

DEFAMATION CASE

India court grants bail to Rahul Gandhi

AFP, Bengaluru

An Indian court yesterday granted bail to opposition leader Rahul Gandhi in the latest of several defamation cases brought against him for accusing Prime Minister Narendra Modi or his party of corruption.

Gandhi, 53, has faced numerous legal cases brought by members of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and was last year briefly disqualified from parliament after a criminal libel conviction.

He is one of several top opposition leaders to face criminal proceedings in cases they claim are politically driven by Modi's government.

The latest case stems from advertisements published by Gandhi's Congress party accusing the BJP of corruptly taking commissions from infrastructure projects in southern Karnataka state.

Gandhi, 53, has not spent any time in custody over the charge. He was granted bail in a five-minute procedural hearing held to determine if he should remain at liberty, Congress spokesperson Randeep Surjewala confirmed to AFP.

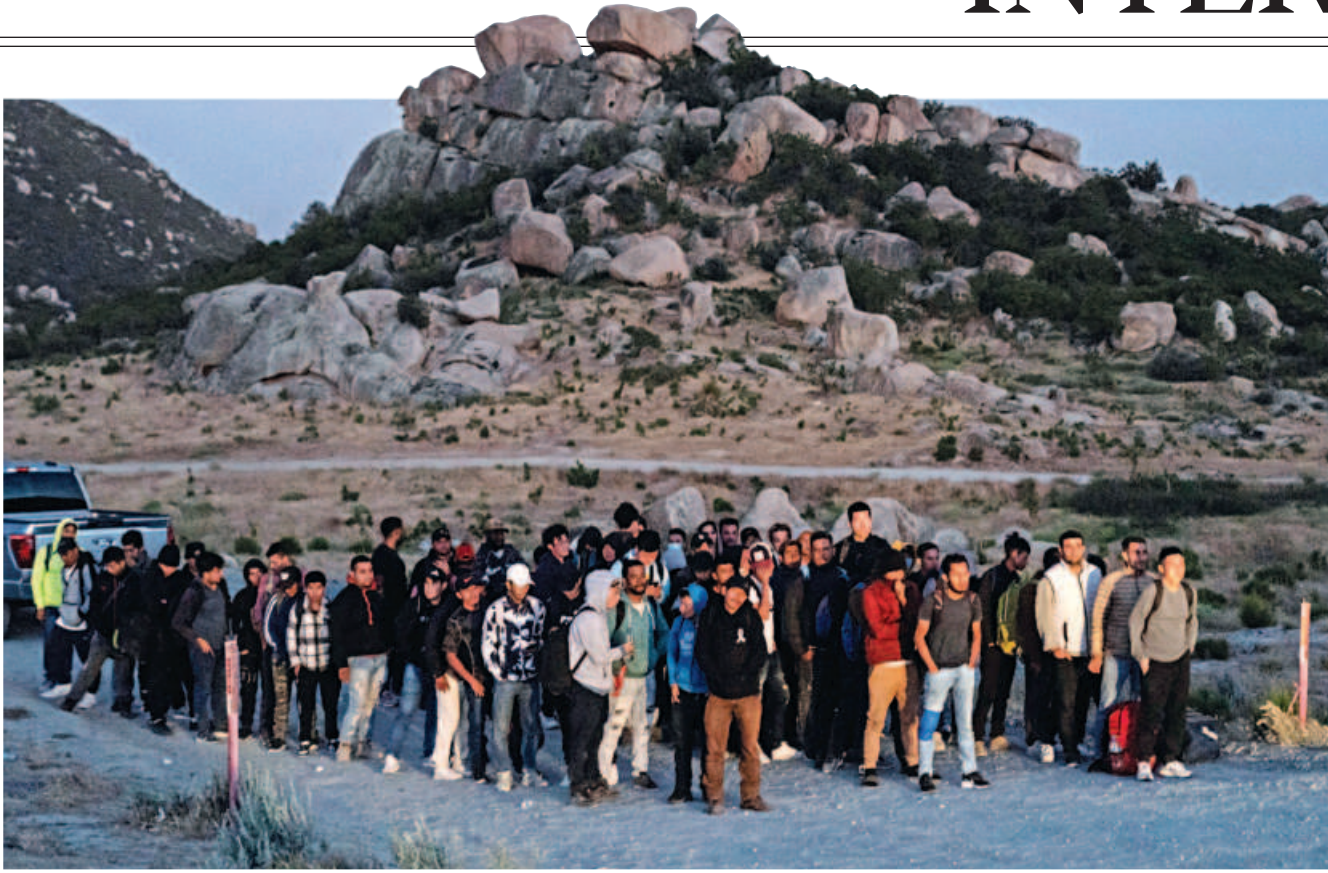
Two other senior Congress figures in Karnataka state had already been bailed last week, neither of whom were in custody beforehand.

