

Full UN membership won't help Palestinians with statehood Says US envoy

REUTERS, Seoul

US Ambassador to the United Nations Linda Thomas-Greenfield said yesterday she did not see a UN resolution recommending the Palestinian Authority become a full UN member helping lead to a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Thomas-Greenfield made the comments at a news conference in Seoul, after being asked whether the United States was open to recognise the request by the Palestinian Authority to have full UN membership.

The Palestinian Authority is expected to push the 15-member Security Council to vote, as early as today, on a draft resolution recommending it become a full member of the world body, diplomats said.



Palestinian children check a building destroyed by Israeli bombardment in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday. Israeli media have quoted security sources as saying the long-feared Rafah offensive was due to start this week but the plans have been upended by the Iranian attack.

PHOTO: AFP

X blocked in Pakistan over nat'l security

REUTERS, Islamabad

Pakistan's interior ministry said yesterday it blocked access to social media platform X in February on national security concerns, confirming a long-suspected shutdown.

Users have reported problems using X, formerly known as Twitter, in Pakistan since mid-February, but the government has made no official announcements. The interior ministry mentioned the shutdown in a written court submission yesterday.

"It is very pertinent to mention here that the failure of Twitter/X to adhere to the lawful directives of the government of Pakistan and address concerns regarding the misuse of its platform necessitated the imposition of a ban," said the report, seen by Reuters.

It said Islamabad took up the issues with X, which demonstrated a reluctance to resolve them. "The decision to impose a ban on Twitter/X in Pakistan was made in the interest of upholding national security, maintaining public order, and preserving the integrity of our nation", the report said.

ISRAEL'S OFFENSIVE IN GAZA STRIP

UN still faces obstacles in bid to fend off famine

REUTERS, United Nations

The United Nations is still struggling to prevent famine in the Gaza Strip and while there had been some improvement in coordination with Israel, aid deliveries in the enclave still faced difficulties, a senior UN aid official said.

Andrea De Domenico, head of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, said on Tuesday aid deliveries within Gaza were facing significant checkpoint delays and that last week 41 percent of UN requests to deliver aid to northern Gaza were denied.



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"We're dealing with this dance where we do one step forward, two steps backward, or two steps forward, one step backward, which leaves us basically always at the same point," De Domenico told reporters.

"For every new opportunity that we've been given, we will find yet another challenge to deal with," he said. "So it's really, really difficult

for us to scale up to where we would like to be."

The UN has long complained of obstacles to getting aid in and distributing it throughout Gaza. But global outrage at the humanitarian crisis in the enclave of 2.3 million people escalated after Israeli airstrikes on April 1 killed World Central Kitchen aid workers.

Israel has since approved reopening the Erez crossing into northern Gaza and temporary use of Ashdod port in southern Israel after US President Joe Biden demanded steps to alleviate the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, saying conditions could be placed on US support for Israel if it did not act.

"There has been a steady increase of the number of trucks that have entered," said De Domenico, adding that the UN did not know how many private aid deliveries Israel had allowed into northern Gaza. But he said the focus also needed to be on improving aid access within Gaza. "The problem is it's not just about food. The problem is that famine is much more complex ... it's much bigger than simply bringing in flour," he said. "Water, sanitation and health are fundamental to curb famine."

US officials have noted steady progress in the amount of aid that goes into Gaza, the US State Department said on Tuesday, but it was still not at the desired level.

TAIWAN STRAIT

China sends fighter jets to shadow US Navy plane

REUTERS, Beijing

China's military said yesterday it sent fighter jets to monitor and warn a US Navy patrol aircraft that flew over the sensitive Taiwan Strait, a mission that took place just hours after a call between the Chinese and US defence chiefs.

China claims sovereignty over democratically governed Taiwan, and says it has jurisdiction over the strait. Taiwan and the United States dispute that, saying the Taiwan Strait is an international waterway.

The US Navy's 7th Fleet said the P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol and reconnaissance plane, which is also used for anti-submarine missions, flew over the strait in international airspace.

"By operating within the Taiwan Strait in accordance with international law, the United States upholds the navigational rights and freedoms of all nations," it said in a statement. "The aircraft's transit of the Taiwan Strait demonstrates the United States' commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific."

