

'Encourage India, Pak to avoid escalation, resolve issues through dialogue'

WASHINGTON DC, Apr 9 (ANI)

THE United States has said that it "will not get into the middle of the situation" following allegations by Pakistan on India and has urged both countries to avoid escalation of tensions and resolve differences via dialogue.

The response by US Department of State spokesperson Matthew Miller came after he was asked about Washington's stance on a recent UK media report citing Pakistani officials alleging that India carried killings of individuals associated with terrorism and extremism on

Pakistani soil. Indian officials have termed the allegations as "false and malicious anti-India propaganda."

"We have been following the media reports about this issue. We don't have any comment on the underlying allegations, but of course, while we're not going to get in the middle of this situation, we encourage both sides to avoid escalation and find a resolution through dialogue," Matthew Miller said during a press briefing.

Miller said this when he was asked about the US response to the recent report in 'The Guardian' newspaper.

India's 1st vertical lift bridge over sea in Rameswaram faces 'CURVE' TEST



Pamban bridge near Rameswaram. (PTI)

■ By Jeevan Prakash
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NEW DELHI, Apr 9 (PTI)

A SHARP curve in the upcoming Pamban railway bridge, India's first vertical-lift bridge connecting the country's mainland with Rameswaram island, has become an additional challenge for the Railways besides its mechanical peculiarity and a rough sea.

The Rail Vikas Nigam Limited (RVNL), which is constructing this 2.08-km-long bridge, is facing a huge challenge in moving a lift span, which is 72.5-m-long, 16-m-wide and weighs 550 tonne, from the Rameswaram end to 450 m in the sea to fix it to the bridge.

"We started moving this lift span on March 10 and till date, we have moved the 550 ton lift span 80 m towards the centre of the bridge. The biggest challenge is the 2.65 degree of curved alignment of the bridge. Had it been straight, we would have moved it faster," a senior official of RVNL said, adding the curved shape was essential due to various alignment changes.

The movement of lift span to its final fixing point shall be completed by the end of May, as it still has to be carried 370 m more.

"Once we cross the curved portion, we can expedite its movement. We have taken a huge precaution while moving it in the sea as its size and weight requires great precision at each

step," the official said.

The RVNL has set a deadline of June 30 to make the bridge operational and its officials say that they are trying their level best to meet it.

"Once the lift span is fixed, the remaining work is no big deal," an RVNL official said.

He added, "This lift span can be lifted up automatically up to 17 m for ships to pass. It will take 5 minutes to go up and the same time to come down and will be scheduled in such a way so that train services shouldn't be disrupted."

The RVNL got this lift span designed from Spanish firm TYPASA and it was manufactured at Sattirakkudi Railway Station, which is 20 km away from the sea coast.

Chandrayaan-3 team receives 2024 John L. 'Jack' Swigert Jr. Award

WASHINGTON, Apr 9 (PTI)

INDIA'S Chandrayaan-3 mission team has been presented with the prestigious 2024 John L. 'Jack' Swigert Jr. Award for Space Exploration in recognition of it raising the bar for space exploration.

The award was received by India's Consul General in Houston D C Manjunath on behalf of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) during the opening ceremony of the annual Space Symposium in Colorado on Monday.

As the first nation to land on the Moon's South Pole, Chandrayaan-3, a mission developed by the ISRO, extends humanity's space exploration aspirations to new and fertile areas for understanding and

cooperation, the Space Foundation said in a press release.

"India's leadership in space is an inspiration to the world," Space Foundation CEO Heather Pringle said in a statement in January when the award was announced.

"The pioneering work of the entire Chandrayaan-3 team has again raised the bar for space exploration, and their remarkable lunar landing is a model to us all. Congratulations and we can't wait to see what you do next!" he said.

The John L. "Jack" Swigert Jr. Award for Space Exploration recognises extraordinary accomplishments by a company, space agency, or consortium of organisations in the realm of space exploration and discovery.

