

US warns Israel that Rafah invasion will jeopardise weapons supply as assault continues



The International Press : US President Joe Biden for the first time publicly vowed to withhold weapons from Israel if its forces make a major invasion of Rafah in southern Gaza while negotiations in Cairo on a ceasefire plan for the enclave were due to continue on Thursday. "I made it clear that if they go into Rafah ..., I'm not supplying the weapons," Biden, whose administration has repeatedly asked Israel for its plan to protect civilians in Rafah, said on Wednesday in an interview with CNN. Biden acknowledged that US bombs provided to Israel have killed Gaza civilians in the seven-month-old offensive aimed at annihilating Hamas. Biden's comments, his starkest to date, increase the pressure on Israel to refrain from a full-scale assault on Rafah, where hundreds of thousands of Palestinians have sought refuge after fleeing combat farther north in Gaza. There was no immediate comment from Israel on Biden's remarks, but Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said the Rafah operation would go ahead. Israel says it must hit Rafah to defeat thousands of Hamas fighters it says are there. Israel, meanwhile, continued tank and aerial strikes on southern Gaza after moving in via the Rafah border crossing with Egypt on Tuesday, cutting off a vital aid route. Biden has been under pressure from his fellow Democrats and growing campus protests to deter Israel from invading Rafah. His support of Israel has become a political liability as the president runs for re-election. The United States is by far the biggest supplier of weapons to Israel, and it accelerated deliveries after the Hamas attacks on October 7 that triggered Israel's offensive in Gaza. Biden said US weapons for Israel's defense, such as for its Iron Dome anti-missile system, would continue. US officials confirmed on Wednesday that Washington paused delivery of a shipment of bombs to Israel because of the risk to civilians in Gaza. Israel's UN ambassador, Gilad Erdan, called that decision "very disappointing" but said he did not believe the US would stop supplying arms to Israel.

TALKS IN CAIRO
Palestinian militant group Hamas said late on Wednesday it would not make more concessions to Israel in the truce talks. In Cairo, delegations from Hamas, Israel, the US, Egypt and Qatar have been meeting since Tuesday. Citing a source familiar with the matter, Egypt's state-affiliated Al Qahera TV reported early on Thursday that areas of disagreement were being resolved and there were signs that an agreement will be reached, without giving details. But Izzat El-Reshiq, a member of Hamas' political office in

Qatar, said in a statement late on Wednesday that the group would not go beyond a ceasefire proposal it accepted on Monday. It would also entail the release of some Israeli hostages in Gaza and Palestinian women and children detained in Israel. "Israel isn't serious about reaching an agreement and it is using the negotiation as a cover to invade Rafah and occupy the crossing," said Reshiq. Israel on Monday declared that the three-phase truce proposal approved by Hamas was unacceptable because terms had been watered down. It did not respond immediately to the Hamas statement. The US said on Tuesday that Hamas had revised its ceasefire proposal and the revision could overcome an impasse in negotiations. Just a few hours before Hamas' latest statement, Washington continued to say the two sides were not far apart. "We believe there is a pathway to a deal ... The two sides are close enough they should do what they can to get to a deal," US national security adviser Jake Sullivan told reporters. The war began when Hamas militants attacked Israel on Oct. 7, killing about 1,200 people and abducting 252 others, of whom 128 remain hostage in Gaza and 36 have been declared dead, according to the latest Israeli figures. **'HUMANITARIAN CATASTROPHE' LOOMS**
Hamas said its fighters on Wednesday were battling Israeli forces in Rafah's east and Islamic Jihad's fighters attacked Israeli soldiers and military vehicles with heavy artillery near the city's long abandoned airport. Israeli tank shells landed in the middle of Rafah wounding at least 25 people on Wednesday, medics said. Residents said an Israeli air strike killed four people and wounded 16 others in western Rafah. The Israeli military said it troops had discovered Hamas infrastructure in several places in eastern Rafah and were conducting targeted raids in Rafah and airstrikes across the Gaza Strip. The UN, Gaza residents and humanitarian groups say further Israeli incursion into Rafah will result in a humanitarian catastrophe. A UN official said no fuel or aid had entered the Gaza Strip due to the military operation, a situation "disastrous for the humanitarian response" in Gaza where more than half the population is suffering catastrophic hunger. Palestinians have crammed into tented camps and makeshift shelters, suffering from shortages of food, water and medicine. "The streets of the city echo with the cries of innocent lives lost, families torn apart, and homes reduced to rubble," Rafah Mayor Ahmed Al-Sofi said, appealing to the international community to intervene.



Modi skips election in Kashmir as critics dispute integration claims

The International Press : Prime Minister Narendra Modi is criss-crossing India in a marathon election campaign but, for the first time since 1996, his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is not contesting in Kashmir, where a 35-year uprising against Indian rule has killed tens of thousands of people. Instead, the main contenders for the three seats in the Muslim-majority region are powerful local parties, the National Conference and the People's Democratic Party (PDP). They will contest against each other but both say they are opposed to the Hindu nationalist BJP and will align with the Congress party-led opposition alliance. Analysts and opposition parties say the BJP decided to skip contesting the election because the outcome is likely to contradict Modi's narrative of a peaceful, more integrated Kashmir since he removed the region's semi-autonomous status in 2019 and brought it under New Delhi's control. The BJP, along with allies, is contesting in every other part of India and is tipped to win a majority of parliament's 543 seats on the back of its Hindu-first image. "Why are they absent from the election?" asked Omar Abdullah, a leader of the National Conference and a former chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir state. "Clearly there is a gap between what the BJP claims to have done and the reality on the ground," he said, speaking in his home in Kashmir's main city, Srinagar. Modi says his 2019 decision brought normalcy to Kashmir after decades of bloodshed and that he will bring investments and jobs soon. The federal Home (Interior) Minister Amit Shah backs up the

