

WikiLeaks plane ready to bring Snowden to Iceland

AFP, Reykjavik

A chartered private jet is ready to bring US intelligence leaker Edward Snowden to Iceland from Hong Kong, a businessman connected to whistleblowing website WikiLeaks said late Thursday.

"Everything is ready on our side and the plane could take off tomorrow," Icelandic businessman Olafur Sigurvinsson, head of WikiLeaks partner firm DataCell, told Channel2 television.

"We have really done all we can do. We have a plane and all the logistics in place. Now we are only awaiting a response from the (Icelandic) government," added the boss of DataCell, which handles donations to WikiLeaks.

The private jet belongs to a Chinese firm and has been chartered at a cost of more than \$240,000 thanks to individual contributions received by DataCell, he said. WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange said Wednesday he had been in contact with representatives of Snowden to discuss his possible bid for asylum in Iceland following his disclosure of US surveillance programmes.

Latvia probes blaze at presidential palace

AFP, Riga

Latvian police yesterday began probing the cause of a major roof fire at Riga Castle, official residence of the president, after firefighters battled through the night to bring the blaze under control.

It was "much too soon" to judge the cause but all possibilities, including arson, were being considered, interior ministry official Ilze Peterson-Godmane told reporters in the Latvian capital.

No one was killed or seriously injured, according to state fire and rescue service VUGD, which deployed all available fire crews after flames were spotted shooting out of the roof late Thursday.

VUGD chief Oskars Abolins said an area of more than 3,000 square metres (33,000 square feet) had caught fire, lighting the night sky well into the early hours of the morning and drawing hundreds of onlookers.

"This was the largest and most complicated fire in Riga in recent times," Abolins told state radio.

Riga castle, parts of which date from the early 13th century, is officially the residence and workplace of Latvian President Andris Berzins.

Inu defends

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right to look after the bank.

"The government wants to enact some rules and regulations just to ensure proper management of the bank," he said in a views exchange meeting at Bheramara upazila auditorium in Kushtia yesterday.

He said the government just wants to build a better bank which has been operating for 30 years.

"Hasn't the Grameen Bank been running better for last two years without Prof Yunus [founder of Grameen Bank]?" Inu said, adding that the bank does not need the Nobel laureate to run it.

Inu's comments came just after the Grameen Bank Enquiry Commission had recommended breaking up the Nobel peace prize winning micro lender into 19 zones, which received flak from experts.

Many see the recommendations as a well-orchestrated attempt to take over the bank, which has been doing very well and its business model had been replicated in several countries.

Kerry seeks 'full potential' in India

AFP, Washington

US Secretary of State John Kerry heads to India on Sunday calling for the two countries' relations to achieve their "full potential," amid charges that years of momentum have ground to a halt.

Kerry will spend three days in New Delhi on his first visit to India as the top US diplomat, where he plans to discuss cooperation on education and climate change and take up concerns over plans for a US withdrawal from Afghanistan.

In a video message ahead of his visit, Kerry said President Barack Obama's administration held a "firm belief that a strong India is in America's national interests."

"The United States not only welcomes India as a rising power, we fervently support it," Kerry said.

"This is the time for both the United States and India to challenge ourselves in order to reach higher, in order to strengthen the bonds that we share, and to realize the full potential of our partnership."

Kerry pointed to Obama's support for New Delhi as a permanent member of the UN Security Council -- one of the emerging power's top foreign policy goals -- and his own efforts as a senator to approve a nuclear cooperation agreement.

The accord, which ended longstanding opprobrium over India's nuclear program, was heralded by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and then president George W. Bush as the start of a deeper relationship

between the world's two largest democracies after estrangement during the Cold War.

But even some erstwhile champions of better ties have grown frustrated. US business leaders have urged the Obama administration to threaten retaliation against India over what they charge are unfair trading practices.

India has angered foreign companies by championing generic drugs -- which advocates say save lives in poor nations -- and by refusing to grant nuclear operators the liability protections they seek in case of accidents.

India in turn has been alarmed by proposals in the US Congress to curb visas to high-tech workers as well as US plans to end the unpopular Afghanistan war next year and negotiate with the Taliban, who are sworn enemies of India.

"We would like to get from the secretary a better idea of what the American plans are" in Afghanistan, a senior government official said in New Delhi.

Sadanand Dhume, a resident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, a right-leaning think tank, described the US-India relationship as "stable but boring, with a hint of frost in the air."

"There are no major kerfuffles, they are talking about more things than ever, but we don't see any big ideas or initiatives," he said.

"Both countries are grappling with their own sets of issues and, frankly, India has more or less fallen off the radar in Washington."

The Natural Resources

Defense Council, an environmental advocacy group, urged Kerry to work with India on climate change, calling it a "pivotal opportunity" for cooperation.

The group said India and the United States could together boost solar power and increase energy efficiency standards, which would put a serious dent in carbon emissions as India's burgeoning middle class buys air conditioners.

Kerry, who will be joined by Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz, has long championed action on climate change. Obama and Chinese President Xi Jinping also found some common ground on the issue when they met earlier this month.

Kerry's visit comes as India prepares for elections next year, with Gujarat state's controversial leader Narendra Modi expected to lead the Hindu nationalist main opposition Bharatiya Janata Party.

The United States has refused to issue Modi a visa due to allegations he turned a blind eye or worse to anti-Muslim riots in 2002. Britain recently ended its boycott of Modi in an acknowledgement of his emerging national role.

A US official expected no change during the trip, saying that Kerry would meet Prime Minister Manmohan Singh but did not have time to see the opposition.

Kerry will be heading to India from Qatar, where he will take part in a conference on Syria and talk about outreach to the Taliban.

Suu Kyi slams proposed inter-faith marriage law

AFP, Yangon

Myanmar opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi has criticised a proposal by nationalist monks to restrict marriages between Buddhist women and men of other faiths, describing it as a violation of human rights, a report said yesterday.

"This is one-sided. Why only women? You cannot treat the women unfairly," Radio Free Asia quoted the Nobel Peace Laureate as saying in an interview.

"I also understand that this is not in accordance with the laws of the country and especially that it is not part of Buddhism," the veteran activist said.

"It is a violation of women's rights and human rights."

Under the proposal -- spearheaded by the controversial Mandalay cleric Wirathu -- non-Buddhist men wishing to marry a Buddhist woman would have to convert and gain permission from her parents to wed or risk 10 years in jail.

The idea was raised at a recent meeting of more than 200 monks called to discuss a surge in Buddhist-Muslim violence in the former junta-ruled country.

Wirathu said the law was needed "because Buddhist girls have lost freedom of religion when they married Muslim men".

Senior clerics have distanced themselves from the proposal while women's rights groups have voiced opposition.

Sectionarian bloodshed -- mostly targeting Muslims -- has laid bare deep divides that were largely suppressed under decades of military rule which ended two years ago in the Buddhist-majority country.

BNP trashes

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she visited the country for treatment of her teeth and other complications and returned home on March 1.

At a press conference on the night of March 1, Khaleda had announced to go for a one-point movement to oust the present government.

Citing the news item, Rizvi yesterday said some media houses had published that Khaleda Zia met her elder son Tarique Rahman in Singapore.

While others reported that she would go to Saudi Arabia to meet Tarique after getting her treatment in Singapore.

In both the cases, the news report had no relation with the reality, he said.

About Khaleda-Ershad meeting, Rizvi said "If they had any interest of holding a meeting, why would they go for this [meeting] in secret in Singapore?"

The news was released to confuse people, he claimed.

Ershad went to Singapore for treatment on June 10 and returned home on June 18 while Khaleda Zia was still there for medical treatment.

10 held

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Also on Thursday night, Detective Branch of police recovered 30,000 yaba tablets worth around Tk65,00,000 and arrested six people in this connection at Chawkbazar, Kamalapur and Banasree of the capital.

The arrestees are Manila Chowdhury, 22, Abu Taher, 48, Md Khaled, 30, Kulsum, 32, Jane Alam, 45, and Md Asif, 24, said Monirul Islam, joint commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP), at a press conference at its media centre yesterday afternoon.

Taher confessed to have smuggled the yaba tablets from Myanmar, while the others admitted that they were involved in supplying those to different parts of the country including Dhaka, Gazipur and Chittagong, added Monirul.

A third-year student of Titumir College, Manila earlier had served 10 months of imprisonment for supplying yaba, noted the DMP official.

Yesterday, a Dhaka court put the six arrestees on three-day police remand each.

Google told to delete Street View payload data in UK

THE GUARDIAN ONLINE

Google has been threatened with criminal proceedings by the information commissioner's office (ICO) over data secretly collected by its Street View cars in the UK.

The privacy watchdog said it would prosecute the US firm under the contempt of court act if it failed to delete private information it gathered from public Wi-Fi networks.

The ICO has served Google with an enforcement notice ordering it to delete the data within 35 days or face criminal proceedings.

Stephen Eckersley, the ICO's head of enforcement, said: "Today's enforcement notice strengthens the action already taken by our office, placing a legal requirement on Google to

delete the remaining payload data identified last year within the next 35 days and immediately inform the ICO if any further disks are found. Failure to abide by the notice will be considered as contempt of court, which is a criminal offence."

It is not known what private details are included in the so-called payload data held by Google about British citizens. But privacy watchdogs in the US found that it contained traces of passwords, emails and text messages sent over unsecured Wi-Fi networks.

Google has faced criticism from regulators around the world for collecting private information with its Street View mapping cars between May 2007 and May 2010. The company admitted publicly in May

2010 that it had collected the data, which the Federal Communications Commission said was not a breach of US laws.

On Friday the ICO said it would "be taking a keen interest in [Google's] operations and will not hesitate to take action if further serious compliance issues come to its attention".

A Google spokesman said: "We work hard to get privacy right at Google. But in this case we didn't, which is why we quickly tightened up our systems to address the issue. The project leaders never wanted this data, and didn't use it or even look at it."

"We co-operated fully with the ICO throughout its investigation, and having received its order this morning we are proceeding with our plan to delete the data."

Taliban fighters welcome Qatar office

AFP, Kandahar

Taliban guerrillas yesterday hailed the rebels' new office in Qatar as evidence of their success on the battlefield but vowed to fight on until all US forces leave Afghanistan.

The opening of the office in Qatar was seen as a first step towards a peace deal as the US-led Nato combat mission ends next year, but a furious Kabul accused the rebels of posing as a government-in-exile.

Talk of a meeting

between US and Taliban officials has been put on hold, and the US has stressed the office must not be treated as an embassy for the hardliners who were ousted from power in 2001.

"We welcome the opening of the Taliban office in Qatar, and we are happy about it," Mullah Ehsanullah, a local Taliban fighter in the Zhari district of the southern province of Kandahar, told AFP by telephone.

"With the establishment of this office, we want to hold

talks with the international community like an independent and sovereign state.

"We are reaching our goals in defeating the US, now we want to free our country from occupation. We want to build our country on our own."

When the office opened on Tuesday, it used the title of the rebels' 1996-2001 government, the "Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan", and flew the white Taliban flag -- a provocative symbol of oppression to many Afghans.

Michael Jackson went 60 days

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Conrad Murray said he gave Jackson to treat his insomnia is something a sleep expert says no one had ever undergone.

Propofol disrupts the normal sleep cycle and offers no REM sleep, yet it leaves a patient feeling refreshed as if they had experienced genuine sleep, according to Dr Charles Czeisler, a Harvard Medical School sleep expert testifying at the wrongful death trial of concert promoter AEG Live.

If the singer had not died on June 25, 2009, of an overdose of the surgical anesthetic, the lack of REM sleep may have soon taken his life anyway, according to an opinion by Czeisler.

Lab rats die after five weeks of getting no REM sleep, he said. It was never tried on a human until Dr Murray gave Michael Jackson nightly propofol infusions for two months.

Czeisler -- who serves as a sleep consultant to Nasa, the CIA and the Rolling Stones -- testified Thursday that the "drug induced coma" induced by propofol leaves a patient with the same refreshed feeling of a good sleep, but without the benefits that genuine sleep delivers in repairing brain cells and the body.

"It would be like eating some sort of cellulose pellets instead of dinner," he said. "Your stomach would be full and you would not be hungry, but it would be zero calories and not fulfill any of your nutrition needs."

Depriving someone of REM sleep for a long period of time makes them paranoid, anxiety-filled, depressed, unable to learn, distracted, and sloppy, Czeisler testified. They lose their balance and appetite, while their physical reflexes get 10 times slower and their emotional responses 10

times stronger, he said.

Those symptoms are strikingly similar to descriptions of Jackson in his last weeks as described in e-mails from show producers and testimony by witnesses in the trial.

Jackson's mother and children are suing AEG Live, contending the company is liable in his death because it hired, retained or supervised Dr Murray, who was convicted of involuntary manslaughter. They argue the promoter pressured Dr Murray to get Jackson to rehearsals, while failing to get Jackson help despite numerous red flags warning that he was in trouble.

AEG Live lawyers contend it was Jackson who chose, hired and supervised Murray and their executives had no way of knowing about the dangerous propofol treatments administered in the privacy of Jackson's rented mansion.

Remarkable growth

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number of cases of abuse of low-skilled female workers.

"It is therefore crucial that each and every female worker is protected when she works abroad, said Begum, who keeps a watch on labour mobility.

Officials of the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment say the government on several occasions imposed full or partial ban on female migration following incidents of physical and mental torture on women workers and even deaths amid weak monitoring and welfare arrangements by the Bangladesh authorities.

Migration experts say the authorities concerned are now encouraging female migration, but the training facilities and the welfare services in the destination countries are still weak.

According to the statistics of Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET), 95 percent of more than 2 lakh female migrants are working mainly in the

United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman and Bahrain as house helps whose monthly salaries range between \$ 150 and 200.

These countries, except for Jordan, do not recognise maids in their national labour law. This means they are not guaranteed rights such as weekly day off, work hour limit, paid holidays and compensation.

The female workers at garment factories in Jordan or at fish processing factories in Mauritius come under the labour law, but they represent a very small percentage.

While there are legal loopholes in the destination countries, Bangladesh also does not have strong service system to help its domestic workers abroad, said Tasneem Siddiqui, chairperson of the Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit of Dhaka University.

She said the Filipino Embassy in Jordan provided services to their female

domestic workers when they went to church on Sundays. Bangladesh mission abroad can do something similar once a month. But it would require more trained staff.

Recently Hong Kong has started recruiting female house helps after providing two months' training in Bangladesh. Their monthly wage is \$ 500, which is much better than that of the Gulf countries.

Those going to the Gulf should also be provided with similar training. The present 21-day training for the Gulf-bound domestic workers was not sufficient at all, said Siddiqui.

"Migration of female workers will see a great leap if we can train caregivers and graduate nurses," she said, adding that Japan, the USA and Europe had huge demand for nurses and caregivers.

She said it was unfortunate that we were not tapping these opportunities, but relying largely on low-paying household jobs.

<div>BANGLADESH TEXTILE MILLS CORPORATION (BTMC) BTMC Bhaban 7-9, Kawran Bazar C/A, Dhaka-1215. Web site: www.btmc.gov.bd, e-mail: btmccho@yahoo.com</div>				
INVITATION FOR RE-TENDER				
1.	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Textiles & Jute		
2.	Agency	Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation		
3.	Procuring Entity Name	Chief Engineer, Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation.		
4.	Procuring Entity / Employer Code	Not use at present		
5.	Procuring Entity / Employer District	Dhaka, BTMC office.		
6.	Invitation for	Construction work of "Vertical Extension of BTMC Bhaban from 8 th floor to 11 th floor and Construction of 5-Storeyed Garage including 1 (one) Basement Car Parking Facility in Adjacent Vacant Land of BTMC Bhaban" at 7-9, Kawran Bazar C/A, Dhaka-1215"		
7.	Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method (OTM) single stage two Envelope systems (Technical & Financial offers are to be submitted in two separate sealed Envelopes).		
8.	Budget and Source of Funds	BTMC's own fund and payments for this work are to be made in Bangladesh Taka.		
9.	Development Partners (if applicable)	Not Applicable		
10.	Project / Program Code (if applicable)	Not Applicable		
11.	Project / Program Name (if applicable)	Construction work of "Vertical Extension of BTMC Bhaban from 8 th floor to 11 th floor and Construction of 5-Storeyed Garage including 1 (one) Basement Car Parking Facility in Adjacent Vacant Land of BTMC Bhaban" at 7-9, Kawran Bazar C/A, Dhaka-1215"		
12.	Tender Package No.	24.30.0000.101.15(4).106.12		
13.	Tender Package Name	Construction work of "Vertical Extension of BTMC Bhaban from 8 th floor to 11 th floor and Construction of 5-Storeyed Garage including 1 (one) Basement Car Parking Facility in Adjacent Vacant Land of BTMC Bhaban" at 7-9, Kawran Bazar C/A, Dhaka-1215"		
14.	Tender Last Selling Date	09/07/2013		
15.	Tender Closing Date & Time	Date	Time	
		10/07/2013	12:00 Noon	
16.	Tender Opening Date & Time	Date	Time	
		10/07/2013	12:30 P.M	
17.	Name & Address of the Office -Selling of Tender Documents	Address: Offices of the Chief Accountant, Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation, BTMC Bhaban (2nd Level), 7-9, Kawranbazar, Dhaka-1215 during office hours.		
No conditions apply for sale, purchase or distribution of tender documents				
- Receiving tender documents				
Office of the Chief Engineer, Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation, BTMC Bhaban (3 rd Level), 7-9, Kawranbazar, Dhaka-1215.				
- Opening tender documents				
Office of the Chief Engineer, Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation, BTMC Bhaban (3 rd Level), 7-9, Kawranbazar, Dhaka-1215.				
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER				
18.	Eligibility of Tenderer	i)	The minimum period of general experience of the tenderer in the construction works shall be 5 (five) years.	
		ii)	Having experience in successful completion of at least 1 (one) No. of 10-Storeyed commercial building with 1 (one) basement (completed within last 5 (Five) years) and value of which should be minimum Tk. 13.00 (Thirteen) Crore in a single work order, in govt., semi-govt., autonomous bodies or private organization.	
		iii)	Having experience of successful supply, installation & commissioning of 2 nos. Lift.	
		iv)	Having experience of supply, installation, testing & commissioning of 500 KVA Sub-station works.	
		v)	In case of the work done under any reputed Private Organization, the certifying authority shall be the owner.	
		vi)	The required average annual construction Turn Over is minimum Tk. 15.00 (Fifteen) Crore within last 5 (five) years. Turnover submitted must be authenticated by concerned Deputy Commissioner of Tax.	
		vii)	Payment Certificate of last 5 (Five) years have to be submitted.	
		viii)	The amount of free funds (liquid assets) & or credit facilities net of other Contractual Commitment of the applicant (Financial Capabilities) shall be minimum Tk. 5.00 (Five) Crore.	
		ix)	Must have valid ABC category Contractor and Supervisory license from Electricity Licensing Board Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.	
		x)	To attach Tender Documents purchasing money receipt (Original), up-to date Trade license, Income Tax Clearance Certificate from the NBR / Concerned office etc.	
		xi)	Other conditions as per Tender Document.	
		xii)	All certificates and necessary papers will have to be submitted in respective forms as mentioned in the Tender Document.	
19.	Brief description of Works	i)	Civil, Sanitary, Internal Electrification, Mechanical & water supply arrangement work of "Vertical Extension of BTMC Bhaban from 8th floor to 11th floor and Construction of 5-Storeyed Garage including 1 (one) Basement Car Parking Facility in Adjacent Vacant Land of BTMC" at 7-9, Kawran Bazar C/A, Dhaka-1215.	
		ii)	External Electrification work supply, installation of Sub-Station & equipment.	
		iii)	Electro-Mechanical works, supply, installation & commissioning of Lifts & Fire-detection, fighting & hydrant system.	
20.	Price of Tender Document	Tk. 10,000.00 (Ten thousand) only Non-refundable, to be paid through BTMC receipt Challan.		
	Lot No.	Identification of lot	Location	Tender security amount (Tk.)
21.	01	Construction work of "Vertical Extension of BTMC Bhaban from 8 th floor to 11 th floor and Construction of 5-Storeyed Garage including 1 (one) Basement Car Parking Facility in Adjacent Vacant Land of BTMC Bhaban" at 7-9, Kawran Bazar C/A, Dhaka-1215"	Kawran Bazar, Dhaka.	BDT 65.00 (Sixty five) Lac only as earnest money must be submitted along with the tender in the form of Bank Draft / Pay Order or Bank Guarantee from any scheduled bank of Bangladesh in favour of Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation (BTMC), Kawran Bazar, Dhaka.
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS:				
22.	Name of Official Inviting Tender	Md. Sanaullah		
23.	Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Chief Engineer (CC) & Project Director		
24.	Address of Official Inviting Tender	Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation, BTMC Bhaban, 7-9, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215.		
25.	Contact details of Official Inviting Tender	Telephone No.	Fax No.	Email:
		+88-02-8121859	+880-2-8114600	
26.	The procuring Entity reserves the right to reject all the Tender(s) without assigning any reason whatsoever.			
Md. Sanaullah Chief Engineer (CC) & Project Director				