

Expert issues

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A demonstration late Friday by German computer security expert Lukas Grunwald showed how personal information stored on the documents could be copied and transferred to another device.

It appeared to contradict assurances by officials in government and private industry that the electronic information stored in passports could not be duplicated.

"If there is an automatic inspection system, I can use this card to enter any country," Grunwald said, holding up a computer chip containing electronic information he had copied from his German passport.

The research is the latest to raise concerns about the growing use of RFID, short for radio-frequency identification, which allows everyday objects such as store merchandise, livestock and security documents to beam electronic data to computers equipped with special antennas.

Countries such as Germany already use RFID in passports to help border officials guard against forgeries and automate the processing of international visitors. US officials plan to start embedding RFID in passports in October.

A State Department spokeswoman said late Saturday she did not have enough information on the matter to comment.

The presentation was one of dozens delivered at the Defcon conference being held through Sunday in Las Vegas. The conference, attended by many of the world's best-known security experts, has become an annual showcase of the latest discovered weaknesses in computers, phone equipment and other machines.

Another security professional showed how people can have their phone numbers hijacked when using certain types of equipment that route calls over the Internet.

The research, from Arias Hung, a security professional with Media Access Guard in Seattle, showed how to control the inner workings of Internet phone routers made by Linksys, which is owned by Cisco Systems Inc. of San Jose, Calif.

Once the routers are accessed, a person can change the device's so-called media access control address, which acts as a serial number that Internet phone providers such as Vonage Holdings Corp. use to verify the identity of customers. A person exploiting the flaw could intercept calls made to a legitimate Vonage user and make calls that would appear to come from the user's phone number.

"The service providers should be very concerned," Hung said. "The general consumer should stay away from this router," he said, referring to two models that Linksys designates the WRTP54G and the RTP300.

Cisco spokeswoman Molly Ford said she could not immediately comment on Hung's research.

Although Defcon focuses largely on computers, not all the research focused on circumventing high tech gizmos.

Marc Tobias, a South Dakota lawyer who authored a textbook for locksmiths, showed how a simple technique can allow a person to secretly pick the locks of most homes, businesses and post office mailboxes.

The method, known as bumping, requires a person to file down a key and then gently tap it into a lock.

"You can do this with virtually every lock," said Tobias, who is calling for a change to US postal regulations to prohibit the trafficking of bump keys, which are advertised for sale on the Internet.

Tk 400cr tender

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They said the JCD leaders engaged them to obstruct buying and dropping of tender schedules for work of around Tk 400 crore. They JCD leaders were of Fazul Haq Muslim Hall of Dhaka University, they added.

The two leaders — Shaikat and Asad — led the gang of 25 to create obstacles in buying tenders but they were not arrested at the scene, said the four. They gave confessional statements yesterday at the chamber of Metropolitan Magistrate Nani Gopal Biswas.

After the recording of the statements of Imtiazur Rahman Prokash, Sahabur Rahman, Humayun Kabir and Mafzur Rahman, all residential students of the dormitory, they were sent to Dhaka Central Jail.

The investigation officer (IO) of the case produced all 13 arrestees, five of them refused to give confessional statements.

Those who refused to give statements are F Kabir Khan Shippi, Sajjad Hossain Robin, Shariful Islam Sabuj, Majedul Islam and Abu Bakar Siddiqui. They told the magistrate that they were implicated in the case as part of a conspiracy to harass them.

The four who confessed said the JCD leaders told them if they disobey their directives, they would be ousted

from the dormitory.

They also told the magistrate that over 25 students, including them, were arrested at the scene but only 13 were forwarded to the court accused in a case filed under the Speedy Trial [Law and Order Disruption] Act with Mottijheel Police Station.

Sources said the two leaders and all the arrestees belong to the Jatityabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), student wing of the ruling BNP.

A team of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) picked up the 13 on July 30 at CMMU of the health ministry on charges of creating obstacles to those who intended to buy or drop schedules.

Sources said August 1 was the last date for buying the schedules for three projects involving around Tk 400 crore under the development budget. The projects are upgrading 50 upazila health complexes to 50 beds from the existing 31 beds at Tk 250 crore, construction of six Institute of Health Technology buildings at six divisional headquarters at Tk 108 crore and the construction of five new 20-bed hospitals at Tk 30 crore.

August 2 was the last date for dropping the tender schedules, which were being sold at 36 places across the country, said the sources.

100pc basic govt salary

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backed platforms — National Front of Teachers and Employees (NFTE) led by Prof Quazi Faruque and Bangladesh Shikshak-Karmachari Oikya Parishad led by Prof MAAwal Siddique have decided to continue their indefinite strike.

