

Opinion poll shows Trump leads Biden in 6 of 7 states

Voters doubt president's capabilities, dissatisfied with the economy

WASHINGTON

AHEAD of the upcoming US election scheduled for November, President Joe Biden is trailing behind his main opponent Donald Trump in six of the seven battleground states, according to a latest opinion poll.

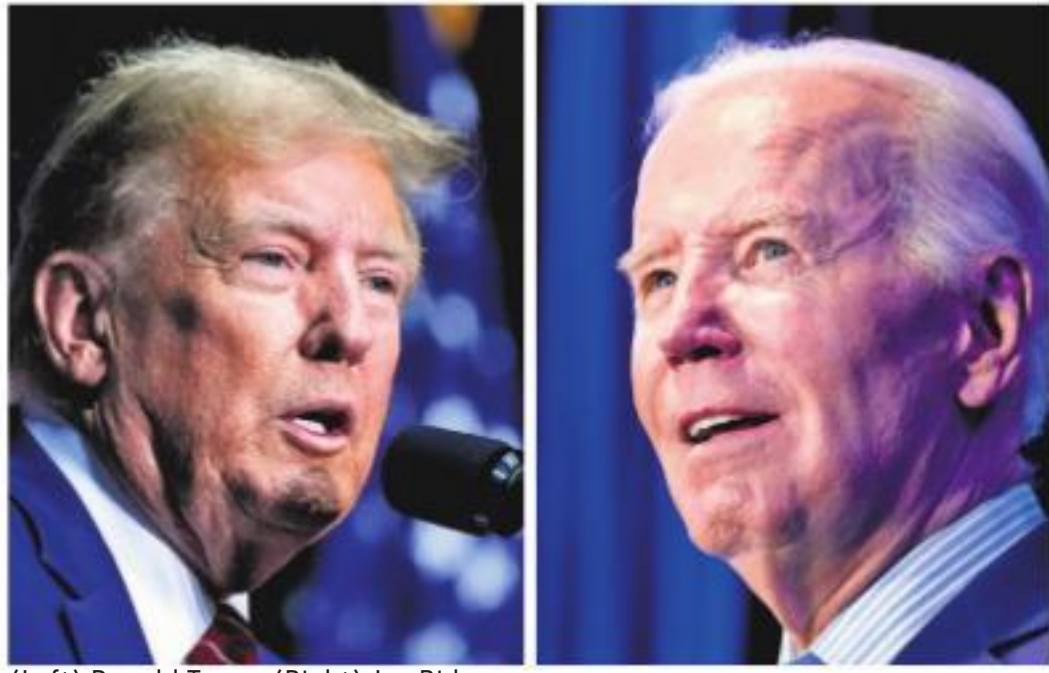
Voters are broadly dissatisfied with the national economy and there are deep doubts about Biden's capabilities and job performance, the survey conducted by the Wall Street Journal revealed.

Trump leads between two and eight percentage points in six battleground states of Pennsylvania, Michigan, Arizona, Georgia, Nevada and North Carolina. However, Biden is leading Trump by three points in Wisconsin.

In every state in the survey, negative views of the president's job performance outweigh positive views by 16 percentage points or more, with the gap topping 20 points in four states. By contrast, Trump earns an unfavourable job review for his time in the White House in only a single state - Arizona - where negative marks outweigh positive ones by 1 percentage point, WSJ reported.

According to Real Clear Politics, which keeps tracks of all the major national polls, Trump and Biden are in a neck-to-neck fight this fall. An average of major national polls shows that Trump is leading Biden by 0.8 percentage points.

"Biden and Trump both easily became their party's presumptive nominees last month,



(Left) Donald Trump (Right) Joe Biden

Let the youngest man win the November election

The polling results also mirror recent concerns over the president's physical fitness. About 48% of voters believe the 77-year-old Trump is more fit to serve as president, while only 28% view the 81-year-old Biden as having the mental and physical fitness to serve another four-year term as president

but each candidate will face a long and difficult campaign in a rematch of the 2020 contest.

