
Pakistan attaches key importance to relations with US: PM Shehbaz

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Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, replying to a letter by US President Joe Biden, said on Sunday that Pakistan attaches key importance to relations with the United States. In Biden's first official correspondence with any Pakistani premier in years, the US president said Washington will continue to stand with Pakistan to tackle the most "pressing global and regional challenges." The premier, according to a statement released by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), stated that Islamabad wants to work with Washington to achieve the common goal of global peace and security and also development and prosperity in the region. PM Shehbaz maintained that the two countries are working on important initiatives in the fields of energy, climate change, agriculture, health and education. The prime minister also welcomed cooperation between the two countries in the energy sector and the Green Alliance Initiative. Breaking from tradition, President Biden

departed from his predecessors' ritual of engaging with Pakistani leaders during his tenure. Neither did he reach out to former prime minister Imran Khan after his election victory, nor did he communicate with Shehbaz upon his succession in April 2022. Biden's letter suggested that despite allegations of ballot fraud, the US government is ready to work with the new government. Although Pakistan is no longer a priority for the US after its withdrawal from Afghanistan in August 2021, the South Asian nation remains key in terms of regional security and counter-terrorism efforts. While the American civilian leaders have had an indifferent attitude towards Pakistan in recent years, the American military establishment still wants a working relationship with Pakistan. In some of the recent testimonies before the US Senate committees, US CENTCOM chief Michael Kurilla stressed the importance of Pakistan and said the US must see ties with Islamabad on its own merit.