

# UN confirms hack, but says no sensitive data compromised

AFP, Geneva

The UN confirmed a report Wednesday that it had suffered a cyberattack last year, including at its rights agency, but insisted the hackers had not accessed any sensitive information.

The New Humanitarian agency reported Wednesday that it had obtained a confidential UN report detailing how hackers broke into dozens of UN servers in Geneva and Vienna starting last July.

The group described the attack as “one of the largest ever known to have affected the world body”, and warned it raised serious data safety concerns.

The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), which collects highly sensitive data about victims and perpetrators of rights abuses around the world, was among the hacking victims.

UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric confirmed to reporters in New York the UN had been the target of a cyber attack “in the middle of last year”, stressing that “the damage related to the specific attack has been contained and additional measures implemented.”

He downplayed the importance of the attack, stressing that “the UN responds to multiple attacks at various levels of sophistication on a daily basis.”

“This particular attack is not a landmark event.”

The rights agency meanwhile acknowledged Wednesday that some of its servers had been targeted in the attack.

But it insisted that “although hackers accessed a self-contained part of our system in July 2019, the development servers they accessed did not hold any sensitive data or confidential information”.

The hackers had accessed the OHCHR’s Active User Directory, which contains user IDs for staff and devices, it said, adding though they had not accessed passwords nor any other parts of the agency’s system.

“The UN Human Rights Office takes breaches of security extremely seriously,” it said.

It stressed that it was well aware of “the potential effects should people gain unauthorised access to our data, and the responsibility we have, both online and offline, to protect victims, staff, partners and any individuals and groups who collaborate with us.”

“We want to assure all concerned parties that this hacking attempt did not compromise sensitive information within this Office.”

The rights office acknowledged that it like many other institutions and companies faces “frequent attempts to access our computer systems”.

But it said it was “constantly further reinforcing existing multifaceted safeguards to preserve the integrity of our systems and the data they hold.”

# US-Israeli woman freed by Russia after Putin pardon

AFP, Moscow

Russia yesterday freed a US-Israeli woman jailed for drug trafficking after she was pardoned by President Vladimir Putin.

Russia released 26-year-old Naama Issachar as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met Putin at the Kremlin to discuss US President Donald Trump’s Middle East peace plan.

Issachar’s case caused an outcry in Israel and she was set to fly back with Netanyahu after his meeting with Putin, an Israeli government official confirmed to AFP.

Issachar was arrested at Moscow’s Sheremetyevo airport in April 2019 while she was in the transit zone en route from India to Israel.

Russian authorities said they found nine grammes (three ounces) of cannabis in her checked luggage and

she was sentenced in October to seven and a half years in prison.

Her case was controversial because she was sentenced for drug trafficking while she was in transit and the drugs were in hold luggage.

Putin pardoned Issachar on Wednesday after she submitted a request at the weekend.

“Guided by the principles of humanity, I pardon Naama Issachar,” Putin said in a decree cited by the Kremlin.

He told Netanyahu that it was lucky for Issachar that she did not cross the border, suggesting this would have complicated the pardon procedure.

“She -- thank God, it’s very good for her -- didn’t even cross the Russian border,” Putin said, adding that the drugs were found in her luggage while the baggage was being moved from one plane to another.

# Want to see democracy

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the city,” they said.

They also hoped that the government, the Election Commission and all political parties would respect the citizens’ rights to cast their votes in a peaceful and festive atmosphere.

They added that the votes should be counted with fairness and integrity.

The signatories to the statement include Benoit Prefontaine, high commissioner of Canada; Charlotta Schlyter, ambassador of Sweden; Earl R Miller, ambassador of the United States; Robert Chatterton Dickson, high commissioner of the UK; Sidsel Bleken, ambassador of Norway; Winnie Estrup Petersen, ambassador of Denmark; Jeroen Steeghs, charge d’affaires of the Netherlands; Penny Morton, acting high commissioner of Australia, and Suzanne Muller, charge d’affaires of Switzerland.

Meanwhile, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen yesterday said it was regrettable that some foreign diplomats sometimes intervened in the country’s domestic issues.

He said this when reporters asked him for comments about a meeting of diplomats at the residence of British High Commissioner Wednesday night, three days before the city polls.

The Election Commission has a code of conduct and so do the diplomats, Momen said.

“We hope they will adhere to the codes. However, the Election Commission will take measures if a diplomat violates the rules.”

The diplomats should be responsible in their actions, he told reporters after the closing session of Bangladesh Development Forum at the capital’s Bangabandhu International Conference Centre.

“If they don’t abide by the code of conduct, we will ask them to leave,” he added.

“The prime minister said that it should be an ideal election and there should be no interference,” he told reporters.

The EC in a statement said 74 officials of embassies and high commissions have been authorised to observe the polls.