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is criss-crossing India in a marathon election campaign but, for the first time since 1996, his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is not contesting in Kashmir, where a 35-year uprising against Indian rule has killed tens of thousands of people. Instead, the main

government's position by claiming that youths now hold laptops in their hands instead of stones that they used to throw at security forces in the past. As part of the move, Jammu and Kashmir state was split into two federally ruled areas - the Muslim-dominated Kashmir valley with the Hindu-dominated Jammu plains, and mountainous, Buddhist-dominated Ladakh. The government slapped a harsh lockdown on Kashmir at the time and Abdullah and almost all other local leaders were held in custody for months. Ravinder Raina, the chief of the Kashmir unit of the BJP, said the party's decision to skip the election was part of a broader strategy, although he declined to give specifics. "The BJP will not fight, but support a candidate who will work for peace, happiness, brotherhood and democracy," in each of the three seats, he said. The BJP has not yet announced which of the many small parties in the fray it will support. **ALIENATION, DISCONTENT**
Interviews with over a dozen residents, political leaders, security officials and analysts in Kashmir and New Delhi indicate that discontent and alienation continue to simmer in the heavily militarised Himalayan region. Besides the three-decade insurgency, Kashmir is divided into India-controlled and Pakistan-controlled sectors and claimed in full by both nations. The nuclear-armed enemies have fought two of their three wars since independence in 1947 over Kashmir. India claims that Islamic Pakistan has supported the insurgency in Kashmir, while Islamabad says it only provides moral support to the people there. Abdul Hameed, a 50-year-old garment store owner in Pulwama town near Srinagar, said the federal government had kept the lid on Kashmir since 2019, masking the true situation. "But it is like a spring. Right now they have crushed it. But who knows when will it burst open again," he said.

Although there are fewer restrictions on people's movements compared to five years ago, there are still tens of thousands of troops in the valley to enforce the peace. For decades, residents and human rights groups have accused Indian security forces of atrocities against the mainly Muslim population. The government says cases of abuse are isolated acts and it prosecutes any soldier found guilty of human rights violations. Indian military data shows there are over 100 active militants in the region, who allegedly target security forces and workers from other parts of India. Militants killed an air force soldier in an attack on a military convoy on Saturday, officials said. "The absence of an elected system over here is an indication of the fact that things are not as they are portrayed," said Sheikh Showkat Hussain, a retired law professor in Srinagar. "They (the BJP) should have treated (this election) as a referendum in their favour. But they seem to be scared." In the May 2019 general election, the BJP contested all three seats in Kashmir, losing them to Abdullah's National Conference. This year, BJP is contesting the two seats in Jammu and one in Ladakh, all of which it had won in 2019. Mehbooba Mufti, the chief of the PDP, is contesting from the Anantnag-Rajouri constituency, which many believed might have been the BJP's best bet to enter Kashmir in this election. **GERRYMANDERING**
In 2022, a federal government-appointed commission changed the borders of constituencies in Kashmir and Jammu. To Kashmir's Anantnag, which had around 1.6 million largely Muslim votes in 2019, it added around 1 million mostly Hindu voters from Jammu's Poonch and Rajouri districts. Mufti told Reuters that by clubbing them, the Modi administration was "changing the balance of the voters". The BJP, she said, wants to "disempower and they want to divest, dispossess Muslims, especially the Kashmiris." National Conference's Abdullah also claimed that the redrawing of the district was done to give BJP an "advantage". But they still didn't field a candidate, which "tells you just how bad things must be for the BJP", Abdullah said. However, BJP's Raina said that the redrawing has made the constituencies more representative of the region.

Shri Sanjay Kumar chairs meeting for achieving the broader objectives of Early Childhood Care & Education (ECCE)



The International Press : Secretary, School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Education, Shri Sanjay Kumar, chaired a meeting for achieving the broader objectives of Early Childhood Care & Education (ECCE), at Ambedkar International Centre, New Delhi today. The representatives of the Ministry of Women & Child Development (MoWCD), States, and Autonomous bodies of the Department of School Education & Literacy (DoSE&L) attended the meeting. As envisioned under the National Curriculum Framework-Foundational Stage (NCF-FS) a continuum of pre-school education and school education is required for seamless transition and quality ECCE. Speaking on this occasion Shri Sanjay Kumar set the context of the meeting and highlighted the importance of every stakeholder in quality ECCE. Shri Kumar reiterated that it was heartening to see various initiatives taken by MoWCD and various States/UTs. The need to have three Balvatikas for 3 to 6-year-olds for pre-primary in all CBSE and Kendriya Vidyalayas having Class 1 was emphasised during the meeting. Co-locating Anganwadis with primary schools in villages was recommended in coordination with WCD, in a decentralised manner to get a proper preschool education and smooth transition to Grade 1. It was also suggested to use Jaadui Pitara at the Government schools with pre-primary classes for a well-rounded learning experience. It was suggested that NCERT can work with state officials to assess existing learning toys, ensuring alignment with NCF-FS goals. It was also suggested that MoE and WCD should collaborate to link Poshan Tracker and UDISE+ data to track

pre-primary to Class-1 transitions. States can define parameters and use Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for Jaadui Pitara materials to ensure transparency and efficiency in procurement. Discussions were also held on the standardization of branding for programs such as NIPUN Bharat, Jaadui Pitara, e Jaadui Pitara and Vidya Pravesh across states to enhance visibility and recognition. It was suggested that the adopted and adapted version of Jaadui Pitara should correspond with the prescribed learning outcomes curated by NCERT for Jaadui Pitara. NCERT should support SCERTs in following the designated Learning Outcomes. The need for proper training of preschool teachers and Anganwadi Worker (AWW) was also discussed at length during the meeting.

