











# United Nation Chief Condemns Israeli Strike in Rafah, Says "Horror Must Stop"

New York [US] : United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres condemned the Israeli strike in Rafah, saying that the attack "killed scores of innocent civilians who were only seeking shelter from this deadly conflict." He stated that "horror must stop" and added that there is no safe place in Gaza. In a post on X, Guterres stated, "I condemn Israel's actions which killed scores of innocent civilians who were only seeking shelter from this deadly conflict. There is no safe place in Gaza. This horror must stop." At least 45 people were killed and 200 others were injured after the Israeli strike hit a camp for displaced people, CNN reported, according to the government media office in Gaza. Shortly after the attack, the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) announced that two senior Hamas officials had been killed after targeting a Hamas compound. The Israeli attack followed Hamas' first rocket attack on the Israeli city of Tel Aviv in months. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Turk, voiced his horror at the further loss of civilian lives in Gaza. He stated that Israel's strikes on Sunday demonstrates there is literally no safe place. In a news release on Monday, he said, "The images from the camp are horrific and point to no apparent change in the methods and means of warfare used by Israel that have already led to so many civilian deaths." "Sunday's strike underscores once again that there is literally no safe place in Gaza," he added. Turk said, "I note that the IDF has announced a review, but what is shockingly clear is that by striking such an area, densely packed with civilians, this was an entirely predictable outcome. It is crucial that such reviews lead to accountability and changes in policy and practices." Volker Turk reiterated his call on all parties to the conflict to put in place a ceasefire, according to the statement released by UN. He said, "Israel must take immediate steps to protect civilians, and ensure they have access to essential humanitarian assistance, and release all those detained arbitrarily." "The UN High Commissioner called on Hamas terrorists to unconditionally release all hostages at once. He stated that Hamas must stop the firing of rockets, which are inherently indiscriminate, in clear violation of international humanitarian law. Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Monday called the country's strike on a displacement camp in Rafah a "tragic mistake." He said that Israel is carrying out investigation into the incident, CNN reported. In his address at the Israeli Knesset on Monday, Netanyahu said, "Despite our best effort, not to harm those not involved, unfortunately a tragic mistake happened last night. We are investigating the case." At least 45 people were killed and 200 others were injured after the Israeli strike hit a camp for displaced people, CNN reported, citing the government media office in Gaza. The Israel Defence Forces (IDF) announced that two senior Hamas officials had been killed after targeting a Hamas compound. In a statement, the IDF said the strike had killed Yassin Rabia, who managed the Hamas terrorist activity in Judea and Samaria



and transferred funds to terrorist targets. According to IDF, Rabia was also behind numerous attacks in which IDF soldiers were killed. Furthermore, Khaled Najjar, another senior member of Hamas, directed shooting attacks and terrorist activities in Judea and Samaria, according to the IDF. In a post on X, IDF stated, "Eliminated in the precise airstrike in northwest Rafah: Hamas Chief of Staff in Judea and Samaria and an additional senior Hamas official. Terrorist #1: Yassin Rabia Rabia managed the entirety of Hamas' terrorist activity in Judea and Samaria, transferred funds to terrorist targets and planned Hamas terrorist attacks throughout Judea and Samaria. He also carried out numerous attacks, in which IDF soldiers were

killed." "Terrorist #2: Khaled Najjar. Najjar, a senior official in Hamas' Judea and Samaria Headquarters, directed shooting attacks and other terrorist activities in Judea and Samaria and transferred funds intended for Hamas' terrorist activities in Gaza. He also carried out several deadly terrorist attacks in which IDF soldiers were killed," it added. Videos posted on social media showed a large fire at the scene, with paramedics and firefighters working to manage the aftermath. The area that had been targeted included a large container used as a shelter for dozens of families, surrounded by hundreds of tents. Gaza's government office said, "The Israeli occupation army had designated these areas as safe zones, calling on citizens and displaced persons to head to these safe areas," adding that when displaced people sought refuge, they came under attack, according to a CNN report. Earlier, the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) confirmed the strike and said that it struck a "Hamas compound in Rafah in which significant Hamas terrorists were operating a short while ago." The IDF said that it was aware of reports indicating that several civilians were harmed due to the strike and fire that was ignited and added

that the incident is under review. In a post on X, IDF stated, "An IDF aircraft struck a Hamas compound in Rafah in which significant Hamas terrorists were operating a short while ago. The strike was carried out against legitimate targets under international law, through the use of precise munitions and on the basis of precise intelligence that indicated Hamas' use of the area. The IDF is aware of reports indicating that as a result of the strike and fire that was ignited several civilians in the area were harmed. The incident is under review." The airstrike was reported after sirens sounded in Tel Aviv and parts of central Israel on Sunday after rockets were fired at the city, according to the Israeli health ministry, CNN reported. It marked the first time rockets were fired on the city since last January. The Israel Defence Forces (IDF) said that eight pockets were fired from the Rafah area of southern Gaza and had crossed into Israel. The IDF stated that a "number of projectiles" had been intercepted. According to CNN, Hamas has claimed responsibility for the attack. Hamas said it had targeted Tel Aviv with a "large missile barrage" in response to Israel's "massacres against civilians."