Gandhi was sentenced to two years imprisonment last year in 2023 in a separate case in Gujarat but was not jailed after appealing with India's top court.

The sentence did however force his brief disqualification from parliament until the Supreme Court suspended his conviction.

Yesterday's case came days after Modi and the BJP won nationwide elections, albeit with a reduced majority forcing them to rely on coalition partners to govern.

Critics have accused Modi and his party of using the justice system to target political rivals.



Asylum-seeking migrants line up to be transported at a staging area, after US President Joe Biden announced a sweeping border security enforcement effort, in Jacumba Hot Springs, California, US on Thursday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Rural vote fall cost Modi a decisive polls win

Show voter analysis as discontent grows in India's countryside over lack of jobs, high inflation

REUTERS, New Delhi

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's party lost a third of its rural parliamentary constituencies in last month's election, a voter analysis shows, reflecting discontent in the countryside over lack of jobs and high inflation.

The Bharatiya Janata Party's poor showing in the vast heartland cost the ruling party its majority in parliament, forcing Modi to depend on regional allies to muster the simple majority required to govern the world's most populous country.

The BJP, which held 201 rural constituencies in the 543-member parliament, retained only 126 of them in the mammoth election, the analysis



showed.

The seats do not include those in the regions of Assam, Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, as a reorientation of constituencies there meant there is no direct comparison with data from the prior election.

Rahul Verma, a political expert at

the New Delhi-based Centre For Policy Research, said Modi's party especially lost ground in the big heartland states of Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan, which have trailed more prosperous southern and western parts of India in the pace of economic development.

"The rural distress would have played a factor," he said. Under Modi, India has become one of the world's fastest-growing economies, but there are too few jobs for the millions entering the workforce each year and growth has been uneven.

Families in rural India, home to 60 percent of its 1.4 billion people, have seen incomes halve as they struggle to keep up with rising costs and fewer jobs.

USA stun cricket world, curious fans

FROM PAGE 12

was heralded across the cricketing world, but the hardcore fans of what is a very niche sport in the USA, witnessed it.

The tournament is being co-hosted by the USA with the game played in a converted minor-league baseball park in the Grand Prairie suburb of Dallas, Texas which holds just 7,000 spectators.

The game wasn't even broadcast on American television but was instead only shown on the cricket specialist Willow TV subscription channel and streaming service.

But online and in social media, American sports fans quickly became aware of their team's achievement.

NPR public radio tried to put the win into context for those not familiar with the sport.

"Team USA just beat Pakistan in Super Over, the baseball equivalent is extra innings," they reported.

"Just to put this into an American sports context, Pakistan losing to the US is like the Boston Red Sox losing to the Durham Bulls," they added, referring to the minor league baseball team from North Carolina.

Outside of the USA though there was no need for analogies.

The UK's Times called it "one of the biggest upsets in cricket history" while Australia's Daily Telegraph said the Americans had "stunned world cricket".

It will be music to the ears of the game's governing body, the ICC,

who chose the USA as co-host for this tournament, alongside the West Indies, to help efforts to popularise the T20 format in the USA.

As well as Texas, Florida and New York are also holding games in the group stage before the Caribbean takes sole ownership of the later rounds.

The sport has a curious history in North America – the first ever international match featured the USA against Canada in 1844 but the lingering influence of the colonial-era game faded as baseball gained prominence.

The Americans have never featured in either the T20 World Cup or the ODI version and not even they would have expected such a start to the tournament with the Pakistan win coming after a thrilling victory over Canada on Saturday.

The USA team, coached by Australian Stuart Law, has a strong Indian influence and is made up of immigrants who have played the bulk of their cricket in the country, along with some players who switched allegiance from other nations after meeting qualification criteria, such as ex-New Zealand all-rounder Corey Anderson.

The game has been growing at grassroots level with thriving local leagues in all three of the states which are hosting games plus in North Carolina and California.

Last year saw the launch of the domestic competition, Major

League Cricket, which has begun to attract top international players and investment from Indian cricket sources.

