

Smriti Irani attends Overseas Friends of BJP victory celebration for PM Modi's third term

London [UK] : The Overseas Friends of BJP (OFBJP) organized a victory celebration for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's third term at the Indian Gymkhana Club in Osterley, London. BJP leader Smriti Irani attended the event. Upon her arrival at the venue, BJP supporters welcomed Smriti Irani. She even posed for pictures with them. Around 500 people gathered to hear Smriti Irani's speech at the event, showcasing strong support and enthusiasm for the BJP and its leadership, according to the OFBJP press release. In her address, Smriti Irani commended the president of the OFBJP UK and emphasized unity among Indians, according to the press release. She highlighted the growth of the BJP in the UK over the past few years and discussed the global impact and influence of Prime Minister Modi and his government. She appreciated the efforts of OFBJP UK President Kuldeep Singh Shekhwat. She emphasized unity among Indians, regardless of their political affiliations, stating, "We should not mock the others as they just don't want our heads but they want India on their platter." Highlighting the efforts made by PM Narendra Modi, "This is a prime minister who has seen in his village, poor women defecating in the open and he built toilets for, for 110 million poor Indian families. This is a prime minister that was told Chaiwala Kabi Pridhan, Mantri, Nahi Ban Sakta (Tea seller can-

Myanmar nationals have outnumbered locals!



On Saturday (22nd June), the Maring Students' Union (MSU) released a press note, saying that refugees from Myanmar have outnumbered the local population in the Tengnoupal district of Manipur. MSU, representing the Maring tribe, pointed out that it has collected the biometrics of 1428 Myanmar nationals, who fled the country amid the ongoing fight between the army junta and pro-democracy forces. They have taken refuge in 6 Maring Naga villages, namely, Saibol, Moirengthei, Chanringphai, Lamlong Khunou, Choktong, and Satang. According to MSU, the population of Myanmar nationals is now higher than that of the local Maring Naga tribe. The Maring Students' Union has also claimed that the Myanmar refugees have been illegally building houses in the villages without permission from the State authorities. The Assam Rifles, a central paramilitary force responsible for border security in the area, has refuted claims of illegal settlements. In a statement, it said, "In the said area, extending from BP 82 to 89, some refugees have indeed taken shelter due to war-like situation in Myanmar, however they are immediately repatriated as the security situation improves across the IMB. The accommodation arrangements for the refugees comprise of self-help, bare essential thatched huts with polythene covers." It further added, "The State Administration is fully aware of the presence of refugees in the area and have also collected the biometric data of the refugees. Proper coordination in terms of security exists between the Security Forces and the State Administration." "Security Forces maintain a vigilant presence and are actively managing the border area to prevent any unlawful activities," it concluded.

not become PM). But this is the prime minister that gave impetus to every youngster in India to say that if you want to become somebody, do not be subjugated to the will of those who only have money but may not have talent." "This is a prime minister who knew that poor women in families, just to save for a rainy day, would take crumpled notes and shove it in bottles which had flour or rice, all because they wanted to save money. Women who, if their husbands or their sons wanted to do something of their own, would give away their gold, one bangle, one earring only so that their families could live with Swabhimaan. This is a prime minister who made sure that he opened bank accounts for 500

million Indians. And to be fair to him, while we applaud him in absentia, it was never a part of his manifesto," she added. She noted that building toilets for the poor was not a part of political discourse in 2014. She said that PM Modi built the toilets as he meant it when he said "I will be harbinger of change." Smriti Irani said, "So, when Vijay (The Foreign in-charge of BJP Worldwide Vijay Chauthaiwale) stands here to say thank you for your support and your contribution, they are not mere words, but the resounding claps will not be limited to this room. They will reach that Prime Minister, who is mocked by the opposition. Why? Because he built roads? This is the prime minister who,

at the age of 73, is humiliated by a man who was born in a political family with a golden spoon and who keeps discovering India even over the age of 50. But don't mock them. I say don't. For they come together because what they want on a platter is not just our heads." "India, don't mock them, for they will find friends who will want nothing less than pull India down. Don't mock them, for they don't celebrate when we become the fifth largest economy. They don't support us when we say we want to be the third-largest economy. Don't mock them for they'd rather burn our homes down only so that they could burn down the legacy of Prime Minister Modi. They will cut the nose to spite the face."

