

US in talks with Pakistan on media ban on LeT coverage

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Washington: The US has said it is in talks with Pakistan on its recent move to ban media coverage of terrorist outfits including LeT and its leaders like Hafiz Saeed, underlining that every nation needs to strike a balance between the fight against terrorism and media freedom.

"All I can tell you is we're aware of them, we're looking into them, we're talking about this with Pakistani leaders," State Department spokesperson John Kirby told reporters.Â

"I'm going to refer you to Pakistan for the reasoning behind its decisions," he said.

Kirby added: "What I can tell you is we recognise there's a balance to be struck here between the fight against terrorism and media freedom. It's a balance that every nation has to strike. Pakistan should speak for itself and for why it made this decision and how it's going to execute this decision.

"What I can tell you is, you know, we continue to discuss this issue with leaders in Pakistan and we'll do that." On Monday, Pakistan banned media coverage of militant groups like the Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD) as part of a crackdown on terror, acknowledging for the first time that the Mumbai attack mastermind Saeed-led outfit was a wing of the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT).

The Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) had issued a notification banning all satellite TV channels and FM radio from coverage of LeT, Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD) and Falah-e-Insaniat Foundation (FIF) under UN restriction.

Yesterday, a media report citing official sources said that Pakistan's decision to ban media coverage of the outlawed groups was part of a commitment given to US President Barack Obama by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif during his recent visit.Â

Sharif had detailed talks with President Obama on various issues, including terrorism during his last month visit to the US.

"The PM apprised the president about Pakistan's resolve to take effective action against UN-designated terrorist individuals and entities, including LeT and its affiliates, as per its international commitments and obligations under UN Security Council resolutions," said a joint statement issued during Sharif's visit.

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