



## Trump plays down Russia's role in US cyberattack

REUTERS

US President Donald Trump, in his first comments about a widespread data breach across the US government, on Saturday downplayed the cyber espionage campaign and questioned whether Russia was to blame as alleged by his own top diplomat.

"The Cyber Hack is far greater in the Fake News Media than in actuality," Trump said on Twitter on Saturday. "Russia, Russia, Russia is the priority chant when anything happens because Lamestream is, for mostly financial reasons, petrified of discussing the possibility that it may be China (it may!)."

Trump's assertion that China may be behind the hacking spree, which has so far affected more than a half dozen federal agencies including the Commerce and Treasury Departments, runs counter to comments by his own secretary of State and multiple lawmakers briefed on the matter.

"We can say pretty clearly that it was the Russians that engaged in this activity," said Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Friday in an interview. A State Department spokesperson did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Saturday.

Daniel Hoffman, a former CIA Moscow station chief, said the Trump administration needed to explain quickly why Pompeo blamed Russia, while the president cast doubt on that assessment.

He noted that Pompeo served as CIA director before becoming the top US diplomat, and he has "an extremely sophisticated understanding of national security. How is it that he attributed the attack to Russia and the president did not?"



A protester burns the effigy of Nepal's Prime Minister Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli, also known as KP Oli, outside the parliament after Nepal's president dissolved parliament yesterday at the request of PM.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## Nepal in fresh political crisis

Country heads to surprise polls next year after PM KP Sharma Oli loses ground; parliament dissolved

REUTERS, Kathmandu

Nepal's president dissolved parliament yesterday at the request of Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli's cabinet and announced that general elections would be held in April and May, more than a year ahead of schedule.

The move plunges the Himalayan country, which has seen revolving-door governance since street protests restored multi-party democracy in 1990, into political turmoil as it battles the coronavirus pandemic.

President Bidhya Devi Bhandari's office said in a statement the next vote will be held on April 30 and May 10, as recommended by the cabinet following an emergency meeting.

Oli, 68, pushed for a fresh mandate after the ruling Nepal Communist Party (NCP) accused him of sidelining his party in government decisions and appointments. He had led an alliance with former Maoist rebels to a landslide victory in 2017.

"The prime minister has lost the majority in the parliamentary party, central committee and the secretariat



of the party," said Bishnu Rijal, an NCP central committee member.

"Instead of seeking a compromise within the party, he chose to dissolve parliament."

Sandwiched between China and India, politics in Nepal is also influenced by the priorities of its giant neighbours. India has been pushing back against Beijing's growing clout in a country that New Delhi considers its own backyard.

Oli aide Rajan Bhattarai said the prime minister had acted in response to the backlash from his party, which had also asked him to consider quitting as its president.

Politicians and social media users

said the ruling party should have tried out other political combinations to run the country instead of calling an untimely election when its tourism-dependent economy has been battered by the pandemic.

Nepal's 2015 charter does not give the prime minister the prerogative to dissolve parliament without exhausting alternatives, constitutional expert Bipin Adhikari said.

"It is unconstitutional at the first sight," he said, adding that the decision could be challenged in the Supreme Court, which may take a couple of weeks to decide its legality.

After his 2017 win, Oli had vowed to ensure political stability, fight corruption and poverty but has made little progress, especially since the pandemic.

Coronavirus infections have reached 253,772, with 1,788 deaths, in the country of 30 million people.

"PM Oli chose to betray the people's mandate for stability, development and dignity," former diplomat Dinesh Bhattarai tweeted.

## Kabul car bomb attack kills nine

Lawmaker, women, children among 20 people wounded

AFP, Kabul

A car bomb targeting an Afghan lawmaker killed nine people and wounded more than a dozen in Kabul yesterday, officials said, the latest attack to rock the capital.

Kabul has been hit by a wave of deadly violence in recent months despite the Taliban and government engaging in peace talks to end the country's long conflict.

Yesterday's bombing targeted parliamentarian Khan Mohammad Wardak who was injured in the attack, officials said.

"Nine people were killed and 20 others were wounded in the car bomb," Interior Minister Masoud Andrabi told reporters, adding that all the casualties were civilians.

The ministry said in a separate statement that women and children were among those wounded by the "terrorist attack".

An aide to lawmaker Wardak said the attack occurred when he was travelling in his convoy, and five of his bodyguards were among the wounded.

No group has so far claimed responsibility for the attack. Kabul has seen a spate of targeted assassinations of prominent figures in recent months, including top officials, journalists, clerics, politicians and rights activists.

Last week a deputy governor of Kabul province was killed when a bomb attached to his vehicle detonated while he was on his way to office.