Rahul Gandhi's emotional note for Wayanad: 'When I faced abuse day after day...'

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, who vacated his Wayanad Lok Sabha seat recently, penned an emotional note for the people of his former constituency. In his note, Rahul Gandhi thanked the constituents of Wayanad for their unconditional support during his tough times. Rahul Gandhi contested and won two seats -- Wayanad in Kerala and Rae Bareli in Uttar Pradesh -- in the Lok Sabha elections. As per rules, Rahul Gandhi had to vacate one of the seats within 14 days of the Lok Sabha results, which came out on June 4. The former Congress chief decided to retain the Rae Bareli seat, which is a Gandhi family bastion. "You embraced me

with unbridled love and affection. It didn't matter which political formation you supported, which community you belonged to, which religion you believed in, or which language you spoke," Rahul Gandhi said in his note to the people of Wayanad. "When I faced abuse day after day, your unconditional love protected me. You were my refuge, my home and my family. I never felt for even a second that you doubted me," he added. Rahul Gandhi further said that though he was sad to leave the Wayanad seat, he was comforted by the fact that his sister, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, will be there to "represent" them. "I am confident that she



will do an excellent job of being your MP if you decide to give her the opportunity," he wrote. The Congress has named Priyanka Gandhi Vadra for the Wayanad bypoll, scheduled to take place later this year. This will also mark her electoral debut.

Over 1,300 Haj Pilgrims Die in Saudi Arabia

Riyadh [Saudi Arabia],: Saudi Arabia said on Sunday that as many as 1,301 people died during the Hajj pilgrimage, with "numerous cases" due to heat stress and "unauthorized" trips accounting for over four out of five of the deaths, CNN reported. In a statement, the Saudi government said, "The health system addressed numerous cases of heat stress this year, with some individuals still under care. Regrettably, the number of mortalities reached 1,301." The statement noted that 83 per cent of those who died were "unauthorised to perform Hajj" and "walked long distances under direct sunlight, without adequate shelter or comfort." It said that the deceased people included "several elderly and chronically ill individuals," adding that the families of all the dead had now been identified, according to CNN report. Extreme heat has been named as the main reason behind hundreds of deaths and injuries reported during this year's Hajj pilgrimage. The temperature in Mecca rose to a record-setting 125 degrees Fahrenheit on Monday. Various authorities have stated that the problems have been enhanced by the number of unofficial pilgrimages. Saudi Arabia requires each pilgrim to acquire one of the 1.8 million available licences to legally access Mecca, the holy city that is central for Hajj pilgrims. These licenses can cost a pilgrim several thousand US dollars. Usually, the unlicensed pilgrims don't travel in organised tour buses with air conditioning or easy access to water and food supplies. The Saudi government seemed to suggest the



unauthorised nature of many of the trips as the reason for taking so long to issue an official death toll, as this had complicated the process of identification. The statement reads, "Identification completed, despite the initial lack of personal information or identification documents. Proper processes were followed for identification, burial, and honoring the deceased, with death certificates provided." Some pilgrims have criticised the poor infrastructure and organisation of this year's Hajj pilgrimage. Pilgrims who were on official tours also spent the bulk of their day walking outdoors in the scorching heat. Speaking to CNN, some witnesses said they saw worshippers losing consciousness and walking past bodies covered in white cloth. Saudi Arabia's announcement comes as the Egyptian government pledged to revoke the licences of 16 Hajj tourism firms involved in making illegal pilgrimages to Mecca and refer the company's managers to the public prosecutor amid fears hundreds of Egyptians are among the deceased people. The Egyptian government made the decision in a cabinet meeting on Saturday after a report highlighted the dubious nature of how some tourism firms operate. The report reviewed by

