

US charges North Korean

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aliases and is fluent in three languages. CBS News reported that investigations were able to link his social media activities, email correspondences, and usage of proxies with the crimes he is alleged to have committed. The news report also states that Hyok was responsible for infection of over 300,000 computers, including devices of hospitals, schools, and businesses.

FBI in their wanted cyber fugitives list has placed the name of Hyok and two of his associates: Jon Chang Hyok and Kim Il. The trio has been alleged to be working for North Korean government's Reconnaissance General Bureau (RGB).

According to cybersecurity experts, RGB is responsible for earning the North Korean regime foreign currency through cyber exploits.

However, these charges are more symbolic in nature as the US does not have any extradition treaty with North Korea. Hyok is unlikely to ever see the inside of a US courtroom ever.

These conspiracies of RGB have been labelled as "Lazarus Group" and "Advanced Persistent Threat 38 (APT38)" by some private cybersecurity researchers.

Lazarus Group has been notorious for launching several targeted attacks on financial institutions across several countries, including Poland, Iraq, Nigeria, Ethiopia, India, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Costa Rica, and, of course, Bangladesh.

From simple hacks to complex intrusions, the group is capable of launching attacks on even the most secured cyber infrastructure, according to industry experts.

During the early investigation of Bangladesh Bank heist, cyber forensic investigators going through log files identified one particular IP address

which originated from North Korea.

Upon further investigation and analysis, a pattern emerged. These patterns were oddly similar to Lazarus's previous known heist.

Studying the BB heist along with other known work of Lazarus Group, Kaspersky Labs has been able to draw a modus operandi of the group.

The group does initial testing of their hacks in financial institutions to hone their skill as well as recalibrate their tools. Once the tools are ready, they attempt to compromise one single device or system within the target network. Once that is done through injecting malware, sometimes in the form of a simple email attachment, they gradually establish a foothold by replicating the infection within the target network. The group then studies the behaviour pattern of the network, learns about the security protocols, and understands the operation by analysing the network traffic.

Finally, they engineer a plan and then go for the intended rogue transactions by bypassing all the security protocols.

The BB heist happened in the very same fashion.

The Criminal Investigation Department of Bangladesh is carrying out an enquiry on the heist, said Abu Hena Mohammad Raze Hassan, the head of the Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit of Bangladesh Bank.

The BFIU is the central agency of Bangladesh responsible for analyzing suspicious transaction reports, cash transaction reports, and information related to money laundering and financing of terrorism from reporting agencies and other sources.

If the CID wants information about the people charged by the US Department of Justice, the BFIU would request the US department concerned for information, Raze Hassan said.



Afghan women cadets handle an AK-47 rifle during a training programme at the Officers Training Academy in Chennai, India yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

Operators place flurry

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NRSC president, formed two committees to deal with two issues.

One committee will scrutinise and finalise the draft of National Road Safety Strategic Action Plan-2021-2024 while the other will work on how to implement recommendations made by another committee to regulate small vehicles, including easy bikes.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan, Railways Minister Nurul Islam Sujan, State Minister for Shipping Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury, chiefs of different government agencies concerned, and transport leaders and experts took part in the meeting in person and virtually.

Khondaker Enayet Ullah, secretary general of Bangladesh Road Transport Owners Association, said many decisions were made to control three-wheelers on highways but those were yet to be implemented.

Referring to the Covid-19 situation, he said all the sectors get financial benefits from the government, but the transport sector was deprived of any incentives.

Prices of every material required for operating a vehicle have "increased by 40 to 50 percent in the last seven years" but the bus fare was not increased during the same period. A decision was made in 2019 to increase the fare, but it was not raised, Enayet said.

"We are requesting you [authorities] to take steps for increasing the bus fare immediately," a meeting participant told this newspaper quoting Enayet as

saying. None from the authorities, however, responded to demands from the transport association leaders.

The demands come two weeks after a government-formed committee proposed fixing the bus fare on the Ghatarchar-Kanchpur Bridge route at Tk 2.2 per kilometre. A single transport company will operate all the buses on the route on a pilot basis from April 1. The proposed bus fare is almost 30 percent higher than the current fares in Dhaka city.

Romesh Chandra Ghosh, chairman of Bangladesh Bus-Truck Owners' Association, told the meeting that they sought some financial benefits from the authorities, including waiver of loan interest during the pandemic period, but no action was taken in this regard.