Vice President Amrullah Saleh, a strong opponent of Taliban, was appointed in October to lead a taskforce to curb the violence in Kabul.

Saleh's programme was popular with people in the capital and that had prompted the Taliban to launch new attacks in an attempt to discredit him, said Sayed Nasir Musawi, an independent Kabul-based political analyst.

## 'No time to waste'

Biden unveils diverse team tasked with ambitious climate agenda

REUTERS, Wilmington

US President-elect Joe Biden introduced his climate and energy team on Saturday, a history-making group that will seek to advance an ambitious climate agenda that reverses many Trump administration policies.

Michael Regan would become the first Black man to run the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) if confirmed by the Senate, and US Representative Deb Haaland, an interior secretary, would be the first Native American Cabinet member.

"Today's nominees are ready on day one, which is essential because we literally have no time to waste," Biden said at a media briefing in his home state of Delaware.

Biden, a Democrat who will be inaugurated on Jan. 20, has vowed to make tackling climate change a top priority. But with a slim majority in the House of Representatives and control of the Senate still undecided, his agenda may see little success in Congress and instead rely on rules from his regulatory agencies to enact sweeping change.

Biden, who served as vice president to

President Barack Obama, tapped Obama's EPA administrator, Gina McCarthy, to fill a new role as national climate adviser.

Former Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm will be Biden's energy secretary if confirmed.

Environmental groups have largely praised the team for its experience and diversity. But the powerful fossil fuel industry, which Biden has frequently criticized, has argued he must balance climate efforts with preserving jobs.

Biden wants the US to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, which would require the world's second-largest emitter to transform its economy including transportation, power generation and farming.

He diverges sharply from President Donald Trump, who withdrew Washington from the Paris climate accord and softened or dismantled climate regulations the administration deemed harmful to the economy.

Trump on Saturday continued to falsely assert on Twitter that the election had been stolen from him through voter fraud.



### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### Thousands in Belarus protest Lukashenko's rule

Thousands of protesters took to the streets of Belarus yesterday as they sought to keep the pressure on President Alexander Lukashenko over his contested re-election. In the capital Minsk, Lukashenko's critics staged a number of scattered protests across the city, with some groups numbering a few dozen participants and others a few hundred. The Viasna rights group said more than 30 people were detained in Minsk and other cities. Since Lukashenko's disputed re-election to a sixth term in August, Belarus has been caught in its most serious political crisis in modern history, with protesters taking to the streets and authorities cracking down on the opposition.

#### Dozens of children freed after new abduction in Nigeria

Local vigilantes rescued dozens of schoolchildren abducted by bandits in the northern Nigerian state of Katsina after a gun battle, police said yesterday. Gunmen had abducted about 80 children on Saturday as they returned to Mahuta village after having attended a religious ceremony, said police. According to local people, when the news of abduction spread across Mahuta, residents and vigilantes mobilised and went after the kidnapers. They laid siege on the area they knew they were holding the children and made sure the children are released. The incident came barely 48 hours after the release of 344 schoolboys kidnapped from a boarding school by bandits.

#### Fauci gives Santa vaccine



Santa Claus can safely deliver gifts to good girls and boys on Christmas, after a special visitor went all the way to the North Pole to deliver a coronavirus vaccine. Anthony Fauci, the top infectious disease official in the United States, said Saturday he personally gave Old St Nick his jab. "I took care of that for you because I was worried that you'd all be upset," he said Saturday during a CNN and "Sesame Street" coronavirus town hall for families, after worried youngsters asked whether Santa could safely enter homes on December 25. "I took a trip up there to the North Pole; I went there and I vaccinated Santa Claus myself. I measured his level of immunity, and he is good to go," Fauci declared. "He can come down the chimney, he can leave the presents... you have nothing to worry about."

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS



Farmers talk with Uttar Pradesh District officers next to barricades during a protest against the central government's recent agricultural reforms, at the Delhi-Uttar Pradesh state border, in Ghazipur, India yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Climate change could create 63m migrants in South Asia by 2050

THOMSON REUTERS FOUNDATION, Barcelona

The growing impacts of climate change have already pushed more than 18 million people to migrate within South Asian countries, but that could more than triple if global warming continues on its current path, researchers have warned.

Nearly 63 million people could be forced from their homes by 2050 in the region as rising seas and rivers swallow villages, and drought-hit land no longer supports crops, said ActionAid International and Climate Action Network South Asia in a report.

The projection does not include those who will be forced to flee sudden disasters such as floods and cyclones and so is likely an under-estimate, noted Harjeet Singh, global climate lead at ActionAid. He said the situation could become "catastrophic".