the cabinet said some operators had not issued correct visas, so holders could not enter Mecca and were rather forced to enter "through desert paths on foot." It also accused some firms of not being able to provide proper accommodation for staying, leaving people exposed to the heat, CNN reported. During the meeting, Egyptian Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly offered his "sincere condolences and sympathy" to the families of the deceased pilgrims and pledged to provide them with the necessary support. Notably, Hajj permits are given to nations based on a quota system and Saudi Arabia requires each pilgrim to acquire one of the 1.8 million available licences to legally access Mecca. Since the cost of one of these licences costs several thousand US dollars, many pilgrims attempt to access the site illegally and they usually don't travel in organised tour buses with air conditioning or easy access to water and food supplies, CNN report. Notably, the timing of the Hajj pilgrimage is based on the Islamic lunar calendar which in 2024 has fallen during scorching temperatures in Saudi Arabia. Pilgrims made the journey in extreme temperatures of up to 49 degrees Celsius. During the Hajj pilgrimage, the faithful perform various rituals in and around Mecca, which often involve many hours of walking in the scorching heat every day. The total number of deaths in this year's Hajj could still rise, as governments only know about pilgrims who have registered and visited Mecca as part of their nation's quota.

Jaishankar visits UAE for bilateral talks, first stop at BAPS Hindu temple



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Sunday arrived in Abu Dhabi to hold wide-ranging talks with his United Arab Emirates counterpart Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan. Jaishankar visited the iconic BAPS Hindu Mandir in Abu Dhabi before the meeting with Al Nahyan, where the two leaders are expected to deliberate on the overall situation in Gaza besides bilateral relations. "Blessed to visit the BAPS Hindu Mandir in Abu Dhabi today. A visible symbol of India-UAE friendship, it radiates a positive message to the world and is a true cultural bridge between our two countries," Jaishankar posted on X soon after the visit to the temple inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on February 14 this year. At the temple, the Minister interacted with the monks of BAPS, the Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Sansthan, the organisation that built the temple on the land donated by UAE. Situated on a 27-acre site in Abu Mureikhah near Al Rahba, the BAPS Hindu Mandir, the temple is a stunning display of craftsmanship. Earlier in the day, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said Jaishankar's visit to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) would provide an opportunity to review the entire spectrum of comprehensive strategic partnership between India and the UAE as well as regional and global developments. "During the visit, the External Affairs Minister will have a meeting with his UAE counterpart on wide-ranging issues of the partnership," the MEA said in a statement. About 3.5-million-strong and vibrant Indian community forms the largest expatriate group in the UAE. The ties between India and the UAE have been on an upswing in the last few years. Following the landmark visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the UAE in August 2015, bilateral relations between the two countries were elevated to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. Both countries signed a landmark comprehensive economic partnership agreement (CEPA) in February 2022 to boost economic engagement. The trade pact provides numerous benefits, including the elimination and reduction of tariffs, fostering an open trade environment, and enhancing market access for service providers across various sectors. The UAE is also among the top four investors in India in terms of foreign direct investments in 2022-23.

Now, Godsend faced with King Cong & Co: 18th Lok Sabha stiffest Opp challenge for Modi

In all his 20-plus years as head of the Treasury, Narendra Modi has never set eyes on as robust an Opposition as he will on Monday when the 18th Lok Sabha assembles for its first sitting. Belying a prediction he had made in the same House less than four months ago, the INDIA bloc has secured 234 of the Lok Sabha's 543 seats. It will now be difficult to shout its members down or suspend them en masse to muscle through legislation with little or no scrutiny, as in Modi's previous two terms. Modi had on February 5, while replying to the motion of thanks to the President's address in the last session before the general election, unsheathed his "Abki baar chaar sau paar (This time, 400-plus)" slogan. He had predicted that most of the Congress candidates would lose and be spotted in the "visitors' gallery" of the Lok Sabha. As the elections progressed, Modi had projected himself as a godsend. Cocking a snook at that prophecy, the Congress has nearly doubled its strength in the House, from 52 to 99. For the first time since the beginning of Modi's dominance in Delhi, the party will be officially eligible to claim the post of leader of the Opposition, having secured the necessary one-tenth of the House's seats. The BJP's numbers are still more than double the Congress's, but the ruling party is bereft of the sheen of absolute majority. It is reduced to 240 members - far below the majority mark of 272 and down from the 303 it tallied in 2019 - and compelled for the first time to bank on its allies, not just to get bills passed but to survive. The Opposition has, by contesting Bhartruhari Mahtab's appointment to the temporary post of pro-tem Speaker, given advance notice of its unwillingness to concede anything without a fight. The Opposition views the appointment of seven-term member Mahtab at the expense of the Congress's eight-term member, Kodikunnil Suresh, as an attempt by