Normal monsoon this year: Skymet

NEW DELHI, Apr 9 (PTI)

INDIA is likely to experience a normal monsoon this year, private weather forecasting agency Skymet said on Tuesday and predicted more rainfall in the second half of the season.

Scientists at the India Meteorological Department (IMD) have also detected early signs of a favourable monsoon season this year with fading El Nino conditions and reduced snow cover over Eurasia. The Met office will issue

a monsoon forecast later this month.

However, normal cumulative rainfall does not mean uniform temporal and spatial distribution of rain across the country, with climate change further increasing the variability of the rain-bearing system.

Climate scientists say the number of rainy days is declining while heavy rain events -- more rain over a short period -- are increasing, leading to frequent droughts and floods.



Crisis caused by Israel-Hamas conflict unacceptable: Kamboj

UNITED NATIONS, Apr 9 (PTI)

INDIA has termed the UN Security Council resolution that demanded immediate ceasefire in Gaza for the month of Ramzan a "positive step," asserting that the humanitarian crisis resulting from the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict is "simply unacceptable."

"We are deeply troubled by the ongoing conflict in Gaza. The humanitarian crisis has deepened and instability has been increasing in the region and beyond," India's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Ruchira

Kamboj, told a UN General Assembly meeting here on Monday.

She said India views the adoption of a resolution on March 25 by the UN Security Council "as a positive step."

Kamboj said the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas has led to a large-scale loss of civilian lives, especially women and children.

"The resulting humanitarian crisis is simply unaccept-

able," she said, adding that Delhi has strongly condemned the deaths of civilians in the conflict and it is imperative to avoid the loss of civilian lives in any conflict situation.

The UNSC resolution, adopted last month, demanded an "immediate ceasefire" for the month of Ramzan respected by all parties leading to a lasting sustainable ceasefire.

It also demanded the imme-



Ruchira Kamboj

Pope meets hostages' kin to mark six-month anniversary of conflict

VATICAN CITY, Apr 9 (AP)

POPE Francis met on Monday with relatives of hostages taken by Hamas on October 7, marking the six-month anniversary of the attack in southern Israel with an hour-long audience.

The Vatican released photos of the encounter, showing relatives of several of the hostages sitting in a semicir-

cle in front of Francis in his private library. Each one held a poster with a photo and the name of a loved one.

It was the second time Francis has met with relatives of the hostages. On November 22, he met with a delegation of Israelis, and then separately a delegation of Palestinians whose relatives had been harmed during the conflict.

mediate and unconditional release of all hostages, as well as the humanitarian access to address their medical and other humanitarian needs.

The adoption of the resolution had come as a breakthrough in the Israel-Hamas conflict which had been on for more than five months then.

The 15-nation Council adopted the resolution, put forth by the 10 non-permanent elected members of the Council, with 14 nations voting in favour, none against, and an abstention by the US, a permanent member.

TESLA EVs entry into India will be 'natural progression': Musk

NEW DELHI, Apr 9 (ANI)

TESLA CEO Elon Musk has said that India, like every other country, should have electric car and it will be a natural progression for his company to provide Tesla electric vehicles in India.



“India is now the most populous country in the world, based on population. India should have electric cars just like every other country has electric cars. It’s a natural progression to provide Tesla electric vehicles in India,” Musk said in a X Spaces session with Nicolai Tangen, the Chief Executive Officer at Norges Bank Investment Management.

The billionaire CEO said in the future “all vehicles will go electric and it is just a matter of time.” Tesla has lately intensified its efforts to bolster its presence in the Indian market and is actively scouting for a suitable location to set up a state-of-the-art manufacturing plant.

As per sources, the State Governments of Maharashtra and Gujarat have extended lucrative land offers to Tesla Inc. for the establishment of an electric vehicle (EV) manufacturing plant, signalling a major stride in India’s electric mobility landscape.