

Russia and China alert to Western ‘games’

Says Lavrov

REUTERS, Moscow

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said yesterday that the United States was attempting to “contain” both Russia and China with the help of other countries, but they were alert to its “games”.

Lavrov told a news conference that the West saw both countries as a threat - Russia right now, and China in the longer term as a systemic rival.

He said Washington was not powerful enough to keep in check both countries at once, so was mobilising Europe, Japan and others to join it.



At the same time, he said, the West was trying to drive a wedge between Russia and China. “The West is trying to sow discord in our relations...We and China see all these games,” he said.

His comments underlined the strategic importance to Moscow of its relationship with China at a time when its army is struggling in Ukraine and its economic links with the West have been wrecked by successive waves of sanctions.

Ties with Beijing had never been stronger, Lavrov said, and the two countries were shifting an increasing amount of their trade into their national currencies to reduce dependence on the West and exposure to sanctions.



People take part in a protest march organised by Doctors Association UK, NHS Workers Say No! and NHS Staff Voices, from University College London (UCL) hospital to Downing Street, in London yesterday, in support of the ongoing pay disputes. Nurses across England began two days of strikes over pay yesterday, threatening fresh disruption for patients in the state-run health service, as new figures showed inflation still surging.

PHOTO: AFP

PUSH FOR EARLY ELECTIONS

Imran dissolves 2nd Pak provincial govt

REUTERS, Peshawar

Seeking to force Pakistan to hold an early national election, the opposition party led by former prime minister Imran Khan dissolved its provincial government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa yesterday, three days after doing the same in Punjab province.

Under the rules, fresh polls for the two provincial assemblies should be held within 90 days, and Khan's Pakistan's Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) is gambling on the national government being unable to afford to hold the provincial elections separately from a national election, which is otherwise due by October.

Pakistan has four provinces, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the northwest and Punjab in the east account for more than half of the country's 220 million population.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's governor Ghulam Ali said he had accepted the resignation tendered by the PTI government a day earlier, telling reporters that he had “no other option”.

The 70-year-old Khan has been demanding snap polls since his ouster in a confidence vote in parliament in April.

He has also led a nationwide protest campaign against his successor Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, and was shot and wounded at a rally in October.

AFGHANISTAN COLD SNAP

70 people killed

AFP, Kabul

At least 70 people have died in a wave of freezing temperatures sweeping Afghanistan, officials said yesterday, as extreme weather compounds a humanitarian crisis in the poverty-stricken nation.

Since January 10, the mercury has plunged in Kabul and several other provinces, with the central region of Ghor recording the lowest reading of -33C (-27F) over the weekend.

“This winter is by far the coldest in recent years,” Mohammad Nasim Muradi, the head of Afghanistan's meteorology office, told AFP.

In the countryside, homeless families were seen warding off the cold by huddling around campfires, whilst in the snowy capital domestic coal heaters were fired up by the more fortunate. “We expect the cold wave to continue for another week or more,” said Muradi. The ministry of disaster management said 70 people and 70,000 cattle died over the past eight days.

Make it easier to raise children

Say many Chinese people after population falls

REUTERS, Hong Kong

If China wants to reverse a decline in population, more should be done to help families raise their children, according to Wei Chao, a 31-year-old mother of twin girls living in Shanghai, and many more parents interviewed by Reuters held the same view. “Nowadays many people do not want to have children if they can't provide a good education for them,” Wei told Reuters yesterday as she sat in a park with her husband and daughters. “When we have good income, of course we would be able to invest more in our children.” The government has already rolled out measures to encourage people to have more babies, including through tax deductions, longer maternity leave and housing subsidies, but so far they have done little to reverse the long-term trend. China's statistics bureau released a report a day earlier that showed the population fell for the first time since 1961, the last year of China's Great Famine. With more than 1.41 billion people, China still has the world's largest population. “People born in the 1980s or 1990s are not as keen to have children as our parents' generation,” said Ding Ding, the 37-year-old father of a girl. China's zero Covid policies that were in place for 3 years have caused further damage to the country's demographic outlook, experts said.

Erdogan sets stage for May 14 election

AFP, Ankara

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan yesterday signalled that he intended to bring the date of Turkey's most consequential general election in generations forward by one month to May 14. The announcement sets the stage for a vote that could either extend Erdogan's Islamic style of rule into a third decade or turn the country on a sharply more secular -- and potentially predictable -- course. The 68-year-old leader stamped his mark on Turkey by rolling back a fiercely secular tradition established in the mostly Muslim nation by its founder Mustafa Kemal Atatürk one century ago.



বিশ্বসেরা
জিপিএইচ
কোয়ান্টাম স্টিল

রডের ব্যবহার সর্বোচ্চ ৩০% কমায়
ব্যবহার্য ফ্লোর স্পেস বাড়ায়

GPH QUANTUM B600C-R

বিশ্বসেরা কোয়ান্টাম প্রযুক্তির উচ্চ শক্তিতে স্মার্ট বাংলাদেশ গড়তে বাংলাদেশে একমাত্র জিপিএইচ ইস্পাতেই তৈরি হচ্ছে HIGH STRENGTH ও HIGH PERFORMING STEEL রি-বার GPH QUANTUM B600C-R

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