Urging the agitating teachers to call off their strike in the greater interest of the students, the education minister said policy regarding human resources and rules and regulation of the jobs of the non-government teachers and staffs will be formulated within a month.

2nd expert group

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The outline of the Vision 2021 for Bangladesh has been drafted on the basis of recommendations and aspirations propagated by the participants of the regional civil society dialogues held at various places of Bangladesh. CPD, the Prothom Alo, The Daily Star and Channel-I are jointly organising the dialogues.

The Nagorik Committee now wants to consult with expert groups about the draft outline.

Bangladesh will celebrate its 50 years of independence in 2021. Where will the country be in 2021? What will it look like? What should the country accomplish in next 15 years? The vision paper will delineate the manner in which the civil society feels the future path of politically accountable development should be conceived for Bangladesh, and subsequently derive both short term and medium term policy implications for the next elected government.

Clarification

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"The LDC Group is deeply appreciative of the role of Zambia during their term as coordinator. In fact, Zambia has been invited to join in a Troika, during the period Bangladesh is coordinator, so that they can continue to contribute to the LDC interests," the Bangladesh Mission says. Bangladesh will be coordinating the LDC Group in the WTO for six months.

School students

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his son Belal, 15, a student of class eight, has been updating the voter list for the same ARO.

Condemning the ARO's act, the villagers said the students involved in voter list update are missing their school classes while they are failing to do the task properly by going door to door.

Cox's Bazar district election officer has been informed of such irregularities.

Latifur Rahman

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months after their terms end.

Referring to the news item, Awami League lawmaker Sheikh Fazul Karim Selim blasted the government in parliament on July 9, alleging that the prime minister violated her oath by allocating the official residence to Latifur Rahman.

"He was rewarded by the BNP government for his role in 2001 general elections," Selim told.

Housing and Public Works Minister Mirza Abbas did not make any comments over the matter on that day.

But a few days later he informed the House in a statement that government did not violate any rule through this allotment.

\$5b investment

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industrial growth of 9.6 per cent, experienced a recent surge in manufacturing sector attaining 10.5 per cent growth and a smooth export growth in 2006 due mainly to accelerated private investment in recent years.

Due to the private investment, the growth of manufacturing sector, which was stagnant at 15 per cent for nine years (1996-2001), has increased during the five years of the present government's tenure and stood at 17.1 per cent in 2006, he said.

The country will experience a possible foreign direct investment (FDI) inflow of \$10.5 billion in next five years, the Bol chairman said, adding that Bangladesh will transform into a developing economy from a least developed country (LDC) within ten years.

Rahman expressed optimism that the country will be ranked among the best five FDI recipients of the 49 LDCs within next five years.

"The country's investment position was 17th when the present government took power in 2001. It was 18th in 2002, stepped into 9th position in 2003 and held the same in 2004," Rahman added.

He supported the proposal of merger of the Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (BEPZA) with the Bol for avoiding duplication of government work.

HC issues rule

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crossfire in 2005. The list was drawn up from the newspaper reports.

They said many people were killed in 2005 and at the beginning of this year in the name of crossfire in different districts.

Manzill Murshid, counsel for the petitioners, said so far 500 people have fallen victim to extrajudicial killing in Rab custody.

He argued that death in custody of the Rab violates the fundamental right of a citizen that they would not be subjected to any 'torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment or treatment' as guaranteed in the constitution.

He said in every case they [Rab] have failed to protect the life of the arrested person.

Citing newspaper reports, Manzill said many people who have been killed in the name of crossfire stood accused in a number of cases and many of them were terrorists, killers and convicted of heinous offences.

"Still, the law gave them a right to get protection of law and fair trial. Even whatever [be] the offence committed by any citizen of the country no one can be punished except provided in the law," he submitted.

He also contended that it is a fundamental right of a citizen to get protection of law but the victims of so-called crossfire were deprived of their rights due to inaction of the respondents.

Manzill was assisted by barrister Moksudul Islam, barrister Moyeen Alam Ferozi and advocate Asaduzzaman Siddique.

PM to send letter

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to uphold public confidence in the world body.

He said Bangladesh still believes that UN is the only place where all could put their hands together to find solution to problems.

Describing the Israeli attacks on innocent Lebanese as a heinous act, Morshed said, "It is not acceptable to us that the whole world will remain as spectator when thousands of innocent men, women and children are being killed in Lebanon."

The foreign minister refuted the Israeli action on the pretext that Hezbollah guerrillas abducted two Israeli soldiers. "This is a pre-planned attack by Israel which was waiting for an opportune moment," he said.