The National Scheduled Caste Commission gave instructions to the District Collector and S.P.



Kolkata, 9 May 2024. The National Scheduled Caste Commission has directed the Collector and SP of South 24 Parganas district in West Bengal to take necessary action and submit a report within 15 days in the case of senior journalist Mrityunjay Sardar. This instruction has been given in the letter issued by the North-Eastern Unit of the Commission on May 7, 2024. Senior journalist Mr. Sardar, resident of Hadiya village, Jeevan Tara police station of the district, had sought the intervention of the Commission for the safety of his movable & immovable property and life. It is noteworthy that Mr. Sardar is the head of a media organization published and broadcast from West Bengal and he has been attacked several times. Journalist organizations across the country have strongly condemned the attacks on him from time to time and have appealed to the government for his safety. However, he was not given security. I am requesting the police administration and the government for security.

Union Public Service Commission announces written results of National Defence Academy and Naval Academy Examination, (I) 2024



The International Press : On the basis of the result of the written part of the National Defence Academy and Naval Academy Examination, (I) 2024 held by the Union Public Service Commission on 21st April, 2024, candidates with the under mentioned Roll Nos. have qualified for interview by the Services Selection Board (SSB) of the Ministry of Defence for Admission to Army, Navy and Air Force Wings of the National Defence Academy for the 153rd Course and for the 115th Indian Naval Academy Course (INAC) commencing from 2nd January, 2025. The result is also available at Commission's website www.upsc.gov.in.

2. The candidature of all the candidates, whose Roll Nos. are shown in the list is provisional. In accordance with the conditions of their admission to the examination, "candidates are requested to register themselves online on the Indian Army Recruiting website joinindianarmy.nic.in within two weeks of written result. The successful candidates would then be allotted Selection Centers and dates, of SSB interview which shall be communicated on registered e-mail ID. Any candidate who has already registered earlier on the site will not be required to do so. In case of any query/

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Dr. Vivek Joshi chairs workshop on 'State of Artificial Intelligence in Banks' with representatives from 12 Public Sector Banks and other financial institutions under DFS

Dr. Vivek Joshi, Secretary, Department of Financial Services (DFS), chaired a workshop on the 'State of Artificial Intelligence in Banks' as part of its lecture series, in New Delhi, today. The NASSCOM made a presentation during the workshop to provide banks



IREDA incorporates 'IREDA Global Green Energy Finance IFSC Limited' in GIFT City, Gujarat

Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Ltd. (IREDA) has incorporated a wholly owned subsidiary in the International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) located in GIFT City, Gujarat. Named "IREDA Global Green Energy Finance IFSC Limited," the



Editorial

Different startups and other participants are engaged in deep-tech rapid ideation and solution development

In a novel initiative, the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) brought together startups/MSMEs, academia and research institutions under the "Telecom Design Collaboration Sprint". This Sprint was organised by DoT at IIT, Bangalore. Fifteen leading startups/MSME in the Radio Access Network (RAN), Core ecosystems, esteemed institutions such as IIT Madras, C-DOT, IIT Delhi and other network entities participated. This collaboration engaged in deep-Tech rapid ideation and innovative solution towards developing a comprehensive and future-ready telecom stack encompassing comprehensive 5G solution and setting the stage for future advancements to 6G. The Sprint was driven by three primary objectives: Leveraging Collective Strengths: The Sprint enabled startups to combine expertise in critical 5G infrastructure areas, fostering innovation and speeding up a common telecom stack development. Fostering Holistic Solutions: Through collaboration, startups aim to create comprehensive 5G solutions, addressing industry needs and preparing for future advancements. Creating Market Opportunities: By aligning efforts, it seeks to unlock market potential, empowering startups to compete and grow in the telecom landscape. After in-depth and extensive discussions during the sprint event, outcome-based focused

groups were formed to address gaps in the Indian telecom ecosystem and get ready for 6G and other upcoming technologies. These groups will concentrate on areas like core infrastructure, distribution units (DUs), radio units (RUs), central units (CUs) and others elements with an objective to bridge current gaps and provide solutions that are suited to meet future needs. Two working groups were also formed. The participants expressed appreciation for this pioneering initiative, marking it as a first-of-its-kind endeavour in the industry. They also expressed interest in close collaboration and urged the DoT to continue with such initiatives. The Sprint underscores DoT's commitment to nurturing innovation and fostering industry collaboration to propel India's telecommunications sector towards global leadership in the 5G era and beyond. Bringing together unique strengths and competence of startups and MSMEs, together with academia and industry, the DoT aims at creating a robust and forward-looking mobile telecom stack with an emphasis on advancing towards 6G technology.



Dr. Vivek Joshi chairs workshop on 'State of Artificial Intelligence in Banks' with representatives from 12 Public Sector Banks and other financial institutions under DFS

The International Press : Dr. Vivek Joshi, Secretary, Department of Financial Services (DFS), chaired a workshop on the 'State of Artificial Intelligence in Banks' as part of its lecture series, in New Delhi, today. The NASSCOM made a presentation during the workshop to provide banks and financial institutions with insights into best practices for AI adoption and risk

mitigation. The event featured several industry experts who shared their experiences and insights on the AI. Besides, DFS Secretary, attendees included senior officials from the DFS, CEOs, MDs, CTOs, and CDOs from 12 Public Sector Banks (PSBs), as well as MDs and CEOs from various financial institutions under administrative control of DFS and delegates from

NASSCOM. The workshop served as a platform for participants to learn about various case studies and strategies for implementing AI in the banking sector. By leveraging the expertise of industry leaders, the workshop aimed to enhance the understanding of AI technologies and their potential impact on the financial services industry. The industry experts

discussed how AI can be used to enhance customer service, make better decisions regarding credit, detect fraud and defaults, manage risks early, and boost employee productivity and efficiency. The workshop also addressed the emerging challenges of AI in terms of data governance, cybersecurity, transparency and compliance.

IREDA incorporates 'IREDA Global Green Energy Finance IFSC Limited' in GIFT City, Gujarat



The International Press : Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Ltd. (IREDA) has incorporated a wholly owned subsidiary in the International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) located in GIFT City, Gujarat. Named "IREDA Global Green Energy Finance IFSC Limited," the subsidiary was officially incorporated on 7th May, 2024. Earlier, on 8th February, 2024, the Reserve Bank of India gave its No Objection letter to set up the finance company in IFSC GIFT City. Commenting on the development, Chairperson & Managing Director of IREDA Shri Pradip Kumar Das, said that IREDA's presence in GIFT City signifies a momentous step in its mission to pioneer innovative approaches to green financing. "This subsidiary not only positions IREDA to extend its global reach but also acts as an

offshore platform for securing competitive funding to drive the renewable energy sector's growth, aligning with the Government of India's ambitious 'Panchamrit' targets." The CMD added that IREDA's entry into the IFSC is anticipated to unlock fresh business prospects and establish its global footprint in the renewable energy sector. "This strategic step is in line with IREDA's vision of facilitating sustainable development through renewable energy investments, both domestically and internationally. With IREDA's presence in the IFSC, we anticipate greater access to innovative financing alternatives and enhanced collaboration with international investors, encouraging the advancement of renewable energy projects in the country and abroad."

KISNA Diamond & Gold Jewellery Launches its Exclusive Showroom in Kolkata



Kolkata, West Bengal, May 08, 2024, The International Press : KISNA Diamond & Gold Jewellery, a leading name in the Indian jewellery industry, proudly announces the grand opening of its inaugural exclusive showroom in the vibrant city of Kolkata, marking its 2nd showroom in West Bengal and 27th in India. With this expansion, KISNA further solidifies its commitment to provide unparalleled craftsmanship and timeless elegance to

customers nationwide. The event was honoured by Mr. Ghanshyam Dholakia, Founder & M.D. Hari Krishna Group along with Mr. Parag Shah, Director, KISNA Diamond & Gold Jewellery. KISNA's presence in Raghunathpur, Kolkata extends beyond mere retail operations; it represents a commitment to engaging with the local community, understanding their unique preferences, and forging lasting relationships built on

trust and satisfaction. Commenting on the launch, Mr. Ghanshyam Dholakia, Founder & M.D. Hari Krishna Group, stated, "With Kolkata being a hub of culture, heritage, and varied preferences, the decision to inaugurate our flagship showroom here highlights our commitment to providing the finest quality jewellery to consumers across diverse demographics. With a vision of 'Har Ghar KISNA', we aim to be the fastest growing

diamond jewellery brand in India and make every woman's dream of owning a diamond jewellery come true." Mr. Parag Shah, Director, KISNA Diamond & Gold Jewellery, said, "The launch of our Kolkata showroom speaks volumes about our dedication to excellence in all facets of our operations. We're enthusiastic about introducing KISNA's distinctive fusion of elegance and refinement to jewellery enthusiasts in Kolkata. It showcases our commitment to connecting with the community, comprehending their preferences, and fostering long-lasting relationships built on trust and satisfaction." Mr. Sachin Singh and Mr Mirza Anees Ahmad Baig, Franchise Partner, KISNA Diamond & Gold Jewellery, said, "As franchise owners of KISNA Diamond & Gold Jewellery in Kolkata, we're thrilled to introduce a new standard of luxury to our city. With our showroom, we're not just offering jewellery; we're crafting an experience. From exquisite designs to impeccable service, we're committed to delighting our customers and setting a new benchmark in Kolkata's jewellery market."

In addition to expanding its retail presence, KISNA distributed Sewing Machines to underprivileged individuals for their sustainable livelihoods. Furthermore, the brand has also committed to provide food meals to those in need and plant saplings on behalf of every purchase made by its consumer base at the showroom.

About KISNA Diamond & Gold Jewellery Launched in 2005, KISNA is the flagship diamond jewellery brand from the Hari Krishna Group. KISNA has established an extensive distribution network, reaching over 3,000+ shop-in-shop outlets across 28 states in India. With an ethical sourcing of diamonds from mines to market, KISNA has an unmatched portfolio of 10,000+ unique designs. KISNA offers a wide range of Rings, Earrings, Pendants, Mangalsutra, Necklaces, Bangles, Bracelets, and Nose Pins in 14KT & 18KT gold which are 100% IGI Certified and BIS Hallmarked. The company also provides 90%

Buyback & 95% Exchange on diamond jewellery including making charge. KISNA Diamond & Gold Jewellery's online platform is a curated space where elegance meets convenience. As your trusted online brand, we offer a seamless shopping experience, featuring latest diamond and gold jewellery designs. Explore timeless sophistication with KISNA, your ultimate destination for authentic and stylish pieces on www.kisna.com