INDIA LOK SABHA POLLS

BJP expected to win a third consecutive term

But may fall well short of its 400 target seats, says poll

NDTV ONLINE

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is expected to win a third consecutive term - but fall well short of its "abki baar, 400 paar" target - in the 2024 Lok Sabha election, according to NDTV's poll of opinion polls. The BJP-led National Democratic Alliance is expected to win 365 of the 543 contested seats, and the Congress-led INDIA could get 122, with the remaining 56 going to parties not allied with either side. The predicted final result may not be a surprise, given the NDA - its charge led by Modi for a third consecutive time - is already seen by many as the clear winner, but the numbers suggest a narrowing of the gap between the ruling party and the opposition since 2019. The 365 seats the NDA is expected to win this year represents a 3.4 percent increase over its 2019 result; it won 353 seats (the BJP got 303) and the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance got 90. The NDA's 2019 score was five percent up from the 336 it won in the 2014 election. The BJP's primary rival - the UPA in 2014 and 2019 and INDIA in 2024 - went from 60 in 2014 to 90 in 2019, an increase of 50 percent. In this election INDIA's expected return of 122 is a 35 percent jump.

Russian attack kills 16 residents in Ukrainian city 60 injured; civilian infrastructure, hospital damaged

REUTERS, Kyiv

A Russian missile attack killed at least 16 residents and damaged hospital and municipal infrastructure in the northern Ukrainian city of Chernihiv yesterday, local officials said. As Russia continues to pound Ukrainian cities starved for air defence, the country's top officials intensified pleas for international support, saying the devastation could have been avoided. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky called for determination and support from allies hours after the attack.

"This would not have happened if Ukraine had received sufficient air defence equipment and if the world's determination to counter Russian terror had been sufficient," Zelensky said. Ukraine is facing a shortage of ammunition, with vital funding from the US blocked by Republicans in Congress for months and the EU failing to deliver munitions on time. Chernihiv's mayor, Oleksandr Lomako, said explosions ripped through a busy part of the city just after 9:00 am, destroying civilian infrastructure. "Unfortunately, Russia continues to engage in terrorist activity against civilians and civilian infrastructure as confirmed by this strike on Chernihiv once again," Lomako told Ukrainian TV.



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TENDER FOR SELECTION OF CATERER FOR IUB MAIN CAFETERIA

Sealed bids are invited from the prospective caterers to deliver food items at the **Student Cafeteria having kitchen & store (3800 sqft.)** of Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB).

The details of the service and other terms & conditions are mentioned in the tender schedule. Interested bidders are requested to collect tender schedule from the Purchase & Procurement Department on payment of Tk.1,000/- (non-refundable) in the form of cash to the Finance & Accounts Department of Independent University, Bangladesh between the office hrs. from 9.30 am to 4.00 pm (Sunday through Thursday) till **April 25, 2024**.

Interested bidders are requested to submit the bids to the Purchase & Procurement Department on **30 April 2024, before 2.00 pm following a pre-bid meeting to be held on 28 April 2024 at 2.00 pm.**

The University authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all of the tenders without assigning any reasons whatsoever.

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The world is as dangerous as it has been for generations and Europe is in the middle of it. This is why it is time for the European awakening on defence and security.

The European Commission President
Ursula von der Leyen

United Nations Development Programme
জাতিসংঘ উন্নয়ন কর্মসূচী

Procurement Notice: Request for Information (RFI)
Quantum negotiation Reference number: UNDP-BGD-00475

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Bangladesh is seeking information and interest from interested companies for the following requirement: **Prequalification Form for submitting Request for Information under different categories of Goods/Equipment/Services**

Deadline for submission of application is at 4:30 p.m. (Bangladesh Local Time), 09 May 2024.

Proposals may be submitted on or before the deadline indicated by UNDP in the procurement notice. For learning more against RFI & submission documents through quantum platform, please visit the below link: https://procurement-notice.undp.org/view_negotiation.cfm?nego_id=18564

For any technical query, please write to us through bd_procurement@undp.org mentioning the reference no: UNDP-BGD-00475 in subject line within **30th April 2024**.

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