

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

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.

Ershad is relaxed after making 'best decision' in politics

HM Ershad seems to be patting himself on the back after appointing his brother GM Quader as Co-chairman and Ruhul Amin Howlader as Secretary General of Jatiya Party.

“I did not know that one announcement could cause so much excitement within the party,” said the chairman at a programme in Dhaka on Thursday.

“This might just be the best decision I took in my entire political career.”

“I had been in so much pain. There was no peace of mind... or smiles. I would be worried all the time, what would happen to Jatiya Party... my child when I’m gone.”

“But now I’m relaxed, my child will survive. I will live because of this one decision.”

Ershad was addressing a reception for the newly appointed Quader, his successor, and Howlader at a restaurant in Gulshan.

Criticising former secretary general Ziauddin Ahmed Bablu, he said, “Ruhul Amin was secretary general for 14 years. But he didn’t say a word when I had removed him from the post.”

“That is loyalty... that is love. I made someone else secretary general in his place who shoved me out of my party after I made my brother (GM Quader) co-chairman. Is that even possible?”

The supporters were heard chanting, “No... no... no... Bablu is a traitor ... traitor.”

“But I’m forgetting all of this from today, I’ll listen to my brother from now on,” said Ershad as he resumed.

Four policemen withdrawn from duty over death of tea-seller

Four policemen have been withdrawn from duty over the death of a tea-seller from burns after police allegedly attacked him, causing an oil spill from a stove, in Dhaka’s Shah Ali area.

Jasim Uddin Molla, Mirpur Division Additional Deputy Commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said the withdrawn policemen are two sub-inspectors, an assistant sub-inspector and a constable.

The action was taken hours after the death of tea-seller Babul Matubbor.

Matubbor was rushed to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) after he was brought to Dhaka Medical College Hospital at around 1:30 am on Thursday. He died there later.

The 45-year-old had suffered 90 percent burns.

Matubbor was attacked by policemen who demanded that he give them money, his family has said.

But police claimed he was a drug dealer and had caught fire while trying to flee from a police informer.

Kader Siddique cannot contest Tangail by-polls after HC scraps petition

The High