News Continue

Contd. from P/1
Union Public Service Commission announces written results of National Defence Academy and Naval Academy Examination, (I) 2024
Login problem, e-mail be forwarded to recruiting6-mod@nic.in. "Candidates are also requested to submit original certificates of Age and Educational Qualification to respective Service Selection Boards (SSBs) during the SSB interview." The candidates must not send the Original Certificates to the Union Public Service Commission. For any further information, the candidates may contact Facilitation Counter near Gate 'C' of the Commission, either in person or on telephone Nos. 011-23385271/011-23381125/011-23098543 between 10:00 hours and 17:00 hours on any working day. In addition for SSB/Interview related matter the candidates may contact over telephone no. 011-26175473 or joinindianarmy.nic.in for Army as first choice, 011-23010097/ Email: officer-navy@nic.in or joinindiannavy.gov.in for Navy/ Naval Academy as first choice and 011-23010231 Extn. 7645/7646/7610 or www.careerindianairforce.cac.in for Air Force as first choice.
3. The mark-sheets of the candidates will be put on the Commission's website within fifteen (15) days from the date of publication of final result. (After concluding SSB Interviews) and will remain available on the website for a period of thirty (30) days.

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General Elections 2024 draws international admiration

International delegates have expressed their happiness at having witnessed the polling process first-hand in General Election 2024. While some of the delegates appreciated transparency others termed ECI's initiatives



New York Indian Film Fest to honour Shabana Azmi's 50 years in cinema

Legendary actress Shabana Azmi who has made a sturdy name for herself with her performances in countless classic movies will be celebrated for her immense contribution to the film industry in New York. The New York



General Elections 2024 draws international admiration



The International Press : International delegates have expressed their happiness at having witnessed the polling process first-hand in General Election 2024. While some of the delegates appreciated transparency others termed ECI's initiatives such as Green Polling Stations as inspirational. Delegates also appreciated the use of technology at scale in the elections including during randomization of EVM-VVPATS. Some of the delegates also said that they were particularly struck by the unwavering faith and commitment of Indian voters towards strengthening democratic ideals. Overall, there was unanimity among the visiting members of the Election Management Bodies of these countries that the election process in India was a peaceful, inclusive and accessible and takes place in a festive mood.

Uttar Pradesh Delegates from Chile, Georgia, Maldives, Namibia, Papua New Guinea and Uzbekistan witnessed the polling on 7th May, 2024 in Fatehpur Sikri and Agra Parliamentary constituency in Uttar Pradesh. Visiting dignitaries were taken to see architectural marvel of Taj Mahal and the Fatehpur Sikri falling in these two constituencies. They were exposed to the various arrangements/activities on the poll day and the day before the polling day. There was unanimity among the visiting members of the Election Management Bodies of these countries that the election process in India was a peaceful, inclusive and accessible and takes place in a festive mood.

These reactions came after largest ever contingent of international delegates experienced India's General Elections first-hand in the recently concluded third phase of the elections as part of the International Election Visitors' Programme (IEVP). Polling was held in 93 Constituencies across 11 States/UTs in the third phase and the delegates watched the polling in 6 States/UTs including the preparatory work that goes into making what is arguably the largest logistical exercise involving movement of men and machinery in the world. IEVP 2024 experiences from ground

Gujarat Delegates from Fiji, Australia, Russia, Madagascar, Kyrgyz Republic witnessed pre-poll arrangements and polling process for the General Elections to the Lok Sabha, 2024 in Ahmedabad. The delegation was impressed with strong room(s) having double lock system and deployment of armed police personnel ensuring effective security for EVMs. Female managed polling stations in Assembly Constituency of Sanand in Ahmedabad East PC was also drew appreciation and invited comments that they boost confidence in women and increase their participation. Facility of ramp and wheelchairs in all places along with volunteers to help elderly voters was also highly appreciated. The concept of Braille ballot paper for blind voters was also liked as a good initiative to help blind people.

Karnataka Delegates from Cambodia, Tunisia, Moldova, Seychelles, and Nepal visited Belgaum Parliamentary constituency in Karnataka and interacted with polling officers and presiding officers inside the polling station, witnessed mock poll, visited command control center, media monitoring facilities. The delegates appreciated the transparency as underscored by mock poll, presence and involvement of candidates' representative inside the polling station.

Maharashtra Representatives from the Election Management Bodies of Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Kazakhstan and Zimbabwe visited Raigad parliamentary constituency in Maharashtra and witnessed the pre-poll arrangements, dispersal of polling parties and other logistics. The group interacted with the District Election Officer, Returning Officer, Presiding Officers and other election related officials about the various facets of the Indian Elections. The delegates were impressed with the transparency measures at polling stations.

Goa Delegates from Bhutan, Mongolia and a media team from Israel witnessed polling and related arrangements in both the constituencies in Goa. They were also exposed to mock poll, command control center, media monitoring facilities and dispatch centers. CEC Bhutan and Electoral officials of Bhutan & Mongolia appreciated transparency in involving political parties, media, candidates' representative inside the polling station in conduct of elections. Admiration and surprise was expressed to see PwD managed Polling stations, and Pink Polling stations by the visiting delegates. Delegates appreciated the use of software for randomization of EVM-VVPATS.

Background Delegates from 23 countries namely Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Chile, Fiji, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Rep, Madagascar, Maldives, Mongolia, Moldova, Namibia, Nepal, New Guinea, Philippines, Russia, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Tunisia, Uzbekistan, Zimbabwe arrived at New Delhi to witness the Elections in the third phase of polling on the 5th May 2024. They interacted with the Election Commission of India in the inaugural session presided over by the Chief Election Commissioner Sh. Rajiv Kumar along with Election Commissioners Shri Gyanesh Kumar and Dr. Sukhbir Singh Sandhu. Thereafter the delegates were divided into 6 smaller groups to visit different states viz. Karnataka, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Goa and Madhya Pradesh and visited polling stations in 13 constituencies for this purpose. The CEOs of the States organized the visit of the groups to see the poll preparedness, logistics and webcasting arrangements as well as engaging with polling officers and presiding officers on pre-poll day and to witness the mock poll, actual polling and to interact with voters on election day i.e. 7th May 2024.

