

Wife Of Rape Accused Arrested For Blackmailing Uzbek National

A woman, whose husband allegedly raped a 23-year-old lady from Uzbekistan, has been arrested for blackmailing and trying to force her into flesh trade in New Delhi.

The accused Anjali has been arrested but her husband Altaf is absconding, the police said.

According to the police, the woman alleged she was raped by Altaf, who introduced her to his wife Anjali and the couple blackmailed her and tried to force her into flesh trade.

It said Altaf had befriended the Uzbek woman on Facebook and she flew down to Delhi on May 6 after being lured by him on marriage promise.

Altaf then took her to a hotel where he allegedly raped her and filmed the act, the police said, adding that he then began to blackmail her with his wife.

The couple, she alleged, had snatched her passport, visa and money. They also confined her into a room and allegedly beat her up regularly. She was forced to attend to the guests, the woman claimed, it said.

The complainant confided into a friend living in Delhi and they approached at the Vasant Kunj (north) police station.

A case has been registered under IPC Sections 370 (buying or disposing of any person as a slave) and 376 (rape). A case under the immoral trafficking act has also been registered and the police are probing the possibility of a bigger racket involving Uzbek women flourishing in the area.

Turkey to modernise Pakistan's F-16s

Turkey has agreed to modernise the Pakistan Air Force's fleet of F-16s at a cost of \$75 million amid the controversy surrounding the purchase of new jets from the United States.

A senior official of the Istanbul-based Foreign Economic Relations Board (DIEK) on Saturday told reporters both countries have struck a deal in an aviation project under which some Pakistani fighter planes have already been flown to Turkey.

Volkan Yuzer, Asia-Pacific regional coordinator at DIEK, said Pak-Turkish multi-faceted relations were growing in the defence sector. He added Turkey was already manufacturing engines for F-16 jets in addition to making some of their spare parts.

Talking about business opportunities in Pakistan, Yuzer said at least 100 Turkish companies were already operating successfully in the country and had invested \$2.7 billion in various projects by 2014.

More investment, he added, is expected in the energy, infrastructure and beverages projects. Replying to a question on signing the Free-Trade Agreement between the two countries expected by September this year, Yuzer said both sides were working out the details of the agreement.

According to the website of Turkish Aerospace industries (TAI), the Pakistan Air Force had awarded the tender of modernisation of its 41 F-16 aircraft to TAI in June 2009. The upgrade of jets started in the last quarter of 2010 when the first three aircraft were flown to Turkey.

Head Constable Posted At Uma Bharti's Residence Attempts Suicide

A Delhi Police Head constable deployed at Union Minister Uma Bharti's residence in New Delhi allegedly attempted suicide by shooting himself with his service gun last night.

The incident took place around 10.30 PM, following which police teams were rushed to the residence of Uma Bharti, the Union Minister for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation in New Delhi's Ashoka Road.

The official, identified as Head Constable Brijpal of Delhi Police's security unit, was still breathing while being rushed to the nearest hospital, a senior police official said adding that the reason why he took the extreme step could not be ascertained yet.

The head constable allegedly shot himself with his official gun which has been recovered from the spot.

"His condition is critical," DCP (New Delhi) Jatin Narwal said.

Prima facie the official shot himself sitting inside his personal car parked inside the premises of Ms Bharti's bungalow.

JP Nadda To Hold Meeting With State Health Ministers On NEET

With several parliamentarians opposed to the common medical entrance test, the Centre has decided to hold consultations with state Health ministers today to formulate a strategy regarding the issue.

Union Health Minister JP Nadda said that he "looks forward" to the meeting tomorrow and hoped to find a solution to address the concerns of lakhs of medical aspirants.

"Looking forward to meeting with the State Health Ministers today morning on the issue of NEET.

"I am hopeful that together we shall be able to find some solution to address concerns of lakhs of aspiring medical students & their parents," Mr Nadda tweeted.

According to reports, the Supreme Court had ruled that starting this academic session, students would have to appear for National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) to seek admission to any medical or dental colleges in the country.

