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## Hackers feast on govt sites

Troves of citizens' data out in the open

ZYMA ISLAM

With the general election around the corner, data leaks and cyberattacks have intensified alarmingly, with the latest being a suspected leak of five crore citizens' data from the Office of the Registrar General, Birth & Death Registration (BDRIS).

The exposed data was first found out on June 27 by Viktor Markopoulos, a researcher from Bitcrack Cyber Security, a computer security solutions firm based in South Africa.

While the government's Computer Incident Response Team (BGD e-GOV CIRT) confirmed the data breach, it is currently verifying the extent of it.

The data leaked from BDRIS includes birth dates and national identification numbers -- two key information with which anybody can use publicly available online government tools to extract other personal details like names, addresses and more.

The authorities have not yet been able to identify the perpetrators.

This, however, is only the latest in the spate of such assaults in the past few months. Some of these are "Distributed Denial-of-Service (DDoS)" attacks -- a cybercrime in which the attacker floods a server with internet traffic to prevent users from accessing connected online services and sites.

Other attacks -- such as the BDRIS leak -- are more threatening, as sensitive, private data and government information are being exposed to the public.

At the moment, Bangladesh Krishi Bank's server is under attack by a ransomware that has encrypted the core banking system.

Mohammad Saiful Alam Khan, project director of BGD e-GOV CIRT, said, "Our team visited the bank. We are assessing the damage and whether the data can be recovered."

Earlier in March, hackers demanded \$5 million in ransom from Biman Bangladesh while holding 100 gigabytes of data hostage. As the government was unable to retrieve the data in time, a vast amount of financial, human resource, training and satellite communications information was leaked.

Within secure messaging channels, a cyber war, fueled by nationalist and religious extremist sentiments, has been active between hacking groups in India and Bangladesh.

This newspaper has observed that the major targets for both groups include law enforcement and government agencies along with security forces.

On March 15, a group called New World Hacktivists leaked 84 police login credentials, with 40 of them belonging to just officers-in-charge of different police stations across Dhaka.

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- Cyber attacks intensified since March
- Krishi Bank currently frozen by ransomware
- Underground India-Bangladesh dark-web hacking battle ongoing
- 2.7 lakh citizen data leaked from Cox's Bazar police



### AT A GLANCE

- Length **19.73km**
- Number of ramps **31**
- Total length with ramps **46.73km**
- Project cost Tk **8,940cr**
- Land acquisition, resettlement costs Tk **4,917.57cr**

### THREE-PHASE IMPLEMENTATION

- Airport to Banani Railway Station **7.45km**
- Banani Rail Station to Mogbazar level crossing **5.85km**
- Mogbazar level crossing to Kutubkhali **6.43km**

### AIRPORT TO FARMGATE

- Total length 11km; total ramps 15
- 1 entry, 1 exit at Airport
- 2 entries, 1 exit at Kuril
- 2 exits, 1 entry at Banani
- 1 entry at Chairmanbari
- 2 exits, 1 entry at Mohakhali
- 2 entries at Bijaysarani
- 1 exit at Farmgate

### PROJECT'S PVT PARTNERS

- First PPP project in transport sector with foreign investment
- Italian Thai Development Public Company Ltd (Thailand) 51pc stake
- China Shandong International Economic and Technical Co-operation Group, China 34pc stake
- Sinohydro Cooperation Ltd 15pc stake
- The companies will build, operate and collect toll until 2044

## DHAKA ELEVATED EXPRESSWAY

LINKS AIRPORT TO KUTUBKHALI ON DHAKA-CHATTOTGRAM HIGHWAY

## The long wait to end this September

Airport-Farmgate stretch of the country's first elevated expressway likely to ease commute for city dwellers

TUHN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

A major part of the Dhaka Elevated Expressway will finally open to traffic in September, more than a decade after the project was initiated to ease the capital's perennial traffic congestion.

Once the 11-kilometre section from the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport to Farmgate -- via Kuril, Banani, Mohakhali and Tejgaon -- opens to traffic, it will serve as an alternative route to and from the airport road, one of the busiest in the city.

This section has 15 ramps for accessing and exiting the expressway that will help vehicles avoid traffic-choked crossings

"The project may not bring about the expected result with regard to easing traffic congestion due to the long delay in its implementation and changes in design in some areas."

Transport expert Prof Shamsul Hoque

and roads, and thus bypass traffic congestion.

Besides, the expressway will be off-limits to three-wheelers and motorcycles, allowing other vehicles to run at 80km per hour, according to sources.

The rest of the 19.73km expressway, the first of its kind in the country, is expected to open next year. Commuters will have to pay tolls to use the expressway, which is also the first project in the transport sector being implemented under the Public-Private Partnership model with foreign investment.

Commenting on the impact it will have on Dhaka's traffic, transport expert Prof Shamsul Hoque said, "The project may not bring about the expected result of easing traffic congestion due to the long delay in its implementation and changes in design in some areas."

He, however, said once the two expressways -- Dhaka Elevated

Expressway and Dhaka-Ashulia Expressway -- are completed, it will bring economic benefit to the country.

Dhaka-Ashulia Elevated Expressway -- stretching from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport to Dhaka Export Processing Zone (DEPZ) on the Nabinagar Chandra highway via Abdullapur, Ashulia and Baipail -- is also under construction. The deadline for the DEPZ project is June 2026.

The two expressways -- around 40km long altogether -- will be connected at the South Kawla point in the airport area.

Once both elevated expressways are operational, SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

## Advert and our reply

An advertisement titled "Rejoinder to a report published on 28th June, 2023, in The Daily Star" was carried in six daily newspapers by the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) on July 6th, 2023, referring to our report headlined "Graft in public hospitals costs Tk 459cr in 5 yrs". It was published on the 27th and not on the 28th as the advertisement erroneously claimed.

It may be mentioned that DGHS did not send us any rejoinder which is the normal practice and published paid advertisements filled with distortion and avoidance of facts.

The advertisement deliberately hid the vital fact that The Daily Star report was fully and SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

## US Under Secy Uzra Zeya due Tuesday

Polls, rights on talks agenda

STAR REPORT

US Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights Uzra Zeya is scheduled to arrive in Bangladesh on Tuesday on a four-day visit.

Zeya, also the US special coordinator for Tibetan issues, arrived in India yesterday, according to a statement from the State Department.

State Department's South and Central Asia Bureau Assistant Secretary Donald Lu and USAID Asia Bureau Deputy Assistant Administrator Anjali Kaur will be in the US delegation, said a foreign ministry statement.

"In Bangladesh, she will meet senior officials to discuss shared humanitarian concerns including the Rohingya refugee crisis, labour issues, SEE PAGE 10 COL 4



Nayan's wife applies a wet compress to cool down his body temperature at Mugda Medical College Hospital, which has been at capacity due to the rising number of dengue patients. Nayan tested positive for dengue 10 days ago.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## DENGUE FEVER Record 820 hospitalised in a day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 820 people were hospitalised with dengue and two others died from the disease in the 24 hours preceding 8:00am yesterday, said the health directorate.

This is the highest number of hospitalisation from dengue in a day this year. The total number of hospitalised

"It is highly likely that both dengue cases and deaths from it will break records in August-September."

Kabirul Bashar, professor and entomologist at Jahangirnagar University

patients was 2,502 yesterday, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

As of yesterday, at least 12,118 dengue patients got admitted to different hospitals this year, and of them, 67 had died.

During the same period (January 1-June 8) last year, only one patient died from the mosquito-borne disease and 1,376 were hospitalised.

In 2022, the number of deaths from dengue was 281 SEE PAGE 10 COL 5