## Narad Rai Meets Amit Shah, Hints At Defection In Samajwadi Party

Amidst ongoing polling to elect members of the 18th Lok Sabha, the Opposition's INDIA bloc faced a major setback on Monday as senior Samajwadi Party leader and a prime face in Uttar Pradesh's politics, Narad Rai met Union Home Minister Amit Shah. According to the reports, Narad Rai is likely to switch sides and may divide Akhilesh Yadav's SP. Narad Rai shared a picture of his meeting with Amit Shah on the micro-blogging site X and lauded Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government's social policies. For the unversed, Narad Rai was close to late SP patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav. The pictures shared by Rai also show that Suheldev Bharatiya Samaj Party (SBSP) chief and UP Minister Om Prakash Rajbhar was present during the meeting. Narad Rai's post also called Prime Minister

Modi a world leader, who strengthened India's image at the global level, and called Amit Shah the real "Chanakya of Politics". "Will strengthen their resolve to strengthen the last man in the queue and their commitment towards nationalism. Jai Shree Ram," Rai's post further read. Reports suggested that everything is not okay between Akhilesh Yadav and Narad Rai as he was not happy with the party chief's attitude at the Ballia rally held last Sunday. Rai represents Bhumihar community in Uttar Pradesh and is active in politics for more than three decades. He was also minister in Akhilesh Yadav's erstwhile state government. It was also learned that Rai has been in constant touch with Om Prakash Rajbhar and that before meeting BJP top leadership, Rai had a word with his supporters and may switch sides. During



the meet with his supporters, Rai remembered Mulayam Singh Yadav and pledged to remember his 'guru-mantra' till his last breath. "Neta ji (Mulayam Singh Yadav) considered himself as the servant of the leader... He said that if it comes to the respect of your people, don't be swayed by anyone. Neta ji, I will remember your guru-mantra till the last breath and I will always fight for my people," Rai said.

## Karnataka Govt To Foot PM Modi's Rs 80 Lakh Radisson Mysuru Hotel Bill; Here's Why

The Congress government in Karnataka will pay the Rs 80 lakh hotel bill which was incurred by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's stay at the Radisson Blu Plaza hotel during his visit to Mysuru in April last year to commemorate 50 years of Project Tiger. Recently, a row erupted after news broke that the hotel where PM Modi had stayed had threatened legal action to recover its dues, over a year after the bill, which runs up to Rs 80 lakh, remained unpaid. In a statement on Monday, Karnataka Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre said the state government will foot the bill of Modi's stay and said efforts are being made to resolve the matter in an amicable manner. "The state government's forest department had



written to them (authority). They informed that the hotel bill (Rs 80 lakh) should be reimbursed by the state government and we have decided to reimburse. So, there is no issue," he added. As per the statement, Khandre said it a state government tradition to host dignitaries like the Prime Minister and the President when they come. But due to Assembly elections

in Karnataka in April last year, the state government was not involved in planning of the programme (Project Tiger) since Model Code of Conduct (MCC) was in force. Talking to reporters, the Karnataka Minister said that PM Modi had visited Mysuru-Bandipur on the eve of commemoration of 50 years of Project Tiger, but the state government was not involved in the planning of the event as MCC was in force. Hence, it was purely a Central government programme. "Initially, they had planned to spend around Rs 3 crore but the expenditure incurred was around 6.33 crore. So, balance 3.3 crore has to come from the National Tiger Conservation Authority," he said.

# Move over Quad, the Squad is here: A challenge for India

Something unusual seems to be happening in India-United States relations. Whether it is a mild tiff or a more severe rift is yet to unravel. Several reasons seem to converge, leading to disarrays in the ties. Three of them stand out. First, the plot to assassinate a US-Canadian citizen and alleged Khalistani separatist, Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, in New York in which, according to American officials, Indian intelligence authorities were involved. Second, New Delhi's perceived alliance with Russia against the background of the Ukraine war and its purchase of Russian defence systems and oil despite US sanctions. Third, India's continuing association with America's bête noir, Iran, with which New Delhi recently signed a long-term agreement to run its Chabahar port.