Earlier this week, the apex court also turned down a batch of appeals by states seeking to conduct their own medical admission tests and ruled that "only NEET would enable students to get admission to MBBS or BDS studies".

Following the apex court's ruling, opposition parties have raised concerns that students passing out from state boards in vernacular languages and living in remote areas may not be able to perform well in common entrance exam despite being competitive.

Several MPs have demanded the government to bring forth an ordinance to stall the NEET for the current academic session.

IS capital put on emergency

US military officials are monitoring reports that Islamic State have declared a state of emergency in Raqqa.

Social media and news reports that suggest IS may have come under siege in its self-declared capital in Syria are being closely watched by the US-led anti-IS coalition.

Col Steve Warren, spokesman for the coalition said: "We have seen this declaration of emergency in Raqqa, whatever that means."

"We know this enemy feels threatened, as they should," he told CNN on Friday,

Media reports have indicated that the terrorist group is moving personnel around the city and attempting to put up covers to shield potential targets from airstrikes and ground attacks.

Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), who are fighting to liberate IS-occupied land, Spokesman Tajir Kobani announced earlier this week that commanders of the SDF-affiliated groups in Northern Syria had coordinated plans for a joint final operation for liberating Raqqa from the IS.

Meanwhile, Lebanese Shia militant group Hezbollah yesterday blamed Sunni extremists for killing its top military commander in Syria and vowed to keep fighting to defend President Bashar al-Assad's regime.

The IS jihadist group, meanwhile, overran a government-controlled hospital in the eastern city of Deir Ezzor, killing 20 members of pro-regime forces and taking medical staff hostage, a monitor said.

Badreddine, who was on a US terror sanctions blacklist and wanted by Israel, was killed in a blast on Thursday night near Damascus international airport.

In Deir Ezzor, IS attacked Al-Assad hospital yesterday as it pressed an advance aimed at controlling all of the oil-rich city and its vital airbase, the Observatory said.

The attack sparked clashes with regime forces providing security for the hospital in which six jihadists were also killed, the monitor said.

Meanwhile, Turkey state-run Anadolu Agency yesterday said the Turkish military and US-led coalition forces killed 45 Islamic State militants in shelling and an air strike north of the Syrian city of Aleppo.11

Sadiq Khan wants to 'educate' Trump on Islam

As a response to Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump's comment on a ban on Muslim in the United States, London's new mayor Sadiq Khan says he would welcome Trump to London to "educate" him about Islam and its compatibility with Western values.

In an interview with NBC News on Friday, the son of a Pakistani immigrant bus driver said Trump's "ignorant" views on Islam were "inadvertently playing into the hands of extremists" who prey on young Muslims.

"To suggest that it's incompatible to be Western and to be Muslim is, I think, really, really risky," Khan said during a visit to a London elementary school.

Real-estate mogul and reality TV star Trump in December suggested a temporary ban on all Muslims entering the US after a deadly mass shooting in San Bernardino that officials said was inspired by ISIS.

Trump's proposal triggered widespread criticism and condemnation from global political and religious leaders.

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"I want to educate Donald Trump. I want to show him that you can be Muslim and be Western," said Khan, who was sworn-in on May 7.

Trump this week said his proposed ban on Muslims entering the US was "only a suggestion" and told the New York Times that he was "happy" about Khan's election.

He also told the Times that the Khan could be an exception to the ban.

Khan has rejected Trump's exemption, and said he will try to visit the US before the November presidential election.

A member of Britain's opposition center-left Labour party, Khan is now Europe's highest-profile Muslim politician after winning last week's London mayoral election, trouncing his Conservative opponent Zac Goldsmith by a hefty margin after a ferocious contest.

Goldsmith, a member of Britain's ruling Conservative party, has been accused of running a divisive campaign that aimed to link Khan to religious extremists.

Khan has condemned Goldsmith's campaign as coming "straight out of the Donald Trump playbook" and said his election could provide lessons for Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton.

He thanked Americans for their messages of support, including former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and New York Mayor Bill de Blasio, who were quick to congratulate Khan on his election win.

Khan also made clear his preference for the next president.