Nazrul Islam, secretary of the Road Transport and Highways Division, said the petition was forwarded to the finance ministry, which sent it to the governor of Bangladesh Bank.

VERBAL SPAT WITH TAPOSH
Speaking at the meeting, Enayet said the two Dhaka city corporations have leased out bus terminals to private operators, but in many cases staffers of the lessees go out on the streets and collect money from vehicles, causing problems.

Osman Ali, general secretary of Bangladesh Road Transport Workers Federation, also talked about the lease issue.

After Enayet's speech, the DSCC mayor spoke on haphazard parking

of vehicles by transport operators. He said they also came to know about some allegations regarding the lease issue from media reports.

"But, I am asking you to be careful about what you say," a meeting participants told The Daily Star quoting Taposh.

As Osman tried to say something about the issues, the mayor said, "You are speaking on irrelevant issues. We will take steps if there is any problem regarding the lease."

At that state, Secretary Nazrul Islam told Osman that those were not the issues to be discussed in this meeting.

TWO COMMITTEES
The BRTA, taking opinions from the agencies concerned, has prepared the draft National Road Safety Strategic Action Plan-2021-2024 as the tenure of the previous one has expired.

Under the draft action plan, the authorities want to reduce 20 to 25 percent of road accident fatalities and injuries by the end of 2024 and 50 percent by 2030.

Yesterday's meeting formed a committee to examine and finalise the draft within one month. The committee, led by Abu Sayed Sheikh, additional secretary of Road Transport and Highways Division, will have six other members, including the BRTA chairman.

The meeting set up another committee, led by the BRTA chairman, to work on how to implement recommendations made by another committee to regulate small vehicles, including easy bikes.

Technical glitch

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around 8:00am just to prevent them from joining the rally.

Meanwhile, hundreds of people, including transport workers, suffered as they had to wait on both sides of the river.

The BNP has been holding rallies over the last few days in the capital and different districts.

The party on February 14 made announcements of the rally in Barishal where it would demand fair elections. Twenty-five vehicles carrying BNP leaders and activists reached Shimulia Ferry Terminal around 8:30am.

"We found no ferry at Shimulia terminal. We were told the ferries were in Bangla Bazar. Our vehicles could not go across the river," said Ishraque Hossain, a member of BNP International Affairs Committee.

"The offices of the authorities concerned at Shimulia terminal were closed," he told reporters, adding that the party members could not ask anyone what was going on.

"The ferry services were suspended due to a technical issue," said Shafiqul Islam, deputy general manager (Shimulia terminal) of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC).

Shafayet Ahmed, who is the manager, said out of 13 ferries, 11 were in operation yesterday morning.

Of the 11, three were moored at Banglabazar and eight were on the river at the time. "That is why they did not find any ferry at Shimulia."

But everything became normal around 10:00am, he informed.

However, a BITWC official, seeking anonymity, told The Daily Star that they received a message on their phones the previous night with instructions to suspend the ferry services.

The official didn't give further details.

Around 700 vehicles were subjected to a tailback at Shimulia due to the suspension, said Helal Uddin, in-charge of Mawa Traffic Police outpost.

The BNP held the rally on Barishal Zila School premises where BNP Vice-chairman Maj (ret'd) Hafizuddin Ahmed spoke as the chief guest.

However, groups of activists threw chairs at each other and scuffled as they quarrelled over front row seats at the rally.

BNP leaders urged people to launch a movement against the government to restore people's right to vote.

[Our correspondents from Munshiganj and Barishal contributed to the report]

World's oldest

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this giant of the Ice Age reveals how mammoths evolved and adapted to life in a cold climate. It also may show a previously unknown species of mammoth.

"This DNA is incredibly old. The samples are a thousand times older than Viking remains and even pre-date the existence of humans and Neanderthals," said Love Dalen, a professor of evolutionary genetics at the Centre for Palaeogenetics in Stockholm.

An international team of researchers was able to isolate DNA from molars from three separate mammoths collected from the Siberian permafrost in the 1970s. They dated the teeth using geological data and by analyzing the DNA.

The research published in the journal Nature on Wednesday.

Only a third of the recipients

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Sherpur, said the area is basically a predominantly agricultural area, due to which most women are busy with their household work.

