

Nawaz Sharif asks Japan to remove Pakistan from travel advisory list

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Islamabad: Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif asked Japan to remove Pakistan from its Travel Advisory List asking its citizens to avoid visiting Pakistan, following a series of major terror attacks in the country.

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Sharif, who met the Japanese envoy Takashi Kurai at the PM House here, said that law and order situation has improved significantly as a consequence of operation "Zarb-e-Azb" and the country hoped that Japan would review Pakistan's inclusion in travel advisory that asks its citizens to avoid visiting Pakistan.

The travel advisory, issued by the Japanese government, identifies different risk zones in Pakistan and advises its citizens to be "evacuated immediately" from terror-infected border regions with Afghanistan including Baluchistan, and several parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and Gilgit Baltistan.

Punjab and Sindh are placed in level 2 risk zone, where citizens are advised to suspend all "non-essential travel".

Several other countries, including the US, UK, and Canada, have issued similar travel advisories for their citizens, asking them not to travel to Pakistan, after a series of major terror attacks rocked the country.

The drying up of tourists from some of the world's biggest economies has badly impacted Pakistan's nascent tourism industry and has destroyed a much-needed source of earning foreign currency.

Sharif also said that Pakistan regards Japan as a "close friend" and a "reliable economic partner," according to an official statement.

He said that Pakistan looks forward to greater level of cooperation between the two countries particularly in the areas of trade, investment, infrastructure and energy.

"PM stated that both sides need to initiate negotiations on bilateral Free Trade Agreement (FTA)," the statement said.

The Prime Minister also welcomed Japanese companies to invest in Pakistan that would enhance the capacity of the country's industrial sector to produce value added goods.

- (With inputs from PTI)