# AL for watch on

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“We do not want a recurrence of the incident. We respect ambassadors, but no one should take advantage of our hospitality.”

A BNP delegation met the election commissioners after the AL delegation left.

After the meeting, BNP standing committee member Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury said, “We complained to the Election Commission repeatedly about the breaches of electoral code of conduct, but we didn’t get the answer to a single question.”

He alleged that BNP leaders and activists were harassed and detained by the law enforcers en masse despite the EC’s promise that no one would be arrested unless there was a visible offence.

The EC should be there to protect peoples voting rights but this EC is

protecting the AL’s interest only, he said.

“Among the 22 local observers, 18 have no website and one person is at the helm of two organisations. These organisations are sponsored by Awami League.”

Asked about BNP’s allegations, Chief Election Commissioner KM Nurul Huda said the EC didn’t ask law enforcement agencies to conduct raids.

“But we are discouraging people from coming to Dhaka without a valid reason. We asked voters to leave the polling centres after casting their votes and not to gather in front of polling centres in groups,” he said.

“Compared to other times, a congenial atmosphere is prevailing. Candidates are campaigning. Voters are participating in processions and rallies,” the CEC told reporters.



Members of the Syrian Civil Defence, also known as the White Helmets, carry the body of a woman recovered from the rubble of a building at the site of a reported airstrike on the rebel-held town of Ariha in the northern countryside of Syria’s Idlib province early yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

# Bangabandhu’s nation-building challenges

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secretariat describes the meeting as ‘very satisfactory’.

McNamara is accompanied by IPM Cargil, director of Asia department of IBRD. It may be noted that Cargil visited Bangladesh following the Pakistan Army crackdown and suggested to the World Bank suspension of loans to the then Pakistan.

Seeing Cargil in the delegation, Bangabandhu reminds him of the report, “I know about your report. You must have noticed the change between your last visit and this.”

**MUIJIB BAHINI AND DHAKA CITY COMMANDOS SURRENDER ARMS** Members of Mujib Bahini hand over their arms to Bangabandhu in an arms laying down ceremony held at Dhaka Stadium.

In that mammoth gathering Bangabandhu declares that there must not be “any shot fired anywhere in Bangladesh from today.” He urges the people to inform the government

of whoever is concealing arms. Bangabandhu asks non-Bengali communities living in Mohammadpur and Mirpur to merge and unite with the people of Bangladesh by surrendering their arms and ammunitions which they had obtained from Pakistan occupation forces.

Referring to the Nixon government’s role in Bangladesh’s Liberation War, Bangabandhu says that these forces are again trying to sow the seeds of conflict between the people of Bangladesh and India but the people will foil such attempts.

Earlier in the morning, the commandos belonging to Dhaka city handed their arms over to Bangabandhu at the official residence of the Prime Minister.

Muhammad Monwar Hossain, a boy of hardly 11 who had lost two of his brothers in the freedom struggle, went there with the freedom fighters to deposit his arms. He was embraced and kissed by Bangabandhu.

The commandos carried a big

photograph of Shaheed Rezaul Karim Manik, who fell to the bullets of the enemy while on a bridge-blowing operation on November 14, 1971. The photograph naturally draws the attention of Bangabandhu. He enquires of the family of the martyr and takes the photograph from the commandos saying, “I shall keep it with me.”

**FOUR MORE RECOGNITIONS FOR BANGLADESH**

Australia, New Zealand, Cambodia and Fiji recognise Bangladesh as an independent and sovereign country.

Sir Keith Jacka Holyoake, the Prime Minister of New Zealand, says in a cable sent to Bangabandhu that as the independence of the former eastern province of Pakistan is now an accomplished fact, “it is in the interests of all concerned that this should be accepted as so by the international community.”

*Sources: February 1, 1972 issues of Morning News, The Bangladesh Observer, Dainik Bangla, The Daily Ittefaq, The Azad and Purbodesh.*

# Senate may acquit Trump today

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“I don’t know that for sure one way or the other,” he said, but called the tone and questions of senators “not encouraging.”

Democrats were not conceding defeat, however.

“My gut tells me we’re making progress, progress, progress,” said Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer.

Late on Wednesday, White House deputy counsel Patrick Philbin was asked if Trump agreed that foreign interference in US elections is illegal. “Mere information is not something that would violate the campaign finance laws,” Philbin replied.

Democrats said they were aghast that a lawyer for Trump would suggest it is OK to solicit foreign interference.

“I’m pretty stunned,” said Senator Mark Warner, top Democrat on the Senate Intelligence Committee.

While the Senate is expected to acquit Trump and leave him in office no matter what happens, allowing witnesses could inflict political damage on the president as he seeks re-election on Nov 3.