He also said people, especially women, in the area are not given proper awareness regarding the vaccination campaign.

"We have instructed healthcare assistants to go door-to-door and encourage women to get vaccinated. And if anyone faces any difficulty, they can get registered at the community clinics," he added.

Government officials said they were satisfied with the progress of the vaccination campaign but concerned about the low response from women.

The government launched the mass vaccination programme across the country 336 days after the first Covid-19 case was reported in the country on March 8, 2020. Starting from February 7, vaccination centres have been operating every day except Fridays.

Mushtaq Hussain, consultant to

the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research, said women, especially in rural areas, are still reluctant to take vaccines.

"Government should open registration booths in every ward so that people register easily and get vaccinated. Family is the biggest source of encouragement. Family members should come forward and help their women get registered and vaccinated," he said.

The mass inoculation drive began with an initial aim to vaccinate 60 lakh frontline workers and people aged 55 and above by this month. The government, on January 27, opened online registration on www.surokha.gov.bd.

Due to a tepid response in the online registration system, the health directorate brought down the target from 60 lakh to 35 lakh on February 3. On Saturday, however, the target was raised to 70 lakh.

The vaccination campaign gained momentum after the age limit was relaxed to 40 from 55 on February 8.

Erfan Selim

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The investigation officer also appealed to the court to clear Erfan in the cases.

But Erfan cannot walk out of jail as he is yet to secure bail in two other cases filed in October last year, his lawyer Pran Nath told The Daily Star.

One of them is a narcotics case and the other is an attempted murder case. In the attempted murder case, police found evidence to prove the charges.

The date for taking the next course of action about the final report in the narcotics case is yet to be fixed, court sources said.

Erfan's bodyguard Zahidul, however, was charged with possession of an illegal firearm and narcotics.

Erfan was arrested after a case was filed against him on charges of attacking Lt Wasif Ahmed Khan

of Bangladesh Navy in the capital's Dhanmondi area on October 25 last year.

Following the "attack", Rab conducted a drive on Haji Salim's house on Debidas Lane. A mobile court of Rab on the same day handed six months' imprisonment to Erfan for keeping walkie-talkies illegally and six months for possessing illegal alcohol.

On February 11 this year, Sub-Inspector Mominul Haque of the Detective Branch of police submitted the charge sheet to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka against Erfan, Zahidul, chauffeur Mizanur Rahman, protocol officer of Madina Group AB Siddique Dipu and their associate Kazi Ripon in the case filed over the assault and attempted murder of the navy officer.

Facebook blacks out news

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deals to pay news outlets whose links drive traffic to their platforms, or agree a price through arbitration.

Although Australia is a small market, the law is being closely watched around the world by regulators, and could be a test case for a bigger global push to force internet giants to share more of their revenue with content providers.

News publishers outside Australia leapt on Facebook's tactics as evidence that the company, which also owns Instagram and WhatsApp, cannot be trusted as the gatekeeper for their industry.

Banning news during a global pandemic was "a classic example of a monopoly power being the schoolyard bully, trying to protect its dominant position with scant regard for the citizens and customers it supposedly serves," said Henry Faure Walker, chairman of Britain's News Media Association industry group.

Facebook said it had blocked a wide swathe of pages because the draft law did not provide clearly define news content. It said its commitment to combat misinformation had not changed, and it would restore pages that had been taken down by mistake.

"The actions we're taking are focused on restricting publishers and

people in Australia from sharing or viewing Australian and international news content," a company spokesman said. "As the law does not provide clear guidance on the definition of news content, we have taken a broad definition in order to respect the law as drafted."

DIFFERENT STRATEGIES
Publishers say platforms such as Google and Facebook have hoarded the vast bulk of revenue as media shift online, even as print and broadcast advertising shrivels, forcing newspapers, magazines and TV and radio stations to shut newsrooms.

The move in Australia represents a split between Facebook and Google, which had joined together for years to campaign against such laws. Both had threatened to cancel services in Australia, but Google instead sealed preemptive deals with several media outlets in recent days.

Rupert Murdoch's News Corp was the latest to announce a deal in which it will receive "significant payments" from Google in return for providing content for the search engine's News Showcase account.

The Facebook pages of state-funded Australian Broadcasting Corp. went blank, along with those of Australia's two big metro newspaper chains, Nine Entertainment Co Ltd and News Corp.

