

Cyberattack hit key US treasury systems

AFP, Washington

Hackers broke into systems used by top US Treasury officials during a massive cyberattack on government agencies and may have stolen essential encryption keys, a senior lawmaker said Monday.

Senator Ron Wyden, who sits on both the Senate Intelligence and Finance Committees, said after a closed-door briefing that the hack at the US Treasury Department "appears to be significant."

Dozens of email accounts were compromised, he said in a statement.

"Additionally the hackers broke into systems in the Departmental Offices division of Treasury, home to the department's highest-ranking officials," said Wyden.

"Treasury still does not know all of the actions taken by hackers, or precisely what information was stolen."

The US government admitted last week that computer systems in multiple departments were penetrated by attackers who hacked in through widely used security software made by the US company SolarWinds.

So far officials have said the hackers broke into computers at the State Department, Commerce Department, Treasury, Homeland Security Department, and the National Institutes of Health.

But experts have said they fear far more of the government could be affected, including US intelligence bodies, given the ubiquitousness of the SolarWinds security software.

Members of Congress briefed by US intelligence, as well as Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Attorney General Bill Barr, have all said Russians were behind the hack. Trump has downplayed Russian role in the attack.

Republican US Senator Mitt Romney said a widespread data breach across the US government was "extraordinarily damaging" and that President Donald Trump has a "blind spot" when it comes to Russia.



Police cars patrol as freight lorries and goods vehicles queue on a closed section of the M20 motorway which leads to the Port of Dover, near Ashford in Kent, south east England yesterday, after a string of countries banned travel including accompanied freight arriving from the UK, due to the rapid spread of a more-infectious new coronavirus strain there.

PHOTO: AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

France rewards frontline Covid workers with citizenship

Hundreds of foreigners in France whose jobs expose them to high Covid-19 risks will be naturalised quickly for their commitment during the health crisis, the interior ministry said yesterday. The ministry had in September invited people who "actively contributed" to the fight against the novel coronavirus to apply for fast-track naturalisation. Of the nearly 3,000 people who responded, 74 had already obtained citizenship and 693 more were in the final stage of the process, the office of Marlene Schiappa, junior minister for citizenship, said in a statement. "Health professionals, cleaning ladies, childcare workers, checkout staff: They all proved their commitment to the nation, and it is now the turn of the republic to take a step towards them," it said. Additionally, immigration authorities have been ordered to reduce the residency period needed for citizenship to two years from the usual five in the case of "great services rendered."

Trump orders US gov't to only construct 'beautiful' buildings

President Donald Trump, with only a month left in office, issued an order Monday that future federal buildings must be "beautiful" and preferably built in the Greco-Roman classical style. The executive order stopped short of an earlier draft that drew the ire of some architects in seeking to ban construction not done in the neo-classical style, typified by the White House, Capitol and Lincoln Memorial in Washington. Trump's order takes aim at federal buildings built after the 1950s, saying that the capital Washington, now features a "discordant mixture" and that the government has "largely stopped building beautiful buildings."

Modi gets top US honour



US President Donald Trump on Monday presented the prestigious Legion of Merit to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his leadership in elevating strategic partnership of the two countries and emergence of India as a global power. India's Ambassador to the US, Taranjit Singh Sandhu, accepted the award on behalf of the prime minister from the US National Security Advisor Robert O'Brien at the White House. President Trump "presented the Legion of Merit to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his leadership in elevating the US-India strategic partnership," O'Brien said in a tweet. O'Brien in another tweet said that Trump also presented the Legion of Merit to Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison and the former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. The awards were received by their respective ambassadors in Washington DC.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

We'll thrive without a deal

Says UK PM Johnson; EU reports progress on fishing rift

AGENCIES

Britain and the European Union narrowed the gap on access to fish stocks from 2021 but the politically sensitive matter was still in the way of a new trade pact, Brussels sources said yesterday ahead of a Brexit update by their chief negotiator.

As Brexit completes on Dec 31, Britain will leave the EU's single market and customs union, meaning its current free trade arrangements will expire. A Sunday deadline set by the European Parliament, which could refuse to approve the agreement, expired without an agreement being found, leaving no time for MEPs to ratify an eventual deal before January 1.

The two sides have for months been struggling to seal a new agreement on everything from trade to transport to energy, with the final stages of the talks coming as EU and other countries have also suspended most travel to and from Britain to try to curb a new

strain of the coronavirus.

The EU's Brexit negotiator, Michel Barnier, was due to update the bloc's 27 national envoys on Brexit at 1500 GMT yesterday, and then speak to the



European Parliament.

"It seems we are crossing the line," an EU diplomat said, adding that an agreement was getting closer.