The ICC have played down talk of 'converting' sceptical mainstream American sports fans as a goal for this tournament but the win is bound to raise their hopes.

"Now that's the way to grow the game in the States," tweeted former England captain Michael Vaughan after the match.

Joe Lynn, the curator of the United States Cricket Museum at Haverford College, near Philadelphia, said the wins were "the perfect start" for what he sees as a comeback for the game.

"Perhaps it's always been a misnomer to say cricket died in the US at the hands of baseball, but I think it's been in hibernation more than anything else. With Major League Cricket and this World Cup it is a reawakening of sorts," he told the BBC.

USA captain Monank Patel, whose crucial 50 from 38 balls earned him the man-of-the-match award, said he was sure the victory would be a game-changer for the sport.

"Of course, beating Pakistan in a World Cup is going to open many doors for us," he said.

"Obviously hosting the World Cup in the USA and performing here as a team, it helps us to grow cricket in the USA...and playing against Pakistan for the first time in the World Cup and beating them – it was an unbelievable performance from our side," he said.

Jubo League activist

FROM PAGE 12

parishad went to polls on Wednesday.

A programme was organised on Thursday night to celebrate Touhid's victory. Ali was returning home around 3:00am after attending the event. When he reached his village, the assailants opened fire on him and fled, said Abdur Razzak, officer-in-charge of Jashore Kotwali Police Station, quoting locals.

Locals took him to Jashore General Hospital where doctors declared him dead, the OC added.

Contacted, Dr Suzayet Hossain said Ali was brought dead to the hospital and two bullet marks were found in his body – one in his head and another in a leg.

Ali was an activist of Jubo League, the youth wing of the ruling Awami League, said Rantu Chakladar, member secretary of the convening committee of Jashore Jubo League.

Police are investigating the incident and additional law enforcers have been deployed in the area to fend off further untoward incidents, said Belal Hossain, additional superintendent of Jashore police.

Israeli forces batter central

FROM PAGE 12

that have taken control along Rafah's border line made several raids into the centre and west of the city, wounding several civilians who had been trapped inside their homes and were taken by surprise.

Some residents said tanks were newly present in Al-Izba, an area of far southwest Rafah close to the Mediterranean coast.

"I think the occupation forces are trying to reach the beach area of Rafah. The raids and the bombing overnight were tactical, they entered under heavy fire and then retreated," one Palestinian resident told Reuters via a chat app.

Later yesterday, an Israeli air strike on a house in the southern city of Khan Younis, north of Rafah, killed six people and wounded several, including children, medics said.

Israeli forces were also operating inside the Al-Bureij camp in the central Gaza Strip, while subjecting the al-Maghazi and al-Nuseirat and the adjacent city of Deir al-Balah under

heavy aerial and tank bombardment, Palestinian medics reported.

Hamas said their fighters carried out attacks on Israeli forces in several central and southern areas.

More than 36,731 Palestinians have been killed and 83,309 have been wounded in Israel's military offensive in Gaza since October 7, the Gaza health ministry said in a statement yesterday. Some 77 Palestinians were killed and 235 wounded in the past 24 hours, the ministry added.

Cut in agri subsidy

FROM PAGE 12

As Bangladesh's domestic food grain production has not increased significantly, the country is heavily reliant on imports.

According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation, Bangladesh imported around 12.5 million tonnes of food products in 2021.

The dependency on food imports increased from 9.3 percent of total food demand in 2010 to 11.2 percent in 2022.

S African parties cool towards ANC's coalition plan

AFP, Johannesburg

Plans by South Africa's ANC to form a government of national unity after last week's general election met a cool reception yesterday, with some potential partners reserving judgement or appearing hostile to the idea.

President Cyril Ramaphosa's African National Congress won 40 percent of the vote – its lowest score ever – and for the first time since the advent of democracy in 1994 it needs the backing of other groups to govern. The new parliament is to meet in about 10 days and one of its first tasks will be to elect a president to form a new government.

After marathon ANC talks on Thursday, Ramaphosa said the party had decided to try to band together with a broad group of opposition parties, ranging from the far right to the hard left.

But Julius Malema, leader of the radical leftist Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), seemed unwilling to join hands with rivals holding radically different political views.

"We can't share power with the enemy," Malema wrote on X, formerly known as Twitter.