Three arrested

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of people came there, beat him and took him to a house in the village he resided in. There, his hands and feet were tied and he was beaten again till morning.

Upon hearing the news, his mother went there and saw her son dying. She was told that Mamun suffered this fate due to a stolen mobile phone.

He was rescued from there on Wednesday noon and admitted to Manirampur Upazila Health Complex. He died in the evening while undergoing treatment.

Sikder Matiar Rahman, Manirampur police inspector (Investigation), said an operation is underway to arrest the others accused, adding that Mamun's body was sent to the Jashore General Hospital morgue for autopsy yesterday morning.

UK, Canada

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transition to democracy that began in 2011 after nearly half a century of army rule, raising fears of a return to an old era of isolation despite the generals' promise to hold fair elections.

Also yesterday, Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi said he had agreed with his U.S., Indian and Australian counterparts in the so-called Quad grouping that democracy must be restored quickly in Myanmar.

But the army has closer ties to neighbouring China and to Russia, which have taken a softer approach.

There is little history of Myanmar's generals giving in to foreign pressure.

PROTESTS AND STRIKES
But they also face a challenge in the country of 53 million from protests that have drawn hundreds of thousands of people and strikes that have paralysed much government business.

"I don't want to wake up in a dictatorship. We don't want to live the rest of our lives in fear," said Ko Soe Min, who was out in the main city of Yangon where tens of thousands took to the streets a day after some of the biggest protests yet.

পপুলার লাইফের বীমা দাবীর ২,৯২০ টি চেকে ৮,০৭,০৯,৭০৭
(আট কোটি সাত লক্ষ নয় হাজার সাতশত সাত) টাকা পরিশোধ

সুজিব
শহরম

পপুলার লাইফ ইনস্যুরেন্স কোম্পানী লিমিটেড এর চট্টগ্রাম অঞ্চলের ২,৯২০ জন বীমা গ্রাহকের বীমা দাবীর মোট ৮,০৭,০৯,৭০৭/- টাকার চেক হস্তান্তর উপলক্ষে চট্টগ্রাম বীমা কনভেনশন সেন্টারে আলোচনা সভা অনুষ্ঠিত হয়। অনুষ্ঠানে প্রধান অতিথি হিসেবে ভিডিও কনফারেন্সের মাধ্যমে উপস্থিত ছিলেন পিএইচপি ফ্যামিলির চেয়ারম্যান এবং পপুলার লাইফ ইনস্যুরেন্স কোম্পানী লিমিটেডের সাবেক চেয়ারম্যান আলহাজ্ব সফি মোহাম্মদ মিজানুর রহমান। কোম্পানীর ব্যবস্থাপনা পরিচালক ও সিও এবং বাংলাদেশ ইনস্যুরেন্স ফোরামের প্রেসিডেন্ট বি এম ইউসুফ আলীর সভাপতিত্বে উক্ত অনুষ্ঠানে বিশেষ অতিথি হিসেবে উপস্থিত ছিলেন পিএইচপি ফ্যামিলি ও পপুলার লাইফ ইনস্যুরেন্স কোম্পানী লিমিটেডের পরিচালক মোহাম্মদ জহিরুল ইসলাম চৌধুরী। অনুষ্ঠানে আরও উপস্থিত ছিলেন কোম্পানীর অতিরিক্ত ব্যবস্থাপনা পরিচালক বি এম শওকত আলী, উর্ধ্বতন উপ-ব্যবস্থাপনা পরিচালক ও কোম্পানী সচিব মোস্তফা হেলাল কবির, উপ-ব্যবস্থাপনা পরিচালক সৈয়দ মোতাহার হোসেন ও মোঃ হাবিবুর রহমান সহ কোম্পানীর নিবন্ধি পরিচালকগণ, প্রকল্প পরিচালকগণ, প্রকল্প ইনচার্জ ও কোম্পানীর অন্যান্য উর্ধ্বতন কর্মকর্তাবৃন্দ। ছবিতে অতিথিবৃন্দকে বীমা দাবীর চেক হস্তান্তর করতে দেখা যাচ্ছে।

জীবন বীমায় বিশ্বস্ত নাম

পপুলার লাইফ ইনস্যুরেন্স কোম্পানী লিমিটেড