Board dissolved

FROM PAGE 1
violations of banking rules by the Oriental Bank.

Asked about the private banks' sentiment, a high official of the BB said they are still in the process of disciplining the board members and the managing director.

"Actions will be taken on the outcomes of the probe that is going on. If necessary, we will bring criminal charges against them," he added.

On June 19, the BB appointed an administrator for the bank after issuing showcause notices to the board of directors for making the financial institute a problem bank with huge bad loans.

The central bank in its letter yesterday said in their replies to the showcause notices, the Oriental Bank board members have failed to justify their performances although they were given 27 days' time in two phases.

The managing director has responded to the showcause notice by tendering his resignation, the central bank order said adding that he has brought up 'some irrelevant issues' instead of replying to the allegation against him of failure to run the bank properly.

"His (managing director) statements don't seem acceptable to the Bangladesh Bank," the BB order read.

The bank has incurred an accumulated loss of Tk 435 crore till December 31, 2005, the letter mentioned adding that the total loss of the bank stood at

Tk 57.31 crore last year while it has been around Tk 10 crore a month in the present year.

The BB letter said governed by the Islamic Sharia Laws, the Oriental Bank cannot borrow money on high interest rates from the inter-bank call money market.

But because of sheer inefficiency of the management, the bank was forced to borrow in total Tk 213 crore from the call money market as of December 31, 2005.

It was so plagued by liquidity crisis that it could not return the term deposits of about Tk 200 crore by different banks—Pubali Bank, Basic Bank, Al Arafah Bank, National Credit and Commerce Bank, Rupali Bank, Shipra Bank, HSBC and Bangladesh Krishi Bank, and the Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge Authorities.

The Oriental Bank was listed as a problem bank in 1994 due to mismanagement, huge bad loans by directors, capital and provision shortfall. At that time, the board of directors signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the central bank in a bid to improve prime financial indicators of the bank.

But it failed to comply with the conditions set by the central bank and over the years its financial situation got worse.

Hasina sees polls

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as they are fed up with the BNP-Jamaat coalition government for its widespread corruption, misuse, torture and repression, and the price hike of essentials," she said.

Hasina, also AL president, was talking with her party's grassroots level leaders from Bagerhat and Magura districts at the party's Dhanmondi office in the capital.

The grassroots leaders urged Hasina to take organisational action against those who 'played role' against the party candidates in Magura and Bagerhat districts that led to a debacle for the AL in the 2001 elections.

Although AL bagged six seats — four in Bagerhat and two in Magura in the 1996 elections, it got only three in the 2001 elections.

The grassroots leaders attributed this debacle to conspiracy by some aggrieved party leaders who failed to get nomination in the 2001 elections.

Talking to The Daily Star, Magura district unit AL President Alif Hossain said they informed Hasina about the intra-party feud and urged her to take organisational action to ensure victory in the next elections.

Bagerhat district unit AL placed a resolution to Hasina demanding party

nomination to Sheikh Helal for Bagerhat and 2 constituencies, Talukder Abdul Khaleque for Bagerhat 3 and Dr Mozammel Haque for Bagerhat 4.

The AL chief instructed the grassroots leaders to work together forgetting intra-party feuds to resist vote stealing and bring the AL-led opposition combine to power in the next elections scheduled for early next year.

Refuting Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's allegation that the AL is conspiring to foil the next election, the AL president said, "She [Khaleda] knows very well that the BNP-Jamaat coalition will not come to power if a free, fair and neutral election is held, and so she does not want a proper election."

Senior leaders including Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, Motia Chowdhury, Sheikh Fazul Karim Selim, Obaidul Quader, Abdul Mannan, Advocate Abdul Mannan Khan, BM Mozammel Haque, Dr Alauddin Ahmed and Nur-e-Alam Chowdhury Liton were present at the meeting.

Updated voter list

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through the EC staff across the country till yesterday.

The EC secretary however said a total of 84.50 lakh people applied for registering their names as voters till last Thursday.

"The progress of the task is good and we hope the number of voters on the list will stand at nine crore, more or less," Abdur Rashid Sarkar told reporters yesterday at his office.

Officials of the EC Secretariat however said the number of applicants rose to about one crore after Thursday as five lakh people on an average applied daily for registration.

"But further allocation for remunerations will be fixed after reviewing the performance of the staff," the secretary said adding, "We have nothing to do unless we get more allocation."

Earlier, the EC Secretariat however had planned to allocate Tk 1500 as remuneration for each of the 1.35 lakh temporary staff but later it changed its plan.

HC stays

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money, they argued.

The by-polls will be stayed until the court reaches a decision on the ruling.