One such witness is former national security adviser John Bolton, who left the White House in September after several sharp disagreements with Trump over the direction of foreign policy.

The New York Times has reported that Bolton wrote in an as-yet unpublished book that the president

told him he wanted to freeze \$391 million in security aid - passed by US Congress to help Ukraine battle Russia-backed separatists - until Kiev pursued investigations into Democrats, including Biden and the former vice president’s son, Hunter.

On Wednesday, the White House objected to the book’s publication. A letter from the White House National Security Council to Bolton’s attorney said that based on a preliminary review, the manuscript appeared to contain “significant amounts of classified information.”

Some material was deemed top secret and could “cause exceptionally grave harm to the national security,” according to the letter, which was dated Jan. 23. It said the manuscript could not be published without deleting the classified information.

The manuscript was submitted to the White House for pre-publication review, a process that civil libertarians have said gives the government too much power to censor speech.

Democrats believe Bolton, a Republican foreign policy hawk, could help them solidify their case against the president and want to call him and a small number of other officials to testify. Trump’s fellow Republicans in the Senate have resisted the idea.

Bolton lawyer Charles Cooper said on Wednesday that neither he nor his client believe that any information in a chapter on Ukraine “could reasonably be considered

classified.” He asked for a quick determination in case Bolton was called to testify.

Trump lashed out at Bolton on Twitter on Wednesday, saying Bolton “couldn’t get approved for the Ambassador to the UN years ago, couldn’t get approved for anything since, ‘begged’ me for a non Senate approved job” and added that “if I listened to him, we would be in World War Six by now.”

Trump added that Bolton “goes out and IMMEDIATELY writes a nasty & untrue book. All Classified National Security. Who would do this?”

Responding to a question by top Senate Democrat Chuck Schumer, lead House prosecutor Adam Schiff said there would be no way to have a fair trial without witnesses.

“And when you have a witness as plainly relevant as John Bolton who goes to the heart of the most serious and most egregious of the president’s misconduct, who has volunteered to come and testify - to turn him away, to look the other way, I think is deeply at odds with being an impartial juror,” Schiff said.

Trump’s legal team has argued that the evidence supporting the charges against him is based on hearsay. It also asserts Trump did not commit an impeachable offense even if the allegation is true.

Removing Trump from office would take a two-thirds majority. None of the 53 Republican senators has publicly advocated removal.

# 62,537 acres

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reply to a question from Chattogram-4 Awami League lawmaker Didarul Alam.

In a scripted answer, Saifuzzaman said the government has taken various measures to recover the land from the grabbers.

He said all deputy commissioners were given directives to recover the land.

The measures include conducting eviction drives against the grabbers, amending the record of khas land registered as the land of individuals in RS, BS or City Records, and preparing a list of grabbers.

Meanwhile, Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Huq told the House that 1,89,311 freedom fighters were getting monthly honorarium, as the present government was taking various steps for their wellbeing.

“As continuation of the welfare activities for the freedom fighters, the government has increased their allowance amount several times,” he said while answering a question from treasury bench MP Rubina Akter.

A freedom fighter is getting Tk 12,000 a month from 2019-20 fiscal year along with two festival allowances of Tk 10,000 each, he said.

“The freedom fighters and their family members are also getting Tk 2,000 as Bangla new year allowance in the present financial year along with the state honorarium. An alive freedom fighter is also getting Tk 5,000 as the victory day allowance,” the minister said.

# Families

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Islam, officer in-charge of Gopalganj Sadar Police Station.

Receiving information, a police team rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control, the OC said, adding that additional forces were deployed in that area to avoid further clashes.

No case was filed in this connection when this report was filed late last night and no one was arrested.

# All-round

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serve them a point against Pakistan in their last group stage game, was to improve their batting. Skipper Akbar Ali was jubilant after the batsmen had done an excellent job in yesterday’s game. Fifties from Tanzid Hasan, Towhid and Shahadat Hossain helped Bangladesh get a daunting total.

“Extremely happy. When we started the tournament, our aim was to make it to the semis. Now we have to focus and do well from here. After the toss we thought anything around 240 was a good total, our plan was that. Our top 5 batted really well, we kept wickets in hand and in the final 10, we exploded. It’s about character, everyone wants to reach the finals. I have to give credit to the batters. After the first innings, our spinners did well. It’s a complete performance,” said Akbar after the match.

# Reward

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The agency offered few details on the reward, or how outsiders might pull off the task.

But its chief -- who said the cash would come out of his own pocket -- warned that he was not calling on amateurs to hunt down the reptile, but rather addressing people with a background in wildlife rescue and a thirst for conservation.

“We’re asking the general public not to get close to the crocodile or disturb its habitat,” said Hasmini Hasmar, head of the Central Sulawesi Natural Resources Conservation Agency.