"As a proud feminist at City Hall, as someone who's a father of two daughters, I think Hillary Clinton being the president of the USA would send a loud and clear message, but also she's competent, she's got gravitas, she's got huge experience," he said. "So you won't be surprised

to know I want Hillary to be president.”

Source: *NBCNews*

US warns of China troops build-up on India border

China has increased defence capabilities and deployed more troops along the Indian border, the Pentagon has said, as it warned of increasing Chinese military presence including bases in various parts of the world, particularly Pakistan.

“We have noticed an increase in capability and force posture by the Chinese military in areas close to the border with India,” Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defence for East Asia Abraham M Denmark told reporters during a news conference here after Pentagon submitted its annual 2016 report to the US Congress on ‘Military and Security Developments Involving the People’s Republic of China’.

However, Denmark said it is difficult to conclude on the real intention behind this. “It is difficult to say how much of this is driven by internal considerations to maintain internal stability, and how much of it is an external consideration,” he said in response to a question on China upgrading its military command in Tibet.

Referring to US Defence Secretary Ashton Carter’s recent trip to India, Denmark said he had a very positive and productive visit.

“We’re going to continue to enhance our bilateral engagement with India, not in the China context, but because India is an increasingly important player by themselves. And we are going to engage India because of its value,” he said.

The Defence Department also warned of China’s increasing military presence including bases in various parts of the world, in particular Pakistan – with which it has a “longstanding friendly relationship and similar strategic interests”.

China and Pakistan may not agree, but the United States believes that India is ready to enter the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG).

Hours after China defended its blocking India from becoming part of the NSG, the US on Friday said that India does in fact meet the missile technology control regime requirements for entry into the NSG.

The remarks about India’s eligibility for the NSG came in response to a question about reports that China and Pakistan have joined hands to oppose India becoming a member of the NSG.

US sources recently told news agency ANI that they are disappointed with Chinese tactics of “using Pakistan’s non credentials with the NSG to settle scores with India”.

'EU trying to copy Hitler-like superstate'

Former London mayor Boris Johnson has claimed the European Union was behaving like German Nazi

dictator Adolf Hitler by trying to create a superstate, in a newspaper interview yesterday.

Johnson is one of the leading figures campaigning for Britain to leave the EU in closely-fought referendum being held on June 23.

His comments drew swift criticism from opponents, who said they were “offensive” and showed a “lack of judgement”.

Johnson said the last two thousand years of European history had featured repeated efforts to bring the continent together under a single government, emulating the Roman empire.

“Napoleon, Hitler, various people tried this out, and it ends tragically. The EU is an attempt to do this by different methods,” Johnson told The Sunday Telegraph.

“But fundamentally what is lacking is the eternal problem, which is that there is no underlying loyalty to the idea of Europe.

“There is no single authority that anybody respects or understands. That is causing this massive democratic void.”

Johnson is a leading member of the ruling Conservative party of Prime Minister David Cameron, who is leading the campaign to keep Britain in the EU.

China: Pentagon report 'severely damaged' ties

China yesterday accused the US of deliberately distorting the facts in a report on the Asian giant’s defence policy, warning Washington it had “severely damaged” trust between the superpowers.

The Pentagon on Friday said Beijing had been building up military facilities on reefs and islets in a bid to assert its claims to the contested waters of the South China Sea.

China’s military has also been using “coercive tactics” to foster tensions with its neighbours, but will ensure they do not snowball into outright conflict, according to the annual report to Congress.

Beijing hit back yesterday in comments published in state media, with a defence ministry spokesman saying the Pentagon report had “deliberately distorted China’s defence policies”.

“It is the United States that has been flexing military muscles by frequently sending military aircraft and warships to the region,” spokesman Yang Yujun said, according to the official news agency Xinhua.

“The US annual report on China’s military and security developments has severely damaged mutual trust between the two sides.”

Yang accused the US of being behind the “militarisation in the South China Sea”, parts of which are claimed by Vietnam, Taiwan, Brunei, Malaysia and the Philippines as well as China.