## The Nijjar controversy

Even before the Pannun murder plot unravelled, America, a member of the "Five Eyes" consisting of Australia, New Zealand, Britain and Canada, reportedly passed on to the latter intelligence on the murder last year of another alleged Khalistani separatist, Hardeep Singh Nijjar, in British Columbia, Canada. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau accused the Indian government of being complicit in the assassination, which subsequently led to a serious diplomatic spat and inflicted considerable damage to the ties between the two major democracies. Four of the accused in the Nijjar killing, all Indian nationals, have been arrested and are under Canadian police custody currently. It now seems that the Pannun murder plot will be New Delhi's albatross, which Washington will happily exploit to hold India hostage to US pressure whenever needed. Meanwhile, India and Russia have had a close relationship going back decades. New Delhi has emerged as one of the top buyers of Russian oil since Western nations imposed sanctions and halted purchases in response to the Ukraine war.

## Treaty with Russia

Besides securing the S-400 missile systems to Washington's chagrin, India is working on an investment treaty with Russia. It is progressing with a free trade agreement with the Moscow-led Eurasian Economic Union. The two countries are also holding talks on jointly producing military equipment. "For long, we have looked at Russia from a political or security perspective," External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said at an industry conference recently. "As that country turns eastwards, fresh economic opportunities are presenting themselves," he added. Trade between India and Russia stood at \$65.7 billion in the financial year ending March 2024, a 33 percent jump over the previous year. As for Iran, noting the new 10-year agreement between New Delhi and Tehran over the development of the Chabahar port, the US State Department said all entities considering business deals with Iran "need to be aware of the potential risk they are opening themselves up to and the potential risk of sanctions."

## China-centric Quad

While some US Congressmen were openly rejoicing at the crash that killed Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, Prime Minister Narendra Modi was among the first foreign leaders to respond, expressing shock and sorrow and acknowledging the Iranian leader's significant contributions to enhancing the bilateral relationship between the two countries. India also announced a day of national mourning to mark the tragedy. A major victim of the souring relationship seems to be the much-celebrated Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, known as Quad, the grouping of Japan, the US, Australia,

and India—earlier touted as a bulwark against a rising China, especially given Beijing's assertive approach in the South-China Sea. It has been over a year since the Quad leaders met last for a summit. With Joe Biden declining New Delhi's invitation to be the chief guest at India's Republic Day in January, a planned Quad summit along the sidelines of the celebration had to be deferred. Another attempt to hold a summit before the beginning of the national elections on 19 April also fell apart for various reasons. No new dates have been set yet.

## Entry of 'Squad'

Meanwhile, according to analysts, an emerging quadrilateral group replacing India with the Philippines, known as the 'Squad', has become the core of Washington's foreign security policy in the Indo-Pacific. Until recently, the US saw India as an increasingly indispensable nation in the global competition with China, so much so that Washington renamed "Asia-Pacific" "Indo-Pacific" a few years ago. In early May, US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin held a series of meetings in Hawaii with his Squad counterparts to set an "ambitious course" for peace, stability and deterrence in the Indo-Pacific. In April, the four countries conducted joint maritime

drills within the Philippines' exclusive economic zone as tensions mount between Manila and Beijing over territorial claims in the South China Sea. Focusing on peace, stability, and deterrence in the Indo-Pacific, the Squad aims to enhance interoperability, conduct joint patrols, and strengthen intelligence and maritime security cooperation. The Philippines' pivot towards the West, particularly under the leadership of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., has played a significant role in driving the institutionalization of this new alliance. "In militarized crises and conflict with China, the minilaterals like AUKUS (Australia, United Kingdom and US) and the 'Squad', and most importantly the US-Japan alliance will prove to be far more important than Quad", says Ashley Tellis, a Senior Fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

## India's regional heft

As the US leads the new Indo-Pacific alliance to contain China's ambitions, Beijing and Moscow are finding strength in each other. In mid-May, President Vladimir Putin and Chinese leader Xi Jinping met in Beijing and pledged a new era of partnership. It was Putin's first trip abroad since being inaugurated for a fifth term in March this year. Both



leaders signed a joint statement expressing opposition to the US on several issues, including Taiwan, Ukraine, and North Korea, and displaying a growing convergence in values and political priorities. They sought to show support for each other and present a united front to the rest of the world. The Indo-US fallout is happening when India's regional heft is diminishing, with neighbours Maldives, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh increasingly moving towards arch-rival China's orbit. While the Quad may not be dead yet, its future remains uncertain amidst evolving geopolitical dynamics and shifting alliances in the Indo-Pacific. As countries navigate these complexities, diplomatic engagements and strategic partnerships will continue to shape the region's security architecture in the future. Whether India can maintain its strategic autonomy while at the same time playing a major role in shaping the future of the Indo-Pacific is anybody's guess.

