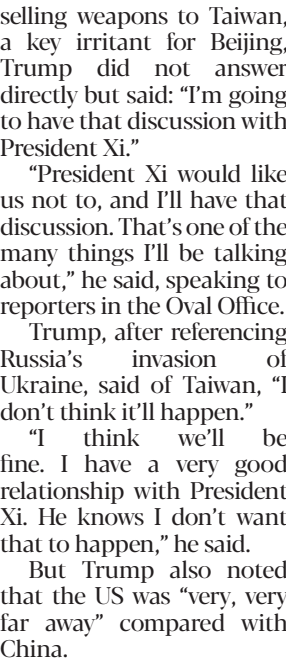


AFP, Washington

China said it hoped to achieve greater stability between the world's two largest economies during the visit lasting today through Friday, the first by a US president since Trump went in 2017.

Asked if US should keep

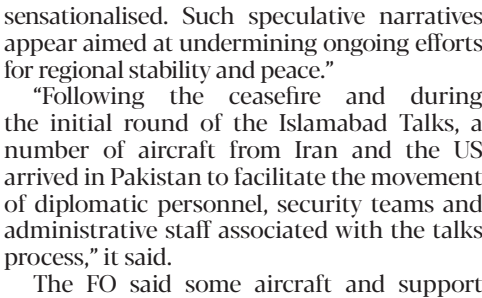


DAWN ONLINE

Pakistan's Foreign Office (FO) yesterday termed a report by an American media outlet claiming that Islamabad "quietly allowed" Iranian military aircraft to park on its airfields while playing the role of a mediator in the Middle East conflict as "misleading and sensationalised".

Citing US officials, CBS News had alleged that days after US President Trump announced the ceasefire with Iran in early April, Tehran sent multiple aircraft to the Nur Khan Air Base. "Among the military hardware was an Iranian Air Force RC-130, a reconnaissance and intelligence-gathering variant of the Lockheed C-130 Hercules tactical transport aircraft," the report claimed.

In a response issued yesterday, the FO said, "Pakistan categorically rejects the CBS News report regarding the presence of Iranian aircraft at Nur Khan Airbase as misleading and



personnel remained temporarily in Pakistan in "anticipation of subsequent rounds of engagement."

"Although formal negotiations have not yet resumed, senior-level diplomatic exchanges have continued. In this context, visits by the Iranian foreign minister to Islamabad were facilitated through the existing logistical and administrative arrangements," it said.

"The Iranian aircraft currently parked in Pakistan arrived during the ceasefire period and bear no linkage whatsoever to any military contingency... Assertions suggesting otherwise are speculative, misleading, and entirely detached from the factual context," the FO said.

The CBS report comes after its new boss, Bari Weiss, ousted a veteran bureau chief following tensions over coverage of the Middle East, bringing in a new foreign editor who, according to sources, "is more aligned with Weiss's pro-Israel agenda", The Guardian reported last month.

AGENCIES

Days after conceding a major defeat in West Bengal, the Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress has launched a sharp attack on the newly formed BJP government in the state over the appointment of former chief electoral officer Manoj Agarwal as chief secretary.

The opposition party termed the move “shameless” and questioned the neutrality of the election process.

The TMC highlighted that Agarwal, who oversaw the recently concluded assembly elections in West Bengal as the Election Commission’s top state official, has now been appointed to the highest bureaucratic post in the BJP-led state government.

Trinamool Congress leader Saket Gokhale wrote on X: “Chief Electoral Officer Manoj Agarwal, who conducted the West Bengal election for the EC, has been appointed chief secretary of Bengal by the new BJP Govt.

“BJP & ECI are now being open about stealing the election. “Are the courts BLIND or COMPLICIT? This is beyond shameless.”

The announcement was made after the first cabinet meeting of the Suvedu Adhikari-led government in West Bengal.

AFP, Madrid

World Health Organization chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said yesterday "our work is not over" to contain hantavirus after evacuations from a cruise ship hit by a deadly outbreak of the illness.

The fate of the MV Hondius has sparked international alarm after three passengers died in an outbreak of the rare virus, for which no vaccines or specific treatments exist.

Yet health officials have stressed that the global public health risk is low and rejected comparisons to the start of the Covid-19 pandemic.

"There is no sign that we are seeing the start of a larger outbreak," Tedros told a joint news conference with Spanish Prime Minister Pedro.