The South China Sea, an important shipping route thought to be home to vast energy deposits, has become a growing source of tension between Beijing and Washington as the US turns its focus

on Asia.

Washington fears Beijing is seeking to impose military controls over the entire area, where China has built massive structures including radar systems and airstrips on reclaimed reefs and islets.

The Pentagon report estimated China has reclaimed 3,200 acres (1,300 hectares) of land around the Spratly Islands, also claimed by the Philippines, over the past two years.

Beijing has been angered by the growing US attention on Asia and US forays into the Sea, including sailing warships close to reclaimed islands.

Meanwhile, the US Congress has been warned that China's new 'Guam killer' missile, capable of hitting targets some 5,500 km away, is raising new fears of a growing Chinese threat to key American military facilities and stability in the Pacific Rim.

A Congressional panel has issued a report warning of the dangers of the DF-26 intermediate-range ballistic missile, during a week in which US-China tensions flared anew with a US Navy destroyer sailing close to a Chinese-claimed island in the disputed South China Sea.

The US-China Economic and Security Review Commission said this week that China's DF-26 missile – dubbed by analysts the "Guam killer" and unveiled at a high-profile military parade in Beijing last September – allows China to bring unprecedented firepower to bear on the US territory of Guam.

SWIFT is responsible

Head of govt probe body on \$81m BB fund heist describes how SWIFT made the payment system vulnerable to cyber attack

A government committee probing the Bangladesh Bank heist has held SWIFT responsible for weakening the payment system which allowed cyber thieves to steal \$81 million from the central bank's account with the New York Fed.

"Primarily, SWIFT is responsible for the incident," Mohammed Farashuddin, the head of the three-member panel, told reporters at the BB yesterday at his first media briefing on the heist.

Since the unknown hackers pulled off the history's biggest cyber heist on February 4, the Brussels-based SWIFT (Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication) has repeatedly maintained that its core message system with the BB was not compromised.

But Farashuddin said SWIFT linked its platform to the real-time gross settlement system or RTGS by removing antivirus software on its own system which left the entire network vulnerable to cyber attacks. Secondly, SWIFT did not put in place a hardware security module, a computing device that safeguards and manages digital keys for strong authentication and provides crypto-processing.

The system's initial design included a backup, but there has been no such backup in place as of yet, according to Farashuddin.

Last week, SWIFT rejected allegations by officials in Bangladesh that technicians with the global messaging system made the BB more vulnerable to hacking.

Farashuddin said, "SWIFT said all responsibilities rested upon Bangladesh. But it's not correct. It doesn't mean that we are rebuking SWIFT."

"But SWIFT must accept responsibility for the incident. They should help Bangladesh Bank."

SWIFT now says its job is to provide solutions and it's the client's responsibility to ensure the safety of the system, Farashuddin said. "I admit that."

But he emphasised that if SWIFT or any individual provides any system, it is the provider's responsibility to supply a secure system and make sure that it doesn't become vulnerable midway.

The SWIFT system has been working in Bangladesh since 1995.

In March last year, SWIFT wrote to the BB that the Belgian organisation wants to link the SWIFT platform with RTGS.

"The letter contained nothing but excitement and flattery. It didn't explain how Bangladesh and the BB would benefit if the linking goes ahead," said Farashuddin.

Upon receiving the letter, the bank's executive committee approved it in an irresponsible manner, and the decision was "devoid of common sense", he said.

Before the link was established, 13 steps should have been followed: some by SWIFT, some by the BB and some jointly by the two, he said.

But the SWIFT platform at the BB was connected with the RTGS in November last year without following two or three major procedures, he said.

The connection was supposed to be established after SWIFT provided the BB with a hardware security module. But SWIFT didn't do so.

Later, the module was brought in, but it is yet to be installed, said the former BB governor.

While establishing the link, it was found that the connection could not be established due to the anti-virus embedded with the SWIFT platform.

When the link was established, the SWIFT engineers tried to disable the anti-virus in vain. Later, the anti-virus was uninstalled because the two systems couldn't be connected while it was active, according to Farashuddin.

It appears that the BB officials involved in the matter were not aware of the changes, he said.

