INTERNATIONAL

DHAKA MONDAY FEBRUARY 5, 2024 MAGH 22, 1430 BS The Daily Star

SPYING FOR PAK ISI **Indian embassy** staffer arrested

NDTV ONLINE

The Uttar Pradesh Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) has arrested an employee of the Indian embassy in Moscow for allegedly spying for Pakistan's intelligence agency ISI. He was arrested in Meerut.

The arrested individual, identified as Satendra Siwal, was working as a Multi-Tasking Staff (MTS) in the Ministry of External Affairs. The operation unfolded as ATS received intelligence from confidential sources suggesting that ISI handlers were luring Indian Ministry of External Affairs employees, offering financial incentives in exchange for sensitive information related to the Indian Army.

The information being exchanged posed a grave threat to India's internal and external security, the agency said.

Satendra Siwal, a resident of Shahmahiuddinpur village in Hapur, was identified as a key player in this espionage network. He was allegedly extracting confidential documents by exploiting his position within the embassy in Moscow.

During questioning, he reportedly failed to provide satisfactory answers, eventually confessing to his involvement in spy activities.

PAKISTAN ELECTION PTI navigates blackouts to keep campaign alive

AFP, Rawalpindi

Former prime minister Imran Khan's party has redefined election campaigning in Pakistan with its social media rallies and use of AI technology in a bid to sidestep a nationwide crackdown that has followed it online.

Khan was jailed in the build-up to the campaign, while his Pakistan Tehreeke-Insaaf (PTI) has been heavily restricted from campaigning for Thursday's vote and banned from the television airwaves. Censorship then followed as the party pushed its election campaign online.

"They can ban what they want, they can ban YouTube and TikTok, whatever they want but our vote is for Imran Khan,' 18-year-old Imran Aziz, a first-time voter, told AFP at a bustling electronics market in the garrison city of Rawalpindi.

Pakistani internet freedom watchdog Bytes 4 All recorded four hours-long social media shutdowns in January -- cutting off access to TikTok, Facebook, Instagram and



A relative mourns next to the bodies of two Palestinian children killed in Israeli strikes in Rafah, in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

Israel forges buffer zone inside Gaza at risk to civilians

Say experts, rights groups

AFP, Nahal Oz

Israeli forces in Gaza have systematically destroyed buildings in an attempt to create a buffer zone inside the Palestinian territory, experts and rights groups told AFP, raising fears over the civilian cost.

The plan, not publicly confirmed by Israel, appears to entail taking a significant chunk of territory out of the already tiny Hamasruled Gaza Strip, something experts as well as Israel's foreign allies have warned against.

Since the October 7 offensive, Israeli forces have targeted structures in Gaza within a

Displacement of Palestinians including from border area could breach laws of war, say experts

kilometre (0.6 miles) of the border, said Adi Ben Nun, a professor at Hebrew University of Jerusalem who has carried out an analysis of



"One very clear example of that may be the buffer zone -- this may amount to a war crime." When contacted by AFP, the military

declined to comment on the buffer zone. Cecilie Hellestveit, of the Norwegian Academy of International Law, warned of "the prospect of ethnic cleansing, transfer, or lack of rebuilding, so that the Palestinians will eventually be forced out of the area entirely". Scrutiny of Israel's actions in Gaza is likely to be heightened by last month's International

28 killed in Ukraine strike on Russiaoccupied city **REUTERS**, Moscow

Russia said vesterday that Ukraine killed at least 28 people, including nine women and a child, when its armed forces struck a bakery and restaurant in Russian-controlled eastern Ukraine with Westernsupplied rockets.

Russian-backed officials said that Ukraine struck the bakery in the city of Lysychansk at about 1230 GMT on Saturday with US-supplied High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMAŔS).

Emergency workers worked through the night searching for survivors in the rubble of what remained of the shattered Adriatic Restaurant on Moskovska Street, where Russian officials said a bakery had been set up for civilians.

"The armed forces of Ukraine opened fire on a bakery in Lysychansk,"

US to work

FROM PAGE 1 The US embassy in Dhaka shared the letter with the foreign ministry yesterday.