the BJP to lay down an early marker and show that it continues to hold the whip hand as before. Led by the Congress, the Opposition promptly opposed the move alleging Mahtab's appointment as pro-tem Speaker amounted to a breach of "convention" and "an unquestioned norm" that required the senior-most MP to be assigned the post. As a mark of protest, the three designated INDIA bloc members on the panel that is to assist the pro-tem Speaker are likely to withdraw themselves. If they do so - the final decision will be taken on Monday morning - it will mark a rare chapter in Parliament's history. Congress leader Jairam Ramesh on Sunday sought to accuse the BJP of being biased against Dalits, questioning why Karnataka MP Ramesh Chandappa Jigajinagi, a seven-time parliamentarian like Mahtab, was not considered for the pro-tem Speaker's post. The short session of eight working days - from June 24 to July 3 - is meant for limited business. These include the administration of oath to the newly elected MPs over the first two days, followed by the Speaker's election, a joint address to both Houses by the President, and a discussion on the motion of thanks to the President's address. But a resurgent Opposition intends to make its reawakened enthusiasm felt even during this short session by raising a storm over a host of issues such as the serial fiascos involving public exams like the NEET-UG and the UGC-NET and the lacunae in railway safety. Also on the agenda are the demand for a joint parliamentary committee probe into

alleged stock market manipulations through "fake" exit polls, the Agnipath scheme of four-year military recruitments, and the continuing Manipur unrest. The first two days are likely to pass peacefully, with the oath of affirmation being administered to the newly elected MPs, but the lull could be broken during the Speaker's election on Wednesday. Given the Opposition's mood, it could force a contest by fielding its own candidate if it finds the government nominee unacceptable. The BJP has deputed defence minister Rajnath Singh, a veteran from the coalition era of Atal Bihari Vajpayee, to talk to the Opposition and ensure the Speaker's election is a unanimous one. He faces a challenging task. The Opposition could also demand the deputy Speaker's post, setting up another possible showdown. The acrimony, however, is likely to be visible most clearly during the discussion on the motion of thanks to the President's address, when the Opposition is expected to try and put the government on the mat. "The challenge for Modi will come not from managing his coalition, but from an Opposition which is coming to the House with the mindset that the ruling party has no mandate to rule," key RSS functionary and former BJP general secretary Ram Madhav said in an opinion piece on Saturday. "Modi said he missed a 'good Opposition'. He should brace up for a rancorous Opposition in this term," Madhav added. A preview of how belligerent the Opposition is likely to be came in another opinion piece, written by former Congress finance minister P. Chidambaram. "The Opposition parties must act as if they were the government. They must seize the opportunity and set the narrative for the government," Chidambaram said in the piece, published in The Indian Express on Sunday, stressing the polls had thrown up a "formidable parliamentary Opposition".

SC Adjourns Arvind Kejriwal's Plea Against Delhi HC Stay On His Bail Till Wednesday

The Supreme Court on Monday adjourned the hearing in jailed Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal's plea against stay on his bail by the Delhi High Court in the Delhi Liquor Policy. The top court will now hear the matter on Wednesday. A vacation bench comprising Justices Manoj Misra and SVN Bhattacharya heard the matter today and said let the high court come out with the order. The high court had reserved order on stay on bail. The court noted that ED and Kejriwal's counsel were to submit short submissions on the stay application to high court and the order on the same is likely to come by tomorrow. The bench said that let the high court order come out tomorrow. On Friday, the Delhi High Court paused the re-

lease of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convenor after the trial court granted him bail on June 20. In its bail order, the trial court had held that prima facie, Kejriwal's guilt was yet to be established and that the ED had failed to furnish direct evidence linking him to the proceeds of crime in the money-laundering case. Kejriwal was arrested by the ED on March 21, and could have walked out of Tihar Jail on Friday. However, the ED approached the high court against the trial court order. The high court put an interim stay on his bail and directed the parties to file written submissions by June 24. The trial court had granted Kejriwal bail after hearing the case on merits. The high court said it wanted to go through the en-



tire case records and issued a notice to Kejriwal seeking his response to the ED's plea challenging the trial court's June 20 order by which he was granted bail. The court had listed the plea for hearing on July 10.