In a race expected to be razor-thin, a handful of battleground states will likely determine the winner," The Hill newspaper said Wednesday.

A new Franklin and Marshall poll in Pennsylvania illustrated a different result in the crucial battleground, Fox News reported. The survey indicated Biden topping Trump by 10

points in a head-to-head showdown. But the president's lead shrank to just two points when voters were asked about a multi-candidate field.

The survey was conducted March 20-31, with a sampling error of plus or minus four percentage points.

First lady Jill Biden was asked about Biden's dismal WSJ polling results on "CBS Mornings" on Wednesday, but dismissed the dismal results, saying, "No, he's not losing in all the battleground states. He's coming up."

The WSJ poll was conducted March 17 to 24 and has a margin of error of plus or minus 1.5 percentage points.

"The presidential contest remains close, but there are some interesting twists which run counter to the conventional wisdom," Lee M. Miringoff, Director of the Marist Institute for Public Opinion. PTI

US treasury secy in China to talk trade

GUANGZHOU

TREASURY Secretary Janet Yellen arrived in China on Thursday for five days of meetings in a nation determined to avoid open conflict with the United States, yet the world's two largest economies still appear to be hashing out the rules on how to compete against each other.

There are tensions over Chinese government support for the manufacturing of electric vehicles and solar panels, just as the US government ramps up its own aid for those tech sectors.

There are differences in trade, ownership of TikTok, access to computer chips and national security 'all of them a risk to what has become a carefully managed relationship.

The 77-year-old Yellen, a renowned economist and former Federal Reserve chair, laid out to reporters the issues that she intends to raise with her Chinese counterparts during her five-day visit.

Yellen begins her trip in Guangzhou and later moves to Beijing for meetings with finance leaders and state officials. Her engagements will include Vice Premier He Lifeng,



Yellen, left, shakes hands with Chinese Ministry of Finance Vice Minister Liao Min at Guangdong province | AP

Chinese Central Bank Governor Pan Gongsheng, former Vice Premier Liu He, leaders of American businesses operating in China, university students and local leaders.

Yellen, speaking to reporters Wednesday during a refuelling stop in Alaska en route to Asia, said her visit would be a 'continuation of the dialogue that we have been engaged and deepening' ever since US President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping met in 2022 in Indonesia. Yellen recently accused China of flooding global markets with heavily subsidised green energy products, possibly undercutting the subsidies the US has provided to its own renewable energy and EV sector with funds provided by the Democrats' Inflation Reduction Act. AP

Alaska Air gets \$160 million from Boeing

SEATTLE

ALASKA Airlines on Thursday said Boeing has paid the carrier \$160 million in 'initial compensation' for a panel that blew out of an Alaska Boeing 737 Max 9 in January.

The airline said that it expects additional compensation, the terms of which it said are confidential. The payment covered Alaska's pretax loss related to the accident, including lost revenue and the cost of returning its Max 9 fleet to service after the planes were grounded for three weeks.

The airline described the compensation in a regulatory filing. A panel that plugs a gap left for an extra emergency exit blew off an Alaska Max 9 as it flew 16,000 feet over Oregon on January 5.

10 Iran personnel killed jihadist attack

TEHRAN

JIHADIST attacks in southeastern Iran near Pakistan killed 10 Iranian security personnel, state media reported on Thursday, doubling an earlier toll.

The Pakistan-based Sunni

Muslim rebel group Jaish al-Adl, or Army of Justice, claimed the attacks.

The number of dead is almost as large as from a similar attack in December, which the same group claimed and which was followed by tit-for-

tat aerial strikes with Pakistan.

The attacks hit Sistan-Baluchistan province which has for years faced unrest involving drug-smuggling gangs, rebels from the Baluchi minority and Sunni Muslim extremists. AFP

66 workers stuck in quarries rescued in Taiwan

HUALIEN

SIXTY-SIX workers stranded at two rock quarries in Taiwan following Wednesday's strongest earthquake in 25 years were rescued on Thursday, authorities said. They could not be rescued immediately as the approach roads to the quarries were damaged.

Elsewhere in Taiwan, rescuers continued their search for missing people and worked to reach hundreds stranded when the quake sent boulders and mud tumbling down mountainsides, blocking roads.

Ten people died and more than 1,000 were injured.

The powerful quake struck during the morning rush hour a day earlier, sending schoolchildren rushing outdoors and families fleeing their apartments through the windows.

The ground floors of some buildings collapsed, leaving them leaning at precarious angles. Though the island is reg-



A trapped tourist of Taroko National Park walks to an ambulance after being rescued in Hualien County, eastern Taiwan, on Thursday | AP

ularly rattled by earthquakes and generally well prepared, authorities did not send out the usual alerts because they were expecting a smaller tremor.

Some residents of the east-

ern coastal city of Hualien near the epicentre were staying in tents, and the main road linking the county to the capital, Taipei, was still closed Thursday afternoon, but much of Taiwan's day-to-day life re-

turned to normal.

Some local rail service to Hualien resumed, and Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co., one of the world's most important manufacturers of computer chips, restarted most operations, the Central News Agency reported.

Nearly 1,070 people were injured in the quake. Of the 10 dead, at least four were killed inside Taroko National Park, a tourist attraction famous for canyons and cliffs in mountainous Hualien County about 150 kilometres from Taipei.

One person was found dead in a damaged building and another was found in the Ho Ren Quarry. Rescuers also carried out the body of a man, who had severe wounds on his head, from a hiking trail.

Hundreds of people were stranded when rocks blocked the roads leading to their hotel, though most were safe while they awaited rescue. AP

Russian attack on Ukraine's city kills four

KYIV

RUSSIAN forces fired drones at two apartment buildings and a power plant in Ukraine's second-largest city, killing four people, local authorities said Thursday, as the Kremlin's forces apparently set in motion their strategy for the coming months of war by escalating the bombardment of civilian areas.

Shahed drones smashed into two apartment buildings in Kharkiv, near the Russian border.

The Kremlin's forces in recent months have stepped up their aerial barrages of Ukraine, hitting urban areas. The approximately 1,000-kilometer (620-mile) front line is largely deadlocked, but Kyiv officials say Moscow's troops have recently been probing for Ukrainian weaknesses on the front line ahead of an expected large-scale Russian offensive in the summer.

600 UK jurists urge govt to stop sale of arms to Israel after workers' death

LONDON

MORE than 600 British jurists, including three retired judges from the UK Supreme Court, are calling on the government to suspend arms sales to Israel, piling pressure on Prime Minister Rishi Sunak after the deaths of three UK aid workers in an Israeli strike.

Britain is just one of a number of Israel's longstanding allies whose governments are under growing pressure to halt weapons exports because of the toll of the six-month-old war in Gaza. In an open letter to Sunak published late Wednesday, the lawyers and judges said the UK could be complicit in 'grave breaches of international law' if it continues to ship weapons.

Signatories, including former Supreme Court President Brenda Hale, said Britain is legally obliged to heed the International Court of Justice's conclusion that there is a 'plausible risk of genocide' in Gaza. The letter said the 'sale of weapons and weapons systems to Israel 'falls significantly short of your government's



obligations under international law.' Britain is a staunch ally of Israel, but relations have been tested by the mounting death toll, largely civilian, from the war. Calls for an end to arms exports have escalated since an Israeli airstrike killed seven aid workers from the aid charity World Central Kitchen, three of them British.

Israel says the attack on the

GAZA TOLL SO FAR

33,037

Diplomatic crisis erupts between Israel, Poland

A new diplomatic crisis between Poland and Israel has erupted following the death of a Polish aid worker in Gaza, with the Polish president on Thursday denouncing a comment by the Israeli ambassador as 'outrageous' and the Foreign Ministry in Warsaw saying it was summoning him for a meeting. A 35-year-old Polish man was among seven people who were killed while delivering food

aid workers was a mistake caused by 'misidentification'.

The UK's main opposition parties have all said the Conservative government should halt weapons sales to Israel if the country has broken international law in Gaza. Several senior Conservatives have urged the same. Sunak has not committed to an arms export ban. AP

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