Madhya Pradesh A 11-member international team comprising delegates from Sri Lanka and Philippines visited polling stations across Bhopal, Vidisha, Sehore, and Raisen constituencies, gaining firsthand insights into the electoral process of the Lok Sabha elections. Interacting with voters, they observed the enthusiasm and active participation of Indian citizens in the democratic process. Reflecting on their experiences, the delegates expressed admiration for the vibrant democracy they witnessed in India. They were particularly struck by the unwavering faith and commitment of Indian voters towards strengthening democratic ideals.

INDIAN NAVAL SHIPS DELHI, SHAKTI, AND KILTAN COMPLETED THEIR VISIT TO SINGAPORE, AS A PART OF THE OPERATIONAL DEPLOYMENT OF THE EASTERN FLEET TO THE SOUTH CHINA SEA



The International Press : Indian Naval Ships Delhi, Shakti and Kiltan visited Singapore from 06 - 09 May 24, aimed at undertaking bilateral engagements and discussing areas of mutual interest and cooperation, and reaffirming the commitment to enhance maritime security and stability in the region. This visit is part of the Operational Deployment of the Indian Navy's Eastern Fleet to the South China Sea. R Adm Rajesh Dhankhar, Flag Officer Commanding Eastern Fleet and Commanding Officers of the ships had an interaction with the Fleet Commander, Republic of Singapore Navy at the Singapore Naval Headquarters. The visit provided an opportunity for discussions on enhancing naval cooperation and interoperability between navies of both India and Singapore. A deck reception was hosted onboard INS Shakti, wherein personnel from both navies and the Indian diaspora in Singapore and also local diplomatic community had the opportunity to interact, furthering the bonds of friendship and mutual respect. As part of the Indian

Navy's commitment to maritime education and outreach, local school children were invited to visit the Indian Ships. The children were given guided tours of the ships,



where they learned about naval operations, India's rich maritime history and heritage and also the importance of maritime security. These interactions aim to inspire the younger generation and promote a greater understanding of maritime affairs. Personnel from both the Indian Navy and the Republic of Singapore Navy also undertook cross-ship visits and Subject Matter Expert Exchange (SMEE), in addition to other professional interactions.

সুন্দরবন স্মরণে স্বপ্নে দেখতে চান

সুন্দরবনের বেড়াতে যাওয়ার বিশ্বস্ত প্রতিষ্ঠান

থাকা খাওয়ার সুব্যবস্থা রয়েছে

স্বল্প খরচে ছোট ছোট টুরের জন্য যোগাযোগ করতে পারেন

মিতাশ্রী টুর এন্ড ট্রাভেলস

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CINEMA

Alia Bhatt and Sharvari Wagh to Star in a YRF Spy Universe Film?

The International Press : Alia Bhatt was made for the big screen. That magnetic movie star charisma is not something every actor can command. She was meant to do great things on the cinema screen. Now, imagine a frame with Alia Bhatt in the centre. A certain 'Avishav Rathore' aka 'Tiger' enters the frame. So does a Pathaan. Maybe even a Major Kabir Dhalwal. We'll say no more, and let the pictures in your mind take over. If you still haven't caught our drift, let's spell it out for you. It looks like the star-studded YRF Spy Universe has a new superstar entering the fray. Much like the universe we inhabit, the YRF Spy Universe seems to be constantly expanding too. But hey, we have no complaints about the second one.

Alia Bhatt's co-star, Sharvari Wagh. This news became public when certain photos of Alia Bhatt and Sharvari Wagh started doing the rounds on social media. Keen netizens, as always, wasted no time

whatsoever in pointing out the fact that the pictures of the two actors were indeed from their prep session for the upcoming film. One picture showed Alia in gym wear with another woman. Another picture showed Sharvari in similar attire with the same woman. She was also seen in an action pose, sporting an intense expression. Alia Bhatt and Sharvari Wagh to Star in a YRF Spy Universe Film? The yet untitled film will be directed by 'The Railway Men' fame director Shiv Rawail. Shooting is scheduled to go on floors rather soon. Another scoop regarding the film had earlier revealed that Bobby Deol was all set to play the baddie in the movie. All put together, this series of developments has undoubtedly sent fans into a tizzy. We sure can't wait to get more such scoops for you!



4 Most expensive things owned by Priyanka Chopra

The International Press : Priyanka Chopra, the known desi girl, has not only won hearts in India. Since her marriage with Hollywood's singer Nick Jonas, the known actress has also been the talk of the town in the west as well. With outstanding performances in Bollywood and Hollywood, the actress is settled with her husband, Nick, and a mini version of herself, Malti Marie. Chopra came a long way from being an ordinary girl in a Punjabi family in Janshedpur, Bihar. Being crowned Miss World in 2000 was just the beginning for her. Looking at her performance, the actress has owned some prized possessions, valued quite more than we can imagine. Let's take a look at the four most expensive things owned by her:

1. LA Mansion The actress is an owner of a big mansion which is located in Encino, California. The couple bought the house for \$20 million and are living the luxury life for sure! The duo enjoy a swimming pool, fully-equipped gym, a premium theatre a restaurant quality wet bar among several other things. The couple in between shifted elsewhere while the home was renovating, but rumor has it that they'll be relocating to this bigger-than-life mansion soon!

2. Rolis Royce Ghost Here's a fun fact about Priyanka Chopra: She absolutely loves luxury cars, and her collection shows! One of her most expensive purchases was this 6.6-litre V12 car with an output of 562 bhp-780 Nm. The vehicle cost Rs 5.25 crores.

3. Lorraine Schwartz earrings Priyanka Chopra made a grand entry at the Oscars 2016 with her Lorraine Schwartz earrings, which left everybody's jaws on the floor! These chunky, gorgeous earrings are surely to die for. Although they may just seem like jewelry, the pair is made of 50-carat diamonds and is worth Rs 21.75 crore! Can you think of spending so much on an accessory?

4. Beach House in Goa Priyanka surely knows how to enjoy life. The actress has invested in a beach house that is her escape for every vacation. The house is located near Baga Beach, Goa. Priyanka had always wanted a vacation home, and working blood and sweat paid off. The dreamy beach house is worth Rs. 20 crore and is often used by the actress and her family.

New York Indian Film Fest to honour Shabana Azmi's 50 years in cinema



National Film Awards along with international acclaim for her pioneering roles. Besides captivating us with her outstanding performances, Azmi is also known for her commitment to social activism, especially in advocating for women's rights and the underprivileged. A recipient of the Padma Shri and Padma Bhushan awards, Shabana Azmi has appeared in over 140 Hindi films and 12 international productions, including Deepa Mehta's 'Midnight's Children', Mira Nair's 'The Reluctant Fundamentalist', and Ismail Merchant's 'In Custody'. The festival, presented by the Indo-American Arts Council (IAAC), will kick off with the film 'Dear Jassi', directed by Indian-American filmmaker Tarsem Singh. Singh, known for his work with stars like Jennifer Lopez and Julia Roberts, has also directed music videos for renowned acts such as rock band REM and Lady Gaga. Closing the festival will be 'Mrs. Kaul', featuring Sanya Malhotra and directed by Arati Kadav. This year's lineup includes notable films such as 'The Umesh Chronicles', starring Bachchan and Vivek Gomber, directed by Pooja Kaul; 'Khiddi', a short film featuring Naseeruddin Shah; a documentary on Merchant Ivory; and Tannistha Chatterjee starring in American filmmaker Wendy Bednarz's debut film 'Yellow Bus'.

The International Press : Legendary actress Shabana Azmi who has made a sturdy name for herself with her performances in countless classic movies will be celebrated for her immense contribution to the film industry in New York. The New York Indian Film Festival (NYIFF) is therefore all set to commemorate the actress' 50-year-long cinematic journey in the film industry. The 24th edition of the NYIFF, recognised as North America's longest-running and most prestigious Indian film festival, is scheduled to take place from May 31 to June 2. This year's lineup will feature a total of 49 narratives including documentaries, and short films — spotlighting acclaimed talents such as Amitabh Bachchan and Naseeruddin Shah from the world of cinema. The festival will celebrate Azmi's five decades across Indian and international cinema with a special screening of her 1996 film 'Fire'. Azmi, who will be present at this year's NYIFF, has received five

Girona want 'historic' home win over Barcelona

Barcelona will be favourites when they visit Girona on Saturday but the hosts are ready to seize a historic opportunity to beat them in front of their own fans, Girona manager Michel said



T20 bowlers must adapt or get left behind, says Southee

The mountain of runs being scored in the Indian Premier League (IPL) shows Twenty20 cricket is changing and bowlers must move with the times or be left behind, New Zealand paceman Tim Southee said. Records have tumbled in



Shamar Joseph in as co-hosts West Indies announce T20 WC squad



The International Press : West Indies announced their 15-member squad for the upcoming ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024, which will be co-hosted by the Caribbean nations and the USA. Shamar Joseph, who impressed in his Test debut series against Australia earlier this year, is now poised to mark his T20I debut after being

picked in the T20 World Cup squad. Shimron Hetmyer makes a comeback after missing the T20I series against Australia. He has been in good nick in the ongoing IPL with the Rajasthan Royals, scoring 83 runs in four innings at a strike rate of 184.44 while playing the finisher's role. Kyle Mayers, who was part of the

squad during the Australia series, was omitted as the Windies opted for a lower-order batter over an opener. Additionally, pacer Oshane Thomas has been left out of the squad. Johnson Charles, Brandon King, and Shai Hope are expected to fill the top-order positions. The Windies boast a plethora of big hitters

and all-rounders, including Nicholas Pooran, Andre Russell, Shimron Hetmyer, Powell, Jason Holder, Sherfane Rutherford, and Romario Shepherd, providing the team with ample options. Akeal Hossain and Gudakesh Motie form the spin-bowling department, while the pace battery will be led by

vice-captain Joseph with the support of Joseph. Squad: Rovman Powell (c), Alzarri Joseph, Johnson Charles, Roston Chase, Shimron Hetmyer, Jason Holder, Shai Hope, Akeal Hossain, Shamar Joseph, Brandon King, Gudakesh Motie, Nicholas Pooran, Andre Russell, Sherfane Rutherford, Romario Shepherd.

Girona want 'historic' home win over Barcelona



The International Press : Barcelona will be favourites when they visit Girona on Saturday but the hosts are ready to seize a historic opportunity to beat them in front of their own fans, Girona manager Michel said on Friday. Girona, third in LaLiga with 71 points, are two behind fellow Catalan side Barcelona, whom they beat 4-2 away in December. "For our fans, tomorrow is a historic match," Michel told reporters. "In this match the motivation is top for everyone. Another challenge is to beat Barca for the first time at Montilivi. "Barca are favourites in this match... but we are playing at home in front of our fans. We will give 200 per cent because it's the only way to win."

