win a nuclear war is deranged.... Without eliminating nuclear weapons, there can be no peace.

UN chief **Antonio Guterres** at UN General assembly

Defence manufacturer Saab to set up new facility in India

REUTERS

Swedish defence products company Saab SAABb.ST will set up a facility to manufacture its Carl-Gustaf M4 weapons system in India, a top executive said yesterday, as the company looks to ramp up production. The facility will begin production in 2024, Senior Vice President Gorgen Johansson told reporters at a news conference. Johansson declined to provide detail on the investment that the company is likely to make in the facility. The Carl-Gustaf M4 is a recoilless rifle which has been ordered by the Indian armed forces. The new facility will support its production as well as components for users of the system around the world, the company said in a statement. India - the world's largest buyer of Russian arms - has been pushing to expand its defence manufacturing capacity in recent years and grow its military exports.

Boost action or we'll see you in court

Climate activists tell govts

AFP, Paris

Governments around the world must scale up climate action "or face further legal action", an open letter from 20 organisations around the world warned yesterday, as battles over policies to cut emissions and protect the environment are increasingly fought in the courts. Research from the Grantham Research Institute at the London School of Economics this year has found that of the 2,000 or so climate legal cases filed since 1986, almost a quarter were started since the beginning of 2020. Some 80 of these cases have been filed against national or subnational governments since 2005, the research found, with a record number of 30 new cases submitted in 2021.



\$2b budget support from ADB this fiscal

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Asia and the Pacific and improve long term food security in the region.

Climate change and the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which disrupted supplies of food staples and fertiliser, are threatening food security in Asia and the Pacific.

Disbursements from the package will begin this year and run until 2025, the lender said in a press release.

The amount that Bangladesh will get from the package would be finalised through discussions later on, said an ADB official preferring not to be named.

On the sideline of the annual event, Kamal had a meeting with ADB President Masatsugu Asakawa, where he sought budget support and policy-based lending to ensure social and economic resilience.

Budget support is being sought as the government wants to ramp up its cash assistance to the poor to mitigate the effects of inflation brought on by the pandemic and the current geopolitical crisis that has left food, energy and fertiliser prices soaring, said a finance ministry official on the condition of anonymity.

Policy-based lending is being

sought as project loans sometimes get delayed and the funds go back. If policy-based lending is in place, then assistance can be provided to the poor and the vulnerable for economic shocks, the official added.

"We strongly hope that ADB can play a dynamic role in helping vulnerable people in Asia and the Pacific region, especially Bangladesh in climate adaptation, mitigation and disaster risk reduction. I believe that flexible credit support rather than blended finance would be a realistic approach to addressing climate change vulnerability," Kamal told Asakawa at the meeting.

ADB can also extend its generous support to ICT-based entrepreneurship development, agricultural diversification, sustainable health and education with a special focus on the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

"It is of utmost importance that the Bangladesh-ADB Country Partnership Strategy (2021-2025) is aligned with Bangladesh's national development and goals," Kamal told the ADB president.

The Manila-based lender is expected to provide Bangladesh with

\$12-15 billion over the next five years.

"ADB's continued support is crucial for Bangladesh in achieving our development milestones."

So far, ADB has provided Bangladesh with \$27.6 billion, of which \$11.69 billion remains outstanding, the press release said.

"Bangladesh continues to service its debt regularly with great capacity. In its 51-year journey, Bangladesh has never failed to repay domestic and foreign debts," Kamal said, adding that the country has one of the lowest debt-to-GDP ratios in the world at just 34 percent.

At the meeting, Kamal went on to request for appointment of senior officials, especially of vice-president-level, at the ADB's office in Dhaka in light of the expanding portfolio.

Bangladesh is ADB's third-biggest portfolio.

Also at the meeting, Kamal thanked ADB for its swift and decisive response to the pandemic, which helped countries across Asia and the Pacific procure vaccines quickly.

ADB provided Bangladesh with \$2.53 billion during the pandemic, with \$940 million going towards vaccine purchases.

Death toll tops 75

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protesting to the sound of tear gas canisters being fired by security forces.

IHR said at least 76 people have been killed in the crackdown that has seen sweeping restrictions imposed on the internet, including blocks on Instagram and WhatsApp.

Officials said Monday they had made more than 1,200 arrests. Those taken into custody have included activists, lawyers and journalists as well as protesters.

At least 20 journalists have been arrested, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists.

In Semnan province, east of Tehran, 26 women were among 155 people arrested, Iran's Fars news agency reported.

In Gilan province, a hotspot of the recent protests on the Caspian Sea coast, the intelligence arm of the Revolutionary Guards detained 12 people, the Tasnim news agency said yesterday.