Hajj pilgrimage to start June 14: KSA

AFP, Riyadh

Saudi Arabia said the hajj will start on June 14 after astronomical observatories spotted the crescent moon Thursday evening, signalling the beginning of the month in which the annual pilgrimage falls.

The Supreme Court determined that Dhu al-Hijjah, the 12th and final month of the Islamic calendar, begins today, the official Saudi Press Agency (SPA) said.

The hajj is one of the five pillars of Islam and must be undertaken at least once by all Muslims with the means.

It involves a series of rituals completed over at least four days in Makkah and its surroundings in the west of Saudi Arabia.

The high point comes on the second day, when pilgrims gather for prayers on Mount Arafat, where the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) delivered his final sermon.

That will occur on June 15 this year, and the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha will fall on June 16, SPA said.

Saudi Arabia is home to the holiest shrines in Islam at Makkah and Medina.

It'll be challenging

FROM PAGE 1

"With a keen focus on containing inflation, reducing aggregate demand, and nurturing the supply side of the market, this budget lays a strong foundation for stabilising the economy," said FICCI President Mohammad Zaved Akhtar.

He said the budget outlines several measures to control inflation and stabilise the economy, including tightening monetary policy by raising interest rates to 8.5 percent.

The standing lending facility (SLF) and standing deposit facility (SDF) rates have been set at 10 percent and 7 percent, respectively, to curb inflation by reducing money supply and encouraging savings, he added.

Additionally, substantial investments aim to boost agricultural productivity by 20 percent and industrial output by 15 percent through technological advancements and infrastructural improvements, he said.

"This is expected to balance demand and supply, thereby stabilising the

economy. The proposal to reduce the corporate tax rate for companies, which are not listed on the stock market, from 27.5 percent to 25 percent, is commendable," he said.

However, Akhtar said the budget lacks allocation or specific directions for the automation of tax, VAT, and customs administration to increase efficiency and simplify the tax collection process.

The absence of such reforms means the complexities related to VAT credit and potential financial strain on businesses will persist, the FICCI president said.

The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh (ICAB) welcomed the introduction of prospective rate of tax, reduction of tax rate for private companies and one-person companies and reduction of source tax on daily essentials.

In a statement, the ICAB said despite the Russia-Ukraine war, high inflation, rising commodity prices, dollar crisis, slowdown in business investment

and employment, and other global uncertainties, the government has taken a challenge of implementing development budget of Tk 265,000 crore, which is a very encouraging step to move forward to a developing economy.

Dazzling new blue

FROM PAGE 12

It has a triangular head featuring large eyes and a triangular mandible with five teeth. The species, named after its distinct blue colour – "neela" in most Indian languages – has been described in a new study, published in the journal ZooKeys.

"While exploring a tree hole about 10ft up in a steep cattle track in the remote Yinku village one evening, something sparkled in the twilight," researchers from the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE) in Bengaluru said.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Local Government Engineering Department

Office of the Upazila Engineer

Sadar, Rangpur.

www.lged.gov.bd

শেখ হাসিনার মূলনীতি
গ্রাম শহরের উন্নতি

Memo No. 46.02.8549.000.07.001.24- 470

Date : 06-06-2024

Invitation for Tender (Works)

e-Tender Notice No.15/2023-2024

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following works, details are given below.

Sl No	Tender ID No	Package No	Description of works	Tender last selling (Date & Time)	Tender Closing/Opening (Date & Time)
1.	996546 (NOTM)	e-Tender/PEDP4/RNP/SAD/2023-2024/W14.1415	Major Repair of 1) DEODOBA DANGIRPAR 2) RADHA BALLOVE 3) SATGARA AZIMUDDIN GPS & 4) DHAP GPS under Sadar Upazila, Dist.: Rangpur.	24 June 2024 (16.00)	25 June 2024 (13.00)
2.	996547 (NOTM)	e-Tender/PEDP4/RNP/SAD/2023-2024/W14.1416	Major Repair of 1) JAFORGONJ 2) POSSIM JAGADISHPUR BATTALA 3) BAKSHA GPS & 4) ARAZIMON KHAMAR (KAIDAHARA) under Sadar Upazila, Dist.: Rangpur.	24 June 2024 (16.00)	25 June 2024 (13.00)

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches up to 24 June 2024 at 16.00

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd) of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh.

Ahmed Haider Zaman
06-6-2024
(Ahmed Haider Zaman)
Upazila Engineer
Ph. 02589962621
E-mail: ur.rangpur-s@lged.gov.bd

GD-965