

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.

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.



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

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 Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has been heavily restricted from campaigning for Thursday's vote and banned from the television airwaves.

"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 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.

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 Hamas-ruled 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

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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 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 Herzl 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 unlivable," said Nadia Hardman, a refugee rights expert at Human Rights Watch.

28 killed in Ukraine strike on Russia-occupied city

REUTERS, Moscow

Russia said yesterday 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 Western-supplied 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 (HIMARS).

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," 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 yet commented on the attack. Reuters was unable to immediately verify what weapons had been used in the attack.

US to work

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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-to-people ties are the foundation of this relationship," the letter says.

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.

In a regular briefing, US State Department 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.

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.

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Collective apathy

FROM PAGE 1

"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.

Kaiserul said India has mentioned in the documentation that traditional sari makers had migrated from Tangail and other parts of Bangladesh to regions of West Bengal. There, they invented a different type of handloom sari by changing the design of the fringe.

Speaking about the importance of the tag, Md Belal Hossen, assistant 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 and climatic conditions.

"I have seen on Facebook that West Bengal has taken the GI tag for Tangail's sari. We strongly protest it," Basak said.

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 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 we will get the GI recognition for this product," Kaiserul said.

Remembering Khandakar Rais Ahmed. Today marks the first death anniversary of Khandakar Rais Ahmed, affectionately known as "Juno" by his loved ones. He was the eldest son of the Late Former IGP A.R. Khandakar and Late Begum Roushan Ara Khandakar.

Now in 2024, the people of South Carolina have spoken again.. you have set us on the path to winning the Presidency again - and making Donald Trump a loser - again. Says US President Joe Biden after winning big in South Carolina

রূপালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি. সংস্থাপন ও কল্যাণ বিভাগ, প্রধান কার্যালয়, ঢাকা। "কুরিয়ার সার্ভিস প্রতিষ্ঠান তালিকাভুক্তির বিজ্ঞপ্তি"। রূপালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি এর প্রধান কার্যালয়ের সেন্ট্রাল ডেসপাচ ডেলিভারির মাধ্যমে সম্পাদিত আন্তর্জাতিক ডাক সমন্বিত ডাকা শহর ও বাংলাদেশের অন্যান্য জেলায় অবস্থিত শাখা, জোনাল অফিস ও বিভাগীয় কার্যালয় সমূহে পৌঁছানো এবং আন্তর্জাতিক ডাকসমূহ বহিঃ বাংলাদেশ তথা সমগ্র বিশ্বে পৌঁছানোর নিমিত্ত অভিজ্ঞতা সম্পন্ন স্ট্রাটেজিক/আন্তর্জাতিক কুরিয়ার সার্ভিস প্রতিষ্ঠান ২(দুই) বছরের জন্য (২০২৪-২০২৫) অর্থাৎ ০১-০১-২০২৪ তারিখ হতে ৩১-১২-২০২৫ তারিখ পর্যন্ত মেয়াদে তালিকাভুক্তির জন্য প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিজস্ব প্যাডে আবেদনপত্র আহ্বান করা হচ্ছে।

Jalalabad Gas Transmission & Distribution System Ltd. (A Company of Petrobangla) (Gas Bhaban, Mendibag, Sylhet-3100). Ref.No: 28.16.9100.096.16.001.24.02. Date: 30-01-2024. e-Tender Notice. This is to notify all concern that the following tender have been published through National e-GP portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd).