

## US State Dept targeting India: BJP

REUTERS, New Delhi

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has accused the State Department and "deep state" elements in the US of trying to destabilise India in conjunction with a group of investigative journalists and opposition leader Rahul Gandhi.

The accusation comes as a surprise as New Delhi and Washington have forged a strong relationship in the last two decades and both have vowed to further strengthen ties despite some differences and irritants.

Gandhi's Congress party used the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP)'s articles that "singularly focused" on the Adani Group and its alleged closeness to the government to undermine Modi, the ruling party said on Thursday.

Group chair Gautam Adani and seven others were indicted last month in the US for being part of a \$265 billion scheme to bribe Indian officials - allegations the group has termed "baseless".

OCCRP's articles have also accused state sponsored hackers in India of

**US 'deep state' elements, media group, George Soros, Rahul Gandhi working together: BJP**

using Israeli-made Pegasus spyware to target government critics.

The government has previously denied both allegations.

The BJP has previously accused Gandhi, the OCCRP and 92-year-old billionaire financier-philanthropist George Soros of attacking Modi.

On Thursday, it cited a French media report that said that OCCRP was funded by the US Agency for International Development and "other deep state figures" like Soros.

"The Deep State had a clear objective to destabilise India by targeting Prime Minister Modi," the BJP said in a series of messages on X.

"It has always been the US State Department behind this agenda... OCCRP has served as a media tool for carrying out a deep state agenda," it said. Sambit Patra, a BJP national spokesperson and lawmaker, repeated the accusations at an official media briefing by the party on Thursday.

"A French investigative media group...has revealed that... 50 percent of OCCRP's funding comes directly from the US State Department," Patra said.

## Bangladeshi

FROM PAGE 12

As the alleged smugglers attacked the BSF troops, the Indian border guards first charged stun grenades and later fired three to four rounds of bullets, the press release said, citing the BSF sources.

A Bangladeshi was killed in the gunfire, and the BGB later learnt from locals that the deceased was Anwar.

The BGB also fired warning shots after hearing the sound of gunfire, the press release added.

The Bangladeshi border force strongly condemned the killing in a protest note handed to the BSF at a flag meeting, said Lt Col Sheikh Md Badruddoza, commander of Nilphamari 56 BGB Battalion.

Locals found the body at the Mominpara border around 7:30am and informed the BGB about the matter.

On information, police went to the spot and recovered the body, said SM Masud Pervez, officer-in-charge of Panchagarh Sadar Police Station.

A deep injury mark was found on the deceased's collarbone, the OC said.

OC Masud also said the body would be handed over to the family today after a post mortem.

Anwar's brother Arif Hossain filed a murder case at the police station against unidentified individuals over the incident.

## Won't tolerate

FROM PAGE 12

The Jamaat chief also touched on the issue of the Pilkhana killings, where 57 military personnel lost their lives.

He demanded a fair investigation into the killings, pointing out that "no trial has yet been held" for those responsible. He called for a thorough investigation into the incident.

Jamaat leader Abu Taher Mohammad Masum, Assistant Secretary General Abul Hasanat Mohammad Abdul Halim, and Central Executive Committee members Mohammad Abdur Rob and Mohammad Mobarak Hossain were also present at the event chaired by Kazi Din Mohammad, ameer of Cumilla City Jamaat.



Palestinians wait in a queue to receive food outside a distribution centre in Khan Yunis in the Gaza Strip yesterday, amid the ongoing Israeli offensive in the enclave.

PHOTO: AFP

## Goal of offensive is to overthrow Assad

Says Syria rebel leader; thousands flee Homs as rebels advance further south; Jordan closes border crossing

AGENCIES

Rebel forces pressing a lightning offensive in Syria aim to overthrow President Bashar al-Assad's rule, their Islamists leader said in an interview published yesterday.

After wresting other key cities from government control, the Islamist-led rebels were at the gates of Syria's Homs, a war monitor said, though the defence ministry denied claims it had withdrawn its troops.

In little over a week, the offensive has seen Syria's second city Aleppo and strategically located Hama fall from Assad's control, for the first time since the civil war began in 2011.

Abu Mohammed al-Jolani, the leader of the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) rebel alliance, said the goal of the offensive was to end Assad's rule, reports AFP.

Meanwhile, thousands of people fled Homs overnight and into yesterday morning, a war monitoring group and residents said, as rebel forces sought to push their lightning offensive against government forces further south.



The head of the Syrian faction leading the sweeping assault told CNN that his group - a former Al-Qaeda affiliate now known as Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) - aimed to "build Syria" and bring Syrian refugees back home from Lebanon and Europe.

Iran will send missiles, drones and more advisers to Syria, a senior Iranian official said yesterday. Russia's embassy in Syria has urged Russian nationals to leave the country on commercial flights.

Jordan has closed its border crossing with Syria, the kingdom's interior minister said.

Hezbollah sent a small number of "supervising forces" from Lebanon to Syria overnight to help prevent anti-government fighters from seizing the strategic city of Homs, two senior Lebanese security sources told Reuters.

In another alarming development for Assad, the head of the US-backed Syrian Kurdish force said the radical Islamic State group, which ran a reign of terror in large swathes of Iraq and Syria until it was defeated by a US-led coalition in 2017, had now taken control of some areas in eastern Syria.

**Billionaires' wealth more than doubles in 10 yrs: UBS**

AFP, Zurich

Billionaires have seen their combined wealth shoot up 121 percent over the past decade to \$14 trillion, Swiss bank UBS said Thursday.

Switzerland's biggest bank said the number of dollar billionaires increased from 1,757 to 2,682 over past 10 years.

The 10th edition of UBS's annual Billionaire Ambitions report found that billionaires have comfortably outperformed global equity markets over the past decade.

The report documents "the growth and investment of great wealth, as well as how it's being preserved for future generations and used to have a positive effect on society", said Benjamin Cavalli, head of strategic clients at UBS global wealth management.

## Indian foreign secy

FROM PAGE 12  
minorities in Bangladesh. Ministry of External Affairs spokesman Randhir Jaiswal held the weekly media briefing in New Delhi that the Indian Foreign Secretary will travel to Bangladesh on December 9 for Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) with his counterpart.



Vikram Misri

position that his [Das] legal rights will be respected and he will be allowed to exercise those rights and he will be given a fair and transparent trial."

The visit by the Indian foreign secretary was agreed on at a meeting between Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Bangladesh's Foreign Affairs Adviser Touhid Hossain

on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York on September 23.

The Jaishankar Hossain interaction was the first since Hasina stepped down in the face of widespread protests and the caretaker administration led by Yunus came to power on August 8.

## Ducsu election likely by next February

FROM PAGE 12

challenges are."

Prof Sayema Haque Bidisha, DU pro VC (admin), said that forming the committee, initiating discussions, and addressing administrative and logistical procedures naturally took them some time.

"Since this process has already begun, and they [committee] have also prepared their plan for consultations, we can hope that they will provide us with concrete recommendations within a reasonable time," she told this newspaper.

"Based on the recommendations, it will become easier for us to hold the election and carry out other related tasks. Accordingly, an approximate deadline for the polls has been set," she added.

With the university authorities preparing for the Ducsu polls, student organisations gave mixed reactions to the plans.

During a meeting on Wednesday, leaders of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement and 29 other student organisations demanded elections to Ducsu and student unions at other universities and colleges across the country by late January or early February.

## Resist communal forces in your country

FROM PAGE 12  
of attacks on minority communities happen repeatedly."

The signatories say that they never equate the Indian people with the Indian government.

"We know that the people of India are also fighting against 'Hindutva' forces and communalism. We [Bangladeshis] fought for a long time against the 'fascist' Awami League regime and brought it down."

When the Bangladeshi people fought against tyranny in July and August, the people of India took to the streets in solidarity. For a long time, people on both sides of the border stood in solidarity with each other.

When the AL was in power, homes of Hindu people were attacked, properties grabbed, temples desecrated, and people were injured and killed. But after

"We have reached an agreement that elections to student councils at all universities and colleges, including Ducsu, should be held by the last week of January or the first week of February," Hasnat Abdullah, convener of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, told reporters after the meeting.

"For over a decade, campuses were dominated by Chhatra League through a type of authoritarian political culture. This created a sense of fear among a generation about student politics. Also, debates have surfaced across educational institutions since August 5 about whether to allow student politics and in what form," Hasnat said.

He added that the student leaders agreed to address the negative aspects of past politics to establish non-partisan, student council-based politics on campuses, ensuring representation of students.

However, Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, the pro-BNP student body, opined that elections to Ducsu and students' unions at other educational institutions should not be held hastily.

Nasir Uddin Nasir, general secretary of the JCD central committee, said, "Student council elections should be held on all campuses, but not hastily. Student organisations should work on

the charter mandates supreme power to the university VC, who can make any decision at will, which is an undemocratic practice. This must be changed before the polls," said Rafikuzzaman Farid, coordinator of the Jote.

DU VC is the ex-officio president of Ducsu.

which is a right for everyone. However, it is astonishing how swiftly the Indian Ministry of External Affairs issued a statement in his favour."

On the day he appeared in court, a chaotic situation ensued, leading to the murder of lawyer Saiful Islam Alif. Thanks to the collective efforts of the people of this country, no major unpleasant incident occurred in the wake of that event.

Signatories to the statement include Prof Anu Muhammad, Prof Salimullah Khan, Prof Sayeed Ferdous, Prof Swadhin Sen, Prof Gitiara Nasreen, Prof Kamrul Hasan Mamun, Prof Tuhi Wadud, Supreme Court lawyer Jyotirmoy Barua, writer and journalist Altaf Parvez, writer Rahnuma Ahmed, musician Shayan, central member of Jatiya Nogorik Committee Pritom Das, and Associate Professor Samina Luthfa.