

## RT NEWS REPORT

### US trying to destabilise India during polls: Russia

NDTV ONLINE

The US aims to destabilise India during the 2024 general election, the Russian foreign ministry has said after a US federal commission's report criticised New Delhi for alleged violations of religious freedom.

RT news has reported that foreign ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova has said Washington lacks understanding of India's national mentality and history and continues to make "unfounded accusations" about religious freedoms in India.

Zakharova called it disrespectful to India as a country and a state. "The reason [behind the US accusations] is to unbalance the internal political situation in India and complicate the general elections," RT news quoted her as saying.



Displaced Palestinians transport their belongings on top of cars as they flee al-Mawasi to a safer area in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday. A Hamas official accused Israel of carrying out incursions in Rafah to block talks seeking a truce in the seven-month offensive in the Palestinian territory.

PHOTO: AFP

## SOUTH LEBANON

### Israeli air strike kills 4 Hezbollah fighters

REUTERS, Beirut

An Israeli air strike on a car in southern Lebanon killed four people yesterday, according to Lebanon's civil defence, with security sources saying those killed were members of armed group Hezbollah.

The conflict between Hezbollah and Israel has rumbled on since October in parallel to the Gaza offensive, with an escalation this week as both sides intensified their bombardment, fuelling concern of a bigger war between the heavily-armed adversaries.

Israel has used artillery, drones and warplanes against targets in southern Lebanon, including to strike fighters from Hezbollah and other armed groups. Fighters in Lebanon have launched rockets and their own drones into northern Israel.

Israel did not immediately reply to a request for comment on strikes. Lebanon's civil defence rescue force said it had pulled four bodies out of a car that had been scorched by an Israeli strike. Two security sources told Reuters the four killed were members of Hezbollah.

## 'Our lives have completely stopped'

Say displaced Palestinians as 'fear' roils in Gaza's southern city of Rafah since Israeli incursion

AFP, Rafah

Displaced Palestinian Marwan al-Masri, sheltering in Rafah, said "Our lives have completely stopped" since Israeli tanks and troops entered the city's east, sending desperate people fleeing north in the besieged territory.

Over 1.4 million people had crammed into Rafah, a city on the Gaza Strip's southern border with Egypt, as Israeli forces pushed their way southward from coastal territory's north during months of offensive.

Many in Rafah have been displaced multiple times during the seven-month offensive, and are now

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heading back north after Israeli forces called for the evacuation of the city's eastern part, which hosts tens of thousands of people.

"Life has completely ceased in the downtown area of Rafah", said 35-year-old Masri, who has been displaced from northern Gaza. "The streets are empty of people, and markets are in a state of paralysis", he told AFP on Wednesday.

"We all feel fear of any advancement in the invasion, as happened in the eastern areas, which are now completely empty of residents".

Masri said he and his relatives "are all tense and frightened" by the incessant shelling that they feel is getting closer to them.

Ibtihal al-Arouqi, who was displaced from Al-Bureij refugee camp in central Gaza, said she has



found herself once again homeless.

"We emerged from under the rubble of our house in Al-Bureij, and now due to intense shelling in Rafah, my children and I are in the street", she said.

The 39-year-old said that only two weeks ago she gave birth by Caesarean section. "We don't know where to go. There is no safe place", Arouqi added.

She spoke from west Rafah, where many Palestinians remain.

While it is relatively calmer than the city's heavily bombed east, the west has also been hit by shelling, an AFP journalist reported.

Both Arouqi and Masri said incessant shelling has filled the air with dust and smoke that make it hard to breathe. "The situation in Rafah is chaotic," said Mohammed Abu Mughaiseb, a medical coordinator for Doctors Without Borders (MSF) charity in Rafah.

Himself displaced from Gaza City, he described "people carrying their things, mattresses, blankets, kitchen items on trucks" to flee east Rafah.

But "there's no space anymore in the west of Rafah," Abu Mughaiseb told AFP.