An engineer from SWIFT gave an interim connection, and it was agreed that once the regular connection was established, the interim connection would be removed.

But the interim connection was not discarded even after the regular connection was established, said the former BB governor.

The system's initial design included a backup, but no such backup has yet been put in place in the BB system, he said.

“But even after the establishment of the connection, SWIFT has not yet explained to BB officials how the system operates and what types of problems could surface.”

The SWIFT engineers gave BB officials instructions to keep the server running round-the-clock – first verbally before their departure and later through telephone correspondences.

“Because of all these reasons, we think that SWIFT system had been compromised.”

There was no logic behind establishing the connection between the SWIFT platform at the BB and the RTGS, he said.

The BB carries out international transactions through SWIFT while the RTGS processes local transactions. “There is no logic behind connecting local transactions with international transactions.”

Farashuddin said 18 messages with payment instructions worth \$500 million were sent from the BB back office to the Fed till 7:15pm on February 4.

Of the amount, \$200 million was sent for buying bonds from Basel Bank.

Later that night, the hackers broke into the BB system and sent 70 payment instructions involving \$950 million to the Fed.

“We haven’t yet got evidence or proofs that BB officials have made those instructions.”

The Fed outright rejected the payment instructions for 35 orders because intermediary banks were not at the recipients’ ends.

Of the remaining 35, the Fed became suspicious and sought explanations from the BB about 12 payment instructions.

“But they should have known that it was already Friday in Bangladesh, and the Bangladesh Bank wouldn’t be able to give explanations,” said Farashuddin.

The Fed was suspicious about the 12 payment instructions and sought explanation from the BB, but didn’t get it. Still, the Fed carried out five payment orders.

“Why did they make payment? Why didn’t they issue the ‘stop payment’ order or recall the fund if they had felt it was suspicious?”

The Fed should have smelt a rat as it sent messages to the BB but didn’t receive any responses, he said.

Of the five payment orders, the beneficiaries of the four were individuals. Historically, BB’s payment instructions involving large amount are institutional. In case of individuals, the amount is small, said Farashuddin.

Farashuddin the hackers had made attempts to steal \$950 million. Of them, advices worth \$101 million were sent.

BB got back \$20 million because of misspelling of the beneficiary organisation in Sri Lanka. Now, the amount of the missing money stood at \$81.16 million.

He said the malware was created either in Pakistan or North Korea.

“We have got evidence that this malware was created to hack the BB’s reserves.”

Talking about the responsibility of the BB, he said the decision to establish connection between the SWIFT platform and the RTGS was inconsiderate.

“It should not have been done.”

BB’s officials were unskilled, negligent and careless about the issue, he said.

“We have no doubt about it. However, we have not received proof yet that they were part of the theft. We are trying to find it out.”

The Farashuddin-led probe body has tasked three professors from Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) to find out whether anybody from the BB was involved with the scam.

Yesterday, the three-member team submitted an interim report to the probe committee.

The probe body is collecting information about two BB officials, said Farashuddin.

“However, the information we have received so far indicate that they were not a party to the crime.”

About the recovery of the stolen funds, he said the government and other departments concerned would work jointly to retrieve the money.

Quoting the Filipino-based Inquirer media outlet, which broke the news, Farashuddin said Philippine’s casino junket operator Kim Wong is believed to have been holding \$35 million and remittance company Philrem \$17 million.

“It is possible to recover more than \$50 million.”

He said diplomatic strategies and legal tools have to be used to recover the stolen money, he said.

“We have to take assistance from the Fed. We have learnt that they are ready to help.”

Last week, the Fed, the BB and SWIFT vowed to work together to trace the stolen \$81 million, following their first-ever joint meeting in Basel, Switzerland.

Farashuddin said Bangladesh should try to convince the Fed to put pressure on the three US-based intermediary banks that channelled the \$81 to the Philippines.

The Fed could also pressurise Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation as it has a branch in Los Angeles.

“If we file lawsuits and work jointly, we will perhaps be able to recover the majority of the missing money.”

He said it was not right on the part of the BB to have kept the government in the dark about the theft.