Two of the three writ petitions were filed separately challenging Comilla-8 by-poll. One was filed by four voters of the constituency including Abu Taher, which was moved by Barrister Mahub Uddin Khokan and Advocate Kamuzzaman. Another petition was filed by six voters of the constituency including Nasiruddin, which was moved by Advocate Saeed Ahmed Raza.

The writ petition regarding Dinajpur-3 by-poll was filed by five voters of the constituency including Khalekuzzaman Chowdhury.

The same bench of the HC division separately issued stay orders on the by-polls and the same types of rules on the respondents to the petitions, asking them to reply within two weeks.

Although the three petitions separately opposed the EC's move to arrange the by-polls, all the petitioners made similar arguments.

They also argued that there is no voter list now in the country as the Election Commission said it is still updating the list.

The seat in the parliament for Dinajpur-3 constituency became vacant due to the death of erstwhile women and children affairs minister, Khurshid Jahan Haq, on June 14 this year, and the seat for Comilla-8 constituency fell vacant due to the death of erstwhile shipping minister, Col (ret'd) Akbar Hossain, on June 25.

The EC on July 26 declared September 7 as the date for the by-polls for the two vacant seats since in accordance with the constitution the EC has to hold by-polls within 90 days of vacancies in the seats.

Bol chief

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(Bol), said the government has to scrutinise the areas of work, aims and objectives of the organisation.

"The government should analyse the current activities of CPD. It should consider whether it should allow CPD to continue their activities if their current activities do not match with their aims and objectives," he said.

The Bol chief, speaking at a meeting with Economic Reporters Forum (ERF) members at the Jatiya Press Club, said 90 per cent work of CPD is now related to 'political future' of Bangladesh.

"This was their main objective under a camouflage of economic research... I have information that the research associates working at CPD are now being forced to engage in political activities. And if someone denies, CPD is sacking him," Mahmud said.

He also said it has now become a fashion to rank countries in every aspects, often irrelevantly, comparing apple with orange, undermining the performance and hiding data.

CPD works as local associate of World Economic Forum (WEF) and UNCTAD, which have depicted a negative economic situation of Bangladesh in their recent reports.

The WEF reported that the productivity in Bangladesh has decreased while UNCTAD said foreign direct investment (FDI) declined.

Mahmud said that he has already written to the WEF protesting the CPD's role in providing wrong information and data on the country's economy. A similar letter will be sent challenging the UNCTAD report.

CPD Executive Director Debapriya Bhattacharya however said CPD does not make any analysis on its own. It sends all the data to the WEF head office where the analyses are made.

Debapriya said Bol should contact Bangladesh Bank if they have any query on the FDI, because it has \$300 million deficit with the BB data. The CPD uses the BB information only, he said.

"We have received a copy of the letter which the executive chairman of Bol has sent to the WEF complaining about Bangladesh's ranking in the GCR and faulted CPD for it. I suspect he is not fully aware that CPD only administers the questionnaire on behalf of the WEF and sends the original questionnaires to WEF head office where WEF analyses the data based on an agreed international methodology to come out with country ranking," he explained.

"CPD has no role to play in influencing the responses of the business leaders and the analysis outcome. Regarding the UNCTAD report on LDC, CPD on its own did an analysis of Bangladesh's status based on the 2004 report of the UNCTAD. CPD's analysis shows that Bangladesh has performed well at least in 15 areas in comparison to average LDCs."

"However, it was found that Bangladesh was lagging behind average LDCs at least in five areas. It so happened, one of the five weak areas happened to be absolute level of FDI flow. In such circumstances, CPD cannot be accused of suppressing positive development of Bangladesh," the CPD executive director said.

3 killed

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Farpapara area under sadar upazila of Chuadanga Friday morning and apprehended Gopal, a close aide to notorious criminal Aslam, reported our correspondent in Kushtia.

Following Gopal's statement, a Rab team took him along to Machpara to capture his fellow activists and seize their firearms.

Gopal's accomplices opened fire on Rab as they reached the area, inviting retaliatory fire. Gopal was caught in 'crossfire' while trying to flee Rab's custody.

Rab recovered a firearm and three bullets from the spot, Rab claimed in a statement.

The third incident was in Tejgaon industrial area in the capital where an accused of many criminal cases including eight murder cases Masud Rana alias Killer Joy was killed in Rab 'crossfire', reported our staff correspondent in Dhaka.

Masud Rana and his accomplices 'opened fire' on Rab during Rab's raid in the Commissioner Bazar area in Tejgaon and forced Rab to 'return fire' in defence.