AGENCIES

A massive blast at a crowded market in northwestern Pakistan killed 10 people and wounded dozens more yesterday, the emergency services agency said, as the latest attack in the region threatens to reignite fighting with neighbouring Afghanistan.

The bomb blast at the crowded Naurang Bazar in Lakki Marwat caused panic on the streets, as people rushed to help the wounded and emergency vehicles raced to the site. Visuals from the scene showed damaged shopfronts and a mangled vehicle.

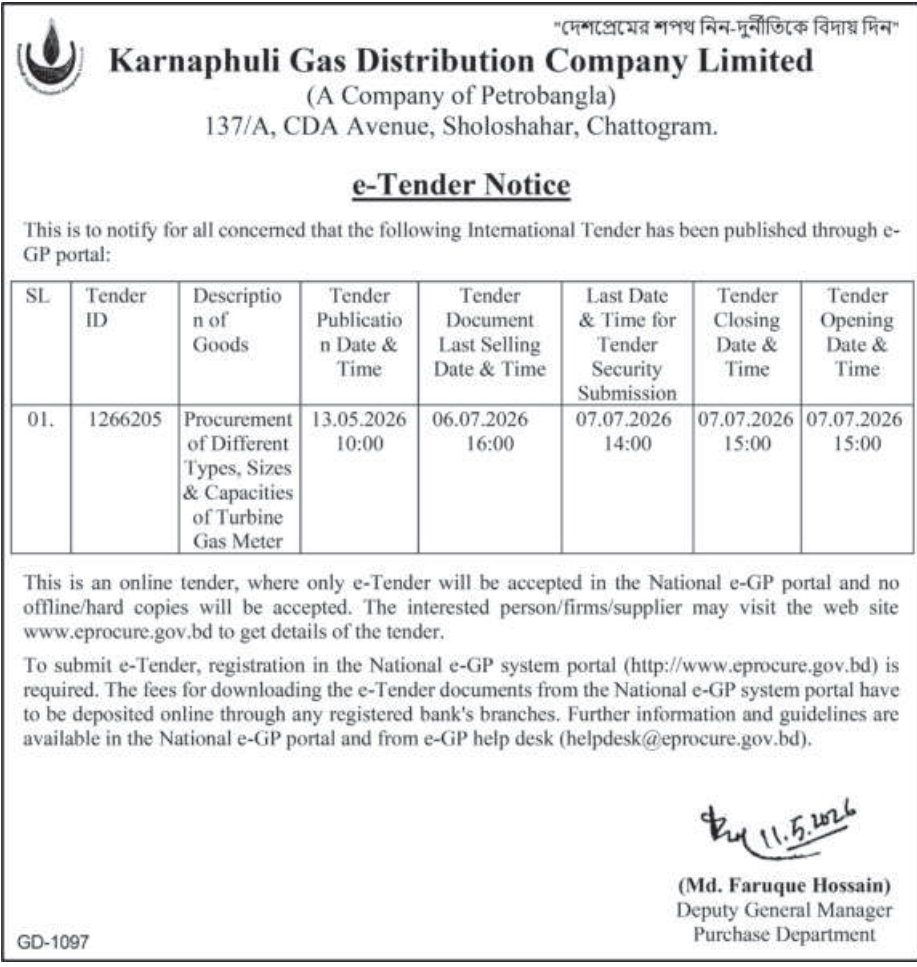
Lakki Marwat Deputy Commissioner Hameedullah Khan issued a statement saying that at least 10 people were martyred. He said that, as per initial reports, terrorists had planted explosives in a rickshaw, reports Dawn online.

The attack follows a car bombing followed by an ambush at a police post in the nearby Bannu district on Saturday that killed 15 police officers.

Pakistan blamed Afghanistan-based militants for the weekend attack and delivered a strong protest to Kabul. The Afghan Taliban administration yesterday rejected allegations that militants based on Afghan soil were behind the weekend attack in Bannu.

The United Nations reported yesterday that at least 372 Afghan civilians were killed in conflict between government forces and Pakistan in the first three months of the year, with more than half the deaths attributed to airstrikes on a drug rehab facility in Kabul.

The two countries engaged in their worst fighting in years in February after Islamabad launched airstrikes on Kabul, saying it was targeting militant strongholds used to orchestrate attacks on Pakistan. The Taliban has denied harbouring militants and said militancy in Pakistan is an internal problem, reports Reuters.

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