

# **Robust foreign policy need of hour: Mulk**

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ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Justice (retd) Nasirul Mulk on Monday underscored the need for framing a robust foreign policy to portray to the international community the brightest side of the country.

The caretaker prime minister chaired two separate briefings at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) during the day. One of the meetings was about the foreign affairs, while the other concerned the economy.

The premier advised against hiking the petroleum products' tariff next week contrary to the advice of the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (Ogra). It is likely that the price increase will be reduced to fifty percent what the authority had recommended last month.

Officially, no word was given about the instructions of the prime minister regarding the subjects of discussion but sources told The News that he had asked the economic managers to concentrate on revenue collection and keep on struggling to steer the country out of economic complexities.

It was an extensive briefing which was given by Secretary Finance Arif Ahmad Khan and his team including the Chairman FBR. The sources pointed out that concern was expressed about 37-nation Financial Action Task Force (FATF) huddle scheduled later this month where a decision would be taken to place Pakistan on the grey list or move it to the black list.

The experts have already suggested that Pakistan may find itself on the blacklist of a global financial watchdog if it failed to prepare a comprehensive action plan to eradicate the alleged terrorist financing forthwith. The FATF held its plenary meeting in Paris in February this year where it placed Pakistan on a watch list of the countries where terrorist outfits are still allowed to raise funds. The FATF was discussed in both the briefings. The prime minister was informed about the efforts of the government to save the country from the brunt of the task force.

The briefing given by Foreign Secretary Tehmina Janjua and Foreign Office spokesman Dr. Faisal Chaudhary pertained to the foreign policy of the country. The prime minister was informed that Pakistan was trying to improve its ties with the United States.

He was briefed by Foreign Secretary Ms. Janjua about the relations with India and other neighbours, the situation in Afghanistan, improving relations with Russia and the close ties with China. Pakistan's role in the United Nations and other world bodies

was also part of the detailed briefing, the sources said. The prime minister termed both the briefings “good and informative”, the sources added.

The Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Mujahid Anwar Khan also called on him at the PMO. The air chief felicitated the caretaker prime minister on assuming the office. Professional matters pertaining to the Pakistan Air Force came under discussion.