Rana was caught in 'crossfire' and sustained injuries while other members of the gang managed to flee. Rana succumbed to his injuries after he was taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, claimed Rab in a statement.

Thai Airlines

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Bangladesh and Thailand have a lot of business and investment opportunities. Apart from bilateral cooperation, the two countries also cooperate through multilateral forums like Bimstec and ACD.

Morshed told reporters that they reviewed entire range of bilateral, regional and international issues during the talks. The two sides discussed new areas of cooperation, investment, coastal shipping lines and easing visa regime.

The two-way trade worth \$361 million tilts toward Thailand. In 2004-05, Bangladesh's exports to Thailand fetched only \$35 million while its imports cost \$326 million.

Dr Suphamanvong and Morshed Khan will leave for India today to attend the 9th Bimstec Ministerial to be held in New Delhi on August 8-9.

11 Israeli soldiers die

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picturesque farm, bordered by pine trees.

Many residents had fled because of the rocket attacks.

The strike on Kfar Giladi was the deadliest Hezbollah rocket strike of the war.

Israeli combat jets also struck villages across south Lebanon, killing 16 civilians and a Palestinian militant, while three Chinese UN peacekeepers were wounded in cross-fire between Israeli troops and Hezbollah guerrillas.

Six members of the Lebanese military were killed in two Israeli airstrikes. Missiles also flattened a house in the village of Ansar, near the southern market town of Nabatiyeh, killing a man and four of his relatives, Lebanese security officials said.

Another strike overnight killed three people in al-Jibbain, a village nearly five km from the Israeli border, civil defence officials said.

A rocket fired by a pilotless aircraft blasted a van carrying bread near Tyre, killing its driver, said Salam Daher, a civil defence official in the southern port city. Another person was killed in the town of Naqoura, near the border on the Mediterranean coast.

In Naqoura and several villages near Tyre, residents called rescue officials to report more people trapped under the rubble of crushed buildings, but crews could not retrieve the dead because of continued bombardment.

"We don't know how many and we can't get there," Daher said.

More than 950 people, mostly civilians, have been killed and over 3,320 others wounded in Lebanon since Israel launched a massive offensive on its northern neighbour after Hezbollah captured two soldiers on July 12.

The tit-for-tat attacks continued after the UN Security Council in New York began debating a draft resolution to bring a halt to the war, although it was swiftly rejected by Lebanon, which is demanding modifications.

A draft US-French resolution calls for a "full cessation of hostilities based upon... the immediate cessation by

Hezbollah of all attacks and the immediate cessation by Israel of all offensive military operations" — implicitly giving Israel the right to pursue "defensive" military operations.

The cessation of hostilities would also leave about 10,000 Israeli troops occupying a strip of southern Lebanon until an international force and the Lebanese army eventually get there.

Lebanon objects to that, and Mohammed Fneish, a Hezbollah minister in the government, said the group would fight until Israel stopped bombing Lebanon and withdrew all its troops.

Israeli Justice Minister Haim Ramon said Israel would keep attacking Hezbollah targets in Lebanon and its soldiers would stay there until the international force arrived to take over.

He did not say if Israel accepted the draft UN resolution. The Israeli cabinet was meeting. US Assistant Secretary of State David Welch was due to meet Israeli leaders after talks in Beirut on Saturday.

"We must continue the fighting, continue to hit whoever we can hit from Hezbollah," Ramon told Army Radio.

Israel's definition of Hezbollah targets has included more than 70 bridges, as well as ports, airports, radar stations, television and telephone masts, factories, farms and countless homes pummeled into ruin by 26 days of bombing across Lebanon.

Hezbollah, which is backed by Syria and Iran, has hit back with rockets that fall indiscriminately in northern Israel.

President George W. Bush, who sees Hezbollah as the common enemy of Israel and the United States, was happy with the draft UN measure, which could be put to a vote on Monday or Tuesday.

Oriental Bank scam

FROM PAGE 1
Rezaul Karim, Salman Karim and others.

THE DAILY STAR INVESTIGATION
The Daily Star investigation of eight cases of fictitious borrowers reveals amazing tales of corruption.

For instance, one Giasuddin Babul used three names of cell phone accessories shops — two of which he does not own — to draw Tk 3.24 crore in 2005.

The city's cell phone accessories shop owners on the other hand told The Daily Star that they just need about Tk 1 lakh to start their business.

During a field visit, it was found that Babul is the proprietor of Messrs City Com at Jatrabari, Messrs Noshin International at Johnson Road, and Messrs Evan Tel at Sadarghat. And he took Tk 1.08 crore loan in the names of each of the three shops from Oriental Bank.