Girona, 13 points ahead of fifth-placed Athletic Bilbao, are looking to ensure a top-four finish and qualify for the Champions League this weekend. "We want to win tomorrow to reach the Champions League. It's about making fans, making Girona grow and achieving worldwide recognition for our club and our project," Michel said. "We always have more objectives like overtaking Real Madrid as the top-scoring team. We only have two goals between us." Leaders Real are 11 points ahead of Barcelona with five matches remaining. "What I want is to be protagonists in a league where Madrid have lost only one game," Michel said.

T20 bowlers must adapt or get left behind, says Southee



The International Press : The mountain of runs being scored in the Indian Premier League (IPL) shows Twenty20 cricket is changing and bowlers must move with the times or be left behind, New Zealand paceman Tim Southee said. Records have tumbled in the IPL this season, with Sunrisers Hyderabad twice scoring the highest totals and Punjab Kings pulling off the biggest successful run-chase last week by mowing down a target of 262 set by Kolkata Knight Riders. The frenetic scoring has left bowlers with few places to hide and raised concerns about the sport's balance between bat and ball ahead of next month's T20 World Cup in the United States and the Caribbean. "It's forever changing, and we're even seeing in the last few weeks in India that it's changing again," Southee told New Zealand media. "You have to change as a bowler, especially. You have to move with the times, and if you don't you get left behind. "As a spectacle, it's exciting. "As a bowler, I'd like it to come back in our favour a little bit more. But I hope that people are enjoying watching cricket." Southee was named in his seventh T20 World Cup squad this week, joining fellow old stagers Trent Boult and Kane Williamson. New Zealand will rely on their usual strength in pace bowling at the tournament, with quicks Matt Henry and Lockie Ferguson included along with medium pacer Daryl Mitchell. Neighbours Australia have also stuck with their pace stalwarts while adding a second specialist spinner in Ashton Agar in their 15. Australia captain Mitchell Marsh hoped conditions in the Caribbean and the U.S. might give bowlers some relief from the kind of batterings seen recently in India. "Some of the scores in the IPL have been incredible," the all-rounder told reporters in Perth, shaking his head with a rueful laugh. "I'm not sure I'll be lining up to bowl in the future over there. "But the game's evolving, the game's moving forward. Teams are going harder in the powerplay. "We'll play as we see it."

Arsenal hope for Man City slip-up



The International Press : Arsenal resume their quest for Premier League glory against Bournemouth this weekend knowing they have no margin for error with Manchester City hot on their heels. Mikel Arteta's Gunners are a single point above Pep Guardiola's men with three games left but City, who host Wolves, crucially have a game in hand. Arsenal have hit a rich vein of form since their 2-0 defeat by Aston Villa last month, but are competing against a City side who are now unbeaten in 31 games in all competitions. The Gunners have a chance at least to apply some pressure

by beating Bournemouth in the early kick-off at the Emirates on Saturday. Bournemouth have registered their highest-ever points tally in a Premier League season to climb to 10th spot but have only beaten Arsenal once before. City were not at their best against Nottingham Forest last weekend but still found a way to win and are strong favourites to wrap up an unprecedented fourth straight English title. Arsenal will cling to the hope that Wolves can complete a rare double against City after they won 2-1 at home earlier this season. Guardiola, for his part, does not believe

his side can afford to drop any points in the run-in. "With four games left, it's like climbing a mountain," he said. "They are very tough games... If we draw a game, we are not going to win the Premier League. It is what it is." Meanwhile, Arteta, who saw his side get the better of local rivals Tottenham Hotspur in a hard-fought 3-2 win in the London derby, asked his side to not get carried away after the win last Sunday. "Don't get carried away with yourself. Just understand we have to be better, we want to be better. There's a margin for improvement and we go again against Bournemouth," said Arteta.

Australia replace India at top of Test rankings



The International Press : Reigning ICC World Test Championship winners Australia have overtaken India and claimed the No.1 spot on the ICC Men's Test team rankings. The ICC updated their annual team rankings on Friday and Pat Cummins' side rose to the top in five-day cricket on the back of their stunning 209-run triumph over India in the World Test Championship decider at The Oval last year. It helped improve Australia's rating to 124 points, four clear of their closest rival and last year's World Test Championship runners up India (120) and 19 points clear of third-placed England

(105). It's the only change at the top of the Test rankings, with South Africa (103), New Zealand (96), Pakistan (89), Sri Lanka (83), West Indies (82) and Bangladesh (53) remaining unchanged in spots between fourth and ninth. The rankings update only takes into consideration teams' performances after May 2021, with India's impressive 2-1 series triumph over Australia under skipper Virat Kohli that finished in January of 2021 dropping out of the rankings period. All results between May 2021 and May 2023 are then weighted at 50 percent and the ones in the

following 12 months - that includes Australia's World Test Championship final victory - then weighted at 100 percent. While India (122 points) may have lost top spot on the Test team rankings, they do remain out in front in both white-ball formats and have increased their lead at the head of proceedings in ODI cricket to six rating points over Australia (116). Third-placed South Africa (112) close the gap on Australia to just four rating points, while Pakistan (106) and New Zealand (101) round out the top five. **Men's ODI Team Rankings** Bangladesh remained

eighteenth while seventh-placed Sri Lanka (93) are now just two rating points behind sixth-placed England (95). Afghanistan (80) and West Indies (69) round out the top 10. India (264) remains well out in front of the updated T20I rankings, although their lead has been reduced from 11 points to just seven with second-placed Australia (257) jumping in front of third-placed England (252). **Men's T20I Team Rankings** South Africa (250) rise two spots from sixth to fourth and now sit just two rating points behind England, with Pakistan (247) dropping two places to seventh and Scotland (192) a notable improver as they overtake Zimbabwe (191) to claim 12th.