The city's Al-Najjar hospital was "closed, evacuated by the medical team to avoid what happened in Al-Shifa or Nasser", he added.

## 23 Chinese warplanes, ships detected around Taiwan

AFP, Taipei

Taipei's defence ministry said yesterday it had detected 23 Chinese warplanes and five navy warships around the island, a day after a US warship sailed through the sensitive Taiwan Strait.

The military presence around Taiwan comes less than two weeks before its inauguration of incoming president Lai Ching-te, who Beijing regards as a "dangerous separatist".

China, which claims self-ruled Taiwan as part of its territory, frequently sends warplanes and naval ships around the island.

The 180-kilometre Taiwan Strait separates Taiwan from China and is an important transport artery for cargo ships.

Taipei's defence ministry said 23 Chinese warplanes and five navy vessels were detected around Taiwan in the 24 hours leading up to 6:00 am yesterday.

"8 of the aircraft crossed the median line," the ministry said, referring to a line bisecting Taiwan Strait.

The Chinese military presence coincided with a US warship -- the USS Halsey -- sailing through the narrow body of water on Wednesday.

## MAY 9 RIOTS LAST YEAR

### Ex-Pak PM Imran refuses to tender apology

DAWN ONLINE

Former Pakistan prime minister Imran Khan on Wednesday refused to apologise for the May 9 riots and said he is ready to face inquiry into the sit-in that his PTI staged in 2014. He was speaking to the media after the court proceedings in the £190 million corruption case at Adiala jail. When asked whether he would apologise for the May 9 violent protests, Khan replied in the negative, saying he was under detention at the time and was unaware of those protests. The ex-premier mentioned that he became aware of the protests when he appeared before the then-chief justice of Pakistan, Umar Ata Bandial. "I had already condemned those violent protests," he added. It may be mentioned that a day earlier, the director general of Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) ruled out dialogue with PTI unless the party leadership tendered a public apology over the May 9 protests. Khan further said that if the establishment is not interested in dialogue, PTI will not pursue it either. According to the former premier, he wanted dialogue for the sake of Pakistan, not to strike a deal for personal favours. However, he clarified that he has no issue with the army as his close relatives are serving in the armed forces and bureaucracy. Khan expressed readiness to face inquiry into the 2014 sit-in and stated that he would gladly appear before the inquiry committee.

## 'No fundamental right to campaign'

### India's probe agency opposes bail for Kejriwal

NDTV ONLINE

With the Indian Supreme Court set to decide on interim bail for Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal today to allow him to campaign for the ongoing Lok Sabha elections, the Enforcement Directorate has filed an affidavit opposing his petition and said that laws are equal for all and that campaigning is not a fundamental, constitutional or even a legal right.

The probe agency, which arrested the AAP chief in the liquor policy case on March 21, has also pointed out that no political leader has ever been granted bail for campaigning and said that letting Kejriwal out of jail to canvas for his party candidates would set a wrong precedent. Hearing the petition on Tuesday, the

SC had said Kejriwal is the elected chief minister of Delhi and is not a habitual offender. "There are elections... these are extraordinary circumstances and he is not a habitual offender," it said. In its affidavit, the Enforcement Directorate pointed out that, while hearing the bail plea of former Delhi deputy CM Manish Sisodia the court said that the laws apply equally to all citizens and institutions, including the state.



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If Putin's illegal invasion teaches us anything, it must be that doing too little, too late, only spurs an aggressor on.

UK Foreign Secretary David Cameron tells fellow Nato partners

## Trump 'will not accept' result of US polls

Says Biden

AFP, WASHINGTON

Donald Trump will refuse to accept the results if he loses the US election this year, Joe Biden said Wednesday.

The two men, who fought for the White House in 2020, are set for a rematch in November that polls show the American public is unenthusiastic about.

In an interview with CNN, Biden raised the prospect of Trump not accepting the outcome of the ballot. "I promise you he won't, which is dangerous."

Trump still insists -- without foundation -- that he won the 2020 election, despite losing repeated legal challenges.

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