His comment came after Prime Minister Boris Johnson said on Monday that there were still problems in Brexit trade talks and that Britain would thrive without a deal.

"The position is unchanged:

there are problems," Johnson told reporters when asked if there would be a trade deal.

"It's vital that everybody understands that the UK has got to be able to control its own fisheries completely and also that we've got to be able to control our own fisheries."

"WTO terms would be more than satisfactory for the UK. And we can certainly cope with any difficulties that are thrown our way," he said.

While EU officials and diplomats said cutting the value of the bloc's catch in British waters by around 30% from 2021 would be too high, the EU was willing to go as far as 25%.

Britain, the world's sixth-biggest economy, left the EU, a trading bloc of 450 million consumers, last January. An estimated trillion dollars worth of annual trade is at stake if they fail to put in place a new accord by the end of the year.

A senior British minister yesterday ruled out prolonging Britain's transition out of the EU beyond Dec. 31.

Russia sanctions EU over Navalny poisoning

Says the Putin critic suffers from 'delusions'

AFP, Moscow

Russia yesterday said it was hitting EU officials with sanctions for their response to the poisoning of opposition figure Alexei Navalny, who the Kremlin said was suffering from "delusions of persecution."

The foreign ministry in Moscow summoned several senior EU diplomats before announcing the new travel bans.

In response to "confrontational" sanctions imposed by the bloc in October, Russia "decided to expand the list of representatives of EU member states and institutions who will be denied entry to Russia."

The announcement came a day after Navalny, 44, said in a report he had impersonated an official in the Kremlin's Security Council and extracted an admission of guilt from a toxins expert with the FSB security service.

In a video of the conversation published by Navalny, the alleged FSB agent says agents placed poison in Navalny's underwear this summer.

The anticorruption campaigner was flown for treatment to Germany in August where labs concluded he was poisoned with Novichok, a Soviet-designed nerve agent.

Navalny's video of his conversation with the man named Konstantin Kudryavtsev racked up more than 12 million views in less than 24 hours and social media were abuzz with memes about Navalny's underpants.

The Kremlin yesterday described Navalny as a "sick" man who was suffering from "delusions of persecution". The FSB described the phone call as "fake" and said it would not have been possible without "the support of foreign intelligence services."

Air pollution killed 1.67m Indians in 2019: report

REUTERS, New Delhi

Toxic air killed more people in India in 2019 than in 2017, The Lancet said in a report shared by the government yesterday, with 1.67 million deaths accounting for 18% of all fatalities.

India, whose cities top global pollution lists, faces a growing economic as well as human toll from bad air quality, which was linked to 1.24 million, or 12.5% of total deaths in the previous such study for 2017.

The analysis found pollution led to chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, respiratory infections, lung cancer, heart disease, stroke, diabetes, neonatal disorders and cataracts.

Land-locked New Delhi, the world's most polluted capital whose winter skies are often obscured by its filthy air, recorded the highest per-capita economic hit, the journal said.

The fatalities in 2019 led to a total loss of \$36.8 billion, or 1.36% of India's gross domestic product (GDP), with the poor and populous states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar experiencing the highest economic loss as a percentage of their GDP.

The government said in a statement that India would need to invest more in state-specific pollution control programmes if it were to meet its goal of becoming a \$5 trillion economy by 2024, from around \$2.9 trillion now.

India's three main cities, New Delhi, Kolkata and Mumbai, were on the list of the world's 20 worst polluted cities, Swiss air quality technology company IQAir reported yesterday.



Municipal workers clean up debris at the site of a bomb attack in Kabul, Afghanistan yesterday. Four doctors who worked at an Afghan prison with hundreds of Taliban inmates were among five people killed when a bomb attached to their car exploded, police said. At least 20 people were injured in the attack.

PHOTO: AFP

'I feel sorry for them'

Vietnamese victim's father pities men convicted in UK over migrant deaths

AFP, Hanoi

The father of one of the 39 Vietnamese migrants who suffocated in a truck in Britain said Tuesday he felt sorry for the two men convicted of manslaughter over the deaths.

The bodies of the men and women were found inside a sealed container near London in October 2019, after they suffocated in sweltering temperatures.

Lorry driver Eamonn Harrison, 24, from Northern Ireland, and Romanian national Gheorghe Nica, 43, were found guilty of 39 counts of manslaughter, as well as people smuggling, by a London court on Monday.

They are expected to be sentenced early in January and could face a maximum sentence of life imprisonment.

Nguyen Dinh Gia, father of victim Nguyen Dinh Luong, 20, expressed sympathy for the men.

"I think they only did it because they wanted to make ends meet. I



don't think it's appropriate to give them a harsh (punishment like) a life sentence," he told AFP from a small village in Vietnam's Ha Tinh province.

"I feel sorry for them." Le Minh Tuan, who lost his 30-year-old son Le Van Ha, however, hailed the court verdict.

"I think the decision of the UK court that convicted two men of manslaughter is right," he told AFP from his village in Nghe An province.

"If they had given the migrants inside some air, those people wouldn't have died."

The bodies were discovered at the

southeastern English port of Purfleet after being sealed inside the container for at least 12 hours.

A forensic expert calculated it would have taken about nine hours for the air to turn toxic in the trailer. The victims were aged between 15 and 44.

Prosecutors have said the trapped Vietnamese were unable to get a phone signal inside the container. Mobile phones recovered from the bodies of the 39 victims showed they had tried to raise the alarm and left messages for their families as they ran out of air.

The case highlighted the vast and unscrupulous people trafficking networks spanning the globe.

Many of the victims had come from poor parts of Vietnam and were plunged into thousands of dollars of debt to smugglers to pay for the dangerous journeys.

Monday's convictions brought the total number found guilty in connection with the case in the UK to eight.

Bangladesh Bank	
Sustainable Finance Department	
Head Office	
Dhaka	
Website: www.bb.org.bd	
Request for Expression of Interest (EOI) for Hiring Consulting Firm (National)	
1. Name of procuring entity	: GCF RPSP Project Implementation Unit, Sustainable Finance Department, Bangladesh Bank.
2. Expression of Interest (EOI)	: Selection of Consulting Firm.
3. EOI Ref. No. & date	: SFD (GBMS)/1003/6/2/2020-2339 Date: December 22, 2020.
4. Procurement sub-method	: Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS).
5. Budget and source of funds	: Foreign Grant.
6. Project title	: Upscaling regulatory landscape of Green Banking for Shariah Based Banks and Financial Institutions in Bangladesh.
7. Assignment title	: Hiring Consulting Firm for Developing Supervision Manual on Shariah Based Green Banking for Bangladesh Bank and arranging workshop for capacity building of related stakeholders.
8. EOI closing date and time	: January 10, 2021 at 5.00pm.
9. Brief description of the assignment	: Bangladesh Bank (BB) has received financing from Green Climate Fund (GCF) to implement a policy framework or a white paper on Shariah based green financing. To carry out the project successfully, consultancy service is needed for the preparation and commission of Supervision Manual on Shariah Based Green Banking.
10. Qualifications and experience	: Consulting firm should be registered under relevant GoB rules and acts. The firm should have established credible credentials, expertise, and track record in undertaking comprehensive technical assistance to the development of supervision for banking and financial sector. Relevant experience in green financing/climate funding operations will be regarded as advantage. The experts employed by the firm for the project should demonstrate experience and knowledge of Islamic finance and financial regulatory landscape of Bangladesh.
11. Other details	: Expected term of the assignment is 16 (sixteen) months. Consulting firm may not associate with other firm(s)/NGO(s) without prior notification to and approval from PIU, SFD, BB. The prospective consulting firm shall submit all supporting documents in written form (in person, or by mail, or by email) to the address below or in BB website (https://etender.bb.org.bd). Interested candidates may obtain "Terms of Reference (ToR)" from the website of Bangladesh Bank (https://www.bb.org.bd/aboutus/tenders/tenders.php). Application/proposal will not be accepted after EOI closing time.
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS	
12. Name of the official inviting EOI	: Khondkar Morshed Millat.
13. Designation of the official inviting EOI	: General Manager (Project Director).
14. Address of the official inviting EOI	: GCF RPSP Project Implementation Unit, Sustainable Finance Department, 19th Floor, 2nd Annex Building, Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka-1000.
15. Contact details of the official inviting EOI	: Phone: 9530320, Fax: 9530327.
This Request for Expression of Interest (EOI) is in compliance with relevant government rules and regulations e.g. Public Procurement Rules 2008. By responding to this EOI, consultant firms are conforming to those rules and regulations. The procuring entity reserves all right to accept or reject any or all EOIs without assigning any reason whatsoever. The details EOI and ToR are available at BB website (https://www.bb.org.bd/aboutus/tenders/tenders.php).	
ব্যাবহিক ও আর্থিক সেবা পেতে হারানির শিকার হলে কিভাবে কোনো অভিযোগ থাকলে ১৬২৩৬ নম্বরে ফোন করুন।	
DCP: 48/2020-3884 Date: 22-12-2020 GD-2046	
Khondkar Morshed Millat General Manager (Project Director) Phone: 9530320 E-mail: g.m.sfd@bb.org.bd	