Many will head from rural areas to towns and cities in their own countries, in search of work, he said. There they often end up living in slum areas exposed to flooding and with very limited access to social services, doing precarious jobs such as rickshaw-pulling, construction or garment-making.

He urged rich nations with high planet-warming emissions to redouble efforts to reduce their carbon pollution and provide more funding for South Asian countries to develop cleanly and adapt

to conditions on a warming planet.

If governments meet a globally agreed goal to limit warming to below 2 degrees Celsius, the number of people driven to move in India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Nepal could be cut almost by half by 2050, the report said.

It builds on research published in 2018 by the World Bank, which said unchecked climate change could cause more than 140 million people to move within their countries' borders by 2050 in sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and Latin America.

The new figures show the largest number of people are expected to migrate by 2050 in India, at more than 45 million. But the country with the sharpest projected rise in migration is Bangladesh, with a seven-fold increase from today.

The report called on South Asian governments to do more to prepare for worsening displacement linked to climate change - and emphasised the importance of acting now to limit the number of people who will be forced to migrate in the future.

It recommended strengthening social protection systems to provide cash and work for those affected by climate extremes and improving essential services for migrant workers in cities - now hit doubly by the Covid-19 pandemic, with many left jobless.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh	
Bangladesh Police Police Headquarters, Dhaka <a href="http://www.police.gov.bd">www.police.gov.bd</a>	
Memo No. 44.01.0000.984.07.002.20-655	Date: 20/12/2020
Request for Expression of Interest (Firm)	
1. Ministry/Division	Ministry of Home Affairs.
2. Agency	Bangladesh Police.
3. Procuring entity	AIG (Sports and Culture), Bangladesh Police, Police Headquarters, Dhaka.
4. Expression of Interest	For Selection of Coaching Firm.
5. EOI reference No.	44.01.0000.984.07.002.20-05 (2020-2021).
6. Date	20-12-2020.
KEY INFORMATION	
7. Procurement method	Quality & Cost Based Selection (QCBS).
FUNDING INFORMATION	
8. Budget & source of fund	GOB (Revenue Budget).
PARTICULAR INFORMATION	
9. Project/program code/budget code	1220201-105954-Headquarters, Bangladesh Police, 3231301-Training.
10. Project/program name	Training for Chess Players.
11. EOI publication date	21/12/2020.
12. EOI closing date & time	04/01/2021, 14:00pm.
13. EOI opening date and time	04/01/2021, 14:30pm.
INFORMATION FOR APPLICANT	
14. Brief description of the assignment	Practical Training: History of Chess, Introduction to Chess board & pieces, The Moves of the Pieces, Casting Move in Pieces, Notation Sheet, Checkmate Technique, Chess-How to Draw, Chess-Opening, Chess-Planning, Chess-Middle Game, Chess-Middle Game Tactics, Chess-Process of Co-ordination, Chess-End Game, Chess-Diagram Analysis, Chess-Different Strategy, Chess-Tournament Rules, Puzzle Solving, Previous International Games Analysis, Practice & Trouble Shoot, Conclusion.
15. Qualification & experience	Firm must have: (i) Experience in providing in-depth training to the players. (ii) Statement of skilled & professionally competent work force of the organization. (iii) Sound financial standing supported by appropriate bank solvency certificate. (iv) Valid trade licence, VAT, TIN certificate, income tax certificate.
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS	
16. Name of official inviting EOI	Shorif Mostafizur Rahman.
17. Designation of official inviting EOI	AIG (Sports and Culture), Bangladesh Police, Police Headquarters, Dhaka.
18. Address of official inviting EOI	Main Building (4th Floor), Room No. 403/1, Sports & Culture, Police Headquarters, 6, Phoenix Road, Fulbaria, Dhaka.
19. Contact details of official inviting EOI	Phone: 55101621 Fax: 55101621 <a href="mailto:aigsports_culture@police.gov.bd">aigsports_culture@police.gov.bd</a>
SPECIAL INSTRUCTION	
20.	a) No EOI will be received after the deadline for submission. b) The procuring entity reserves the right to reject any EOI and to annul the EOI proceeding. c) If not possible to receive/open the EOI on the scheduled date in any unavoidable circumstances, the same will be received/opened on the next working date at the same time and same venue. d) The procurement will be performed according to the Public Procurement Act-2006 and Public Procurement Rules-2008.
 <b>Shorif Mostafizur Rahman</b> BP 7605104564 AIG (Sports and Culture) On behalf of Inspector General, Bangladesh Police Police Headquarters, Dhaka Tel & Fax: 55101621 E-mail: <a href="mailto:aigsports_culture@police.gov.bd">aigsports_culture@police.gov.bd</a>	
GD-2017	