## If you had asked sweetly, voters would have given you one seat

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leaders Arvind Kejriwal and Bhagwant Mann, the chief ministers of Delhi and Punjab respectively, are vigorously campaigning across all constituencies in the latter state to secure the 13 Lok Sabha seats that go to the polls on June 1. They are conducting road shows and public meetings, drawing substantial crowds. Posters depicting Kejriwal behind bars have been placed throughout the constituencies, emphasising the actions taken against him by the Central government. These events are intended to rally support against the BJP, which they accuse of withholding funds for Punjab and harassing protesting farmers. Both leaders deliver speeches from SUVs, urging voters to stand against the saffron party. Kejriwal has carried out road shows in Bathinda and Hoshiarpur and attended public meetings in Amritsar and Ferozpur. Meanwhile, Mann has been a part of similar events in nearly all constituencies, including Faridkot, Bathinda, Patiala, Amritsar, Sangrur, Jalandhar, Ludhiana and other areas. Their efforts aim to galvanise support and secure victories in the upcoming election. AAP National Convenor Arvind Kejriwal and Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann at the press conference on Monday Road show. During a road show in Bathinda, Kejriwal addressed the crowd from his SUV, saying, "Two years, before you brought the AAP to the Punjab Assembly where out of the 117 seats, around 92 were won by us. "We have given free electricity to Delhi and Punjab and opened mohalla clinics that provide free treatment. In the past two years, we have provided 50,000 jobs to youngsters. The state government seen by the Punjab public in the past two years is unlike anything that had come before. Give us 13 seats, and we will get all the work done by the Central government. When farmers went to Delhi to protest two years ago they were stopped by putting nails on the road. Is Delhi owned by their father? Delhi belongs to everyone. Press the button this time to get rid of [Prime Minister Narendra] Modi. Your 8,500-crore population [of Punjab] are being hindered by the Central government.



Funds that were for building roads and mohalla clinic are being blocked by the Modi government, which is dictatorial. If you give us 13 seats, we will get into their houses and get back your money," said Kejriwal. Press conference On Monday, Kejriwal and Mann held a press conference to speak out against Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who visited Ludhiana to campaign on Sunday. Mann said, "Instead of asking for votes, Shah threatened Punjabis in Punjab. He said that after June 4, the Bhagwant Mann government would splinter and he will not be the CM. This is a general election, so why he is threatening the elected state government? First of all, they are buying MLAs and putting them behind bars. Punjabis have made huge sacrifices for the country and here he is threatening them. If you ask us to do anything with love, we are ready to comply. But if you threaten a Punjabi, the results will be far from expected. Farmers who had been protesting had sat for more than a year and later they had to apologise. We have 92 seats and the man who is talking about breaking the government has only three seats in the Assembly. Now, they will not even get three seats. We won the Assembly poll by a huge margin so how can you break us? BJP will score zero this time in Punjab. They had put Kejriwal in jail and broke the Shiv Sena and NCP in Maharashtra. Since yesterday, I've been getting calls asking how can Amit Shah say he will destroy the state government. Will you bring governor's rule? What will you do?" The Punjab CM added, "Earlier he [Modi] called himself a chowkidar and

now he says he's God." At the press conference, Kejriwal also slammed Shah, saying, "No other home minister has made such comments and indulged in such gundagardi after going to a state. He openly made threats and challenged Punjabis and Punjab. The citizens of the state are infuriated by Shah's speech." He added, "The people want to ask Amit Shah how he will destroy the state government and what are your plans to destroy the party, which has 92 MLAs. Will you send the ED and CBI to threaten Punjabi citizens or will you buy the Punjab people? What price do you put on Punjabi citizens? How much money do you have? Will governor's rule emerge in Punjab? Tell us all what is the plan. Will you [voters] accept this type of gundagardi? Punjabis have a big heart. If you had asked sweetly, they would have given you one seat. But if such threats are made and the going will be difficult for you, Amit Shah," added Kejriwal. He added that the BJP's only aim was to stop Punjab's citizens from getting free electricity. "The same threats were made against me in Delhi. If you want to continue getting free electricity, give 13 seats to AAP. What the BJP will do in future can't be imagined. Give us 13 seats so that we can fight for your rights. Modi and Shah detest the people of Punjab. Around 700 farmers lost their lives because of them during the protest last year," Kejriwal said. The Delhi chief minister said, "Soon after our party came to power in Punjab, they blocked funds amounting to almost Rs 9,000 crore. I say to Amit Shah: first form the government on June 4 and later decided about destroying the state. People will vote and show their face in the election." Kejriwal added that the video of Shah's speech had already gone viral and Punjab citizens were angry. Kejriwal said if was wrong to resort to threats and abuse to gain votes. "They should seek votes based on the work they have done instead. In two years, we are showcasing our work. But in the past 10 years, they don't have anything to say about their work. In the past 50 years, people have not seen such a prime minister and home minister," added Kejriwal.