PBI chief sues

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Station under the Digital Security Act and the Special Powers Act.

The PBI recently pressed charges against Babul and six others in the Mitu murder case.

Banaj Kumar alleged, "False and baseless information was disseminated through a documentary video made by journalist Elias Hossain, which was uploaded on Elias' Facebook and YouTube accounts on September 3."

The two other accused in the case are Babul's father Abdul Wadud Mia and brother Habibur Rahman Labu.

The PBI chief, also an additional inspector general of police, said the documentary video contains statements made with an intention to tarnish the country's image and friendly relations between India and Bangladesh.

Attempts have been made to create enmity, hatred, damage communal harmony and create unrest and disorder among the Hindu-Muslim

communities, the complainant said.

"Reviewing the 42.21 minutes video, it can be said that the speeches were intended to defame the Bangladesh Police and the specialised investigation unit of PBI and especially me," reads the case statement.

Earlier, Babul filed a case against six police officials, including Banaj Kumar, accusing them of torturing him in PBI custody. A Chattogram court dismissed case on September 25.

Babul is now behind bars.

Nasa spacecraft

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camera as the cube-shaped "impactor" vehicle, no bigger than a vending machine with two rectangular solar arrays, streaked into the asteroid Dimorphos, about the size of a football stadium, at 7:14 pm EDT (2314 GMT) some 6.8 million miles (11 million km) from Earth.

Man dies in police custody

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After interrogation, the arrestees were kept in two separate cells at the police outpost, he added.

He claimed that Lebu committed suicide by hanging himself from the ventilator of the cell.

The body was brought down in the morning in presence of Aminul Islam Bulbul, assistant commissioner (land) in Mirzapur.

Aminul said there was no injury mark on the body, but there was a black mark around his throat.

Contacted, Tangail Additional Superintendent of Police (crime) Shariful Islam said an inquiry committee would be formed to investigate whether there was any negligence on the part of the police in the death of Lebu.

Police handed over the body to the family members around 5:30pm yesterday after an autopsy at the Tangail General Hospital morgue.

On September 14, 22-year-old Rajesh Roy allegedly died by suicide in police custody in Jhalakathi. Police claimed that he hanged himself from

the ceiling fan.

In mid-August, another such incident happened in the capital's Hatirjheel Police Station where Sumon Sheikh, a 25-year-old deliveryman, allegedly took his life. His family had alleged that he was tortured to death.

In January, Himangshu Roy, 36, allegedly hung himself from the window grilles of a cell at a police station in Hatibandha, Lalmonirhat.

Hatibandha police had claimed that the CCTV cameras installed at the cell were not working during the incident.

Investors worry about instability

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destination for Bangladesh, with the annual export being \$11.41 billion. The foreign direct investment (FDI) is also the biggest, about \$6 billion.

In recent months, Haas repeatedly spoke about participatory and fair elections in Bangladesh.

The US is focused on several key objectives that includes a peaceful and stable Bangladesh which is committed to democracy, transparency, pluralism, tolerance, good governance, and respect for human rights.

It also wants a socially and environmentally resilient Bangladesh.

Many things attract foreign investors. Bangladesh has been among the fastest growing economies in the world over the past decade and has great macroeconomic stability even in challenging times, he said.

So far, the macroeconomic situation seems manageable; the country has a huge and increasingly middle-class population, and above

all, it is a huge market with its 165 million people, including a willing workforce, he added.

He said it is pleasing that Bangladesh has committed to telling its stories to international investors and continues to improve its physical, legal, and financial structures to improve the investment climate here.

However, at the same time, Haas said, a company wants a policy framework that is understood, and laws that are consistently enforced. It wants to know that if a dispute arises it has access to courts that can quickly and fairly settle it.

"A company does not want to be taxed more rigorously or investigated more thoroughly than its local competitors. And a company wants to know it can repatriate its profits easily and without delay."

Peter Haas has asked if Bangladesh can assure investors that the cancerous effects of corruption are less prevalent here than in other markets and if it can

say it fully understands the impacts of proposed regulations on business and that it actively seeks stakeholder input before putting them in place.

"For example, does the Bangladesh Telecommunications Regulatory Commission understand how its proposed rules governing data privacy and online content will force digital businesses to reconsider investing in Bangladesh?"

He also asked if Bangladesh can say it has an adequate legal framework within which businesses can operate when it takes years to schedule a hearing.

These are the questions that American and international companies will ask themselves before deciding to do business in Bangladesh, he said.

"Luckily, Bangladesh has committed to addressing these issues."

He said the US stands ready to assist Bangladesh in creating a business climate that is as welcoming as possible to foreign investments.

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