

INTERNATIONAL

INDIA ELECTION
Opposition
slams Modi for
anti-Muslim
remarks

AFP, New Delhi

India's main opposition party yesterday condemned Prime Minister Narendra Modi for anti-Muslim comments in election campaign speeches that have heightened concerns over sectarian tensions in the world's biggest democracy.

P Chidambaram, a former Indian finance minister and senior lawmaker for Congress, said that Modi was playing "his usual game of dividing Hindus and Muslims".

"The world is watching and analysing the Indian prime minister's statements, and they do not bring glory to India," he added.

Modi remains popular across much of India and his Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is widely expected to win this general election when it concludes in early June.

Slovak PM
'able to speak'
after shooting

AFP, Banska Bystrica

Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico was speaking yesterday but tired and still in a "really difficult condition" a day after being shot multiple times, the president-elect said after visiting his ally.

"He is able to speak but only a few sentences and then he is really, really tired... The situation is very critical," president-elect Peter Pellegrini told reporters outside the hospital.

Interior Minister Matus Sutaj Estok said the shooter -- whom police have charged with attempted murder -- had acted alone and had previously taken part in anti-government protests.

"This is a lone wolf who had radicalised himself in the latest period after the presidential election (in April)," Sutaj Estok said.



Displaced Palestinians walk around a puddle in front of destroyed buildings and tents in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday. The UNRWA has said 600,000 people have fled Rafah since Israeli military operations intensified in the southern Gaza city.

PHOTO: AFP

GAZA OFFENSIVE, CAMPUS PROTEST
Democratic divide
hurting Biden: poll

REUTERS, Washington

Democrats are deeply divided over President Joe Biden's handling of both the offensive in Gaza and the US campus protests against it, a new Reuters/Ipsos poll found, fraying the coalition that he relied on four years ago to defeat Republican Donald Trump.

Some 44 percent of Democratic registered voters responding to the May 7-14 poll said they disapprove of Biden's handling of the crisis. Democrats who disapproved of his response were less likely to say they would vote for Biden in the November 5 election -- no small concern given his tight rematch with Trump.

Biden has faced heavy criticism from some members of his own party for

continuing to provide arms to Israel even though more than 35,000 Palestinians have been killed in the offensive in Gaza.

The flow of weapons has continued even after Biden last week delayed a shipment of 2,000 pound (907 kg) bombs and 1,700 500 pound bombs to Israel over concerns they might be used for a major invasion of Rafah.

The widespread campus protests, including some that have ended in violence when university officials called in police to clear campus, have undermined Biden's 2020 campaign pledge of a return to stability after Trump's chaotic four years in office.

Trump, meanwhile, has been working to exploit the unrest over the issue, urging Jewish voters, young voters and others

unhappy with Biden's performance in the White House to cross over to him.

Overall, just 34 percent of registered voters approve of Biden's handling of the offensive, including 53 percent of Democrats, 31 percent of independents and 22 percent of Republicans.

Demonstrations have not been limited to college campuses, with protesters targeting Biden and other members of his administration at public events for months.

The poll, conducted online, surveyed 3,934 US adults nationwide, including 3,208 registered voters. It had margins of error of about 2 percentage points for responses from all registered voters, about 3 points for registered Republicans and Democrats and about 4 points for independents.

It's one-party rule under a democratic framework

FROM PAGE 1
Bangladesh Institute of
Development Studies (BIDS)
organised the event at its
office in the capital.

Citing the example of South Korea, Wahiduddin, also a former caretaker government adviser, said this government system can bring development.

Under a one-party authoritarian rule, at least some important areas should be less politicised, the economist said. "If possible, those should not be politicised at all."

For instance, the governor of Bangladesh Bank should be allowed to take steps independently, he said.

"In bureaucracy, promotions should be based on performance and merits instead of political connections. Otherwise, talented people will feel discouraged to work better," said Wahiduddin.

According to the economist, this type of governments usually patronise some people and give them unusual benefits and that is why

real entrepreneurs remain deprived.

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