"The United States is committed to supporting Bangladesh's ambitious economic goals and partnering with Bangladesh on our shared vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific," President Biden said in the

letter. Biden said as the two countries embark on the "next chapter" of the US-Bangladesh partnership, he wants to convey the sincere desire of his administration to continue their work together, including on regional and global security, economic development, climate change and energy, global health and

humanitarian support. "We have a long and successful history of working together to solve problems, and our strong people-topeople ties are the foundation of this relationship," the letter

The Biden Administration has been critical of Bangladesh's democracy and human rights records, especially in the last three national elections. It also announced a visa policy in May last year, saying that it would deny visas to those who undermine Bangladesh's democracy and elections.

"We came to know about it

[India's GI status for Tangail

sari] on Friday. We began

the process from our side on

Saturday and will complete it expeditiously," he said.

has mentioned in the

traditional sari makers had

migrated from Tangail and other parts of Bangladesh to

they invented a different type

of handloom sari by changing

importance of the tag, Md

director, trademarks units

of DPDT, said a product with a GI tag generally fetches about 20 to 30 percent more

in the international market

compared to similar products

without the tag. Basak added that these saris

are produced in the district due

to convenient geographical

the GI tag for Tangail's sari. We strongly protest it," Basak said.

"I have seen on Facebook

and climatic conditions.

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Hossen, assistant

the design of the fringe.

Speaking

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FROM PAGE 1

Kaiserul

documentation

Global leaders including Chinese President Xi Jinping Russian President Vladimir Putin, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on her winning the polls and becoming prime minister for the fourth straight time.

The US issued a statement saying that it shares the view with other observers that these elections were not free or fair and it regrets that not all parties participated in the polls boycotted by BNP and its allies.

However, the statement on January 8 also had said that the US supports the people of Bangladesh and their aspirations for democracy, freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of expression.

The US also condemned the violence that took place during elections and in the months leading up to it and encouraged the Bangladesh government to credibly investigate reports of violence and to hold perpetrators

accountable. In a regular briefing, State Department US Spokesperson Matthew Miller last Thursday said the US expressing concerns over the election or crackdowns on political activists does not mean it does not have the responsibility to work with the Bangladesh government.

Collective apathy

As for arbitration, there are several options to pursue.

There is an opportunity to come to an understanding through agreements between the two governments, but there is also the scope to appeal directly to the World Intellectual Property Organization within one year. "We are also actively

considering that," he said.

"Documentation needs to regions of West Bengal. There, be done. The product must have originated at least 50 years ago, while the history of Tangail sari is more 250 years old."

To prove the place of origin of the product, many supporting documents including historical documents must be submitted as evidence. If there is any reference in ancient literature,

it has to be provided. After receiving all these, the DPDT examines the case. The whole process requires three to four months, according to DPDT officials.

"As such, we are hopeful that West Bengal has taken that we will get the Gl recognition for this product," Kaiserul said.

YouTube while Khan's PTI live-streamed to its supporters.

The blackouts were blamed by the government on "technical difficulties".

Despite the restrictions, PTI remains far ahead of its rivals when it comes to connecting online with Pakistan's youthful population and tens of millions tune in to their live-streams.

They've also become the first party to use AI voice-cloning technology, releasing a fresh speech by Khan from behind bars.

"They have apps, they have online speeches, they've done a Tiktok jalsa (gathering) which is unprecedented, at least in Pakistan, so they have a way of innovating and it's always been the case," said Ramsha Jahangir, a technology journalist.

She said censorship efforts by the government have little impact on PTI's popularity because the party is nimble enough to keep reaching its voters.

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satellite imagery. More than 30 percent of all buildings in

that area have been damaged or destroyed during the war, he said. Last month, the Israeli army's deadliest

day since the ground invasion began in late October offered a glimpse of the tactics being used to clear the border area.

Israeli army chief Herzi Halevi said at the time that 21 reservists were killed "during a defensive operation in the area separating the Israeli communities from Gaza" to allow for residents' "safe return".

The troops had laid out explosives to blow up buildings when they were fired upon by Hamas fighters, the army said.

Displacement of Gazans including from the border area could breach the laws of war, experts said.

"We are seeing mounting evidence that Israel appears to be rendering large parts of Gaza unliveable," said Nadia Hardman, a refugee rights expert at Human Rights Watch.

Court of Justice ruling asking Israel to prevent any acts of genocide.

The United States, Israel's top ally and provider of military aid, has repeatedly said Gaza's territory should not change and that a buffer zone would breach that principle.

"When it comes to the permanent status of Gaza... we remain clear about not encroaching on its territory," said US Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

Rights experts said Israel could use parts of its own territory to create a security zone.

"If the Israeli government wants a buffer zone, it has every right to create one in far larger Israel, but it has no right to seize land in Gaza," human rights expert Ken Roth, a professor at Princeton University, said on social media.

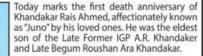
Border security has become a priority for many Israelis, experts said, and the return to communities near the Gaza border would be seen as a sign that Hamas no longer posed a threat.

said Leonid Pasechnik, the Russian-installed head of the Luhansk region which is now controlled by Russian forces.

Pasechnik said the bakery was crowded with civilians when it was struck. Russia's emergency ministry said 10 people had been pulled from the rubble alive.

But the ministry said four more people were in an "extremely grave condition" and that it was still searching for people. Ukraine has not vet commented on the attack. Reuters was unable to immediately verify what weapons had been used in the attack.

Remembering Khandakar Rais Ahmed



Rais, an eminent banker, graduated from Dhaka University before joining the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) where he distinguished himself and assumed a regional role in Hong Kong. He continued his successful career in corporate banking in

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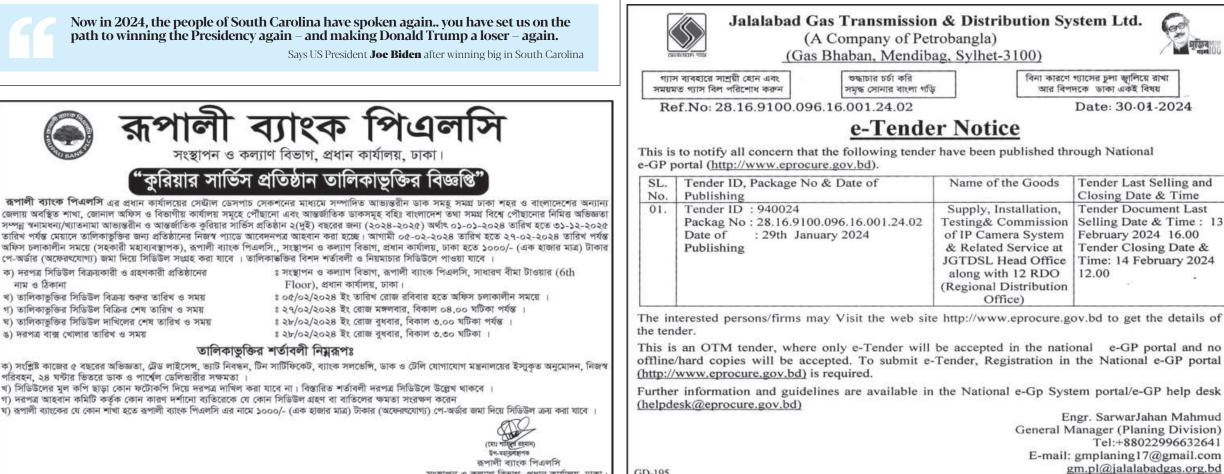
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Bangladesh, holding senior positions at renowned global financial institutions such as American Express and Standard Chartered Bank

A true gentleman, Rais was cherished by all who knew him. He was a devoted husband, loving father, dutiful son, and a kind-hearted individual who embodied humility and integrity. An aesthete, he had a passion for music, particularly Jazz, and was an avid photographer. In his youth and during his early career, he excelled in sports, notably as a tearaway fast bowler for the ShurjoTorun Cricket Club, and enjoyed basketball and squash. Additionally, Rais was an active Rotarian leading various social initiatives to support underserved communities.

At the age of 65, he passed away last year at United Hospital in Dhaka. Rais is survived by his two children, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, and five siblings. His legacy of kindness and humility will forever be cherished by those who knew him. May he rest in eternal peace.

Loving tribute from Raima Khandakar & Rabeeb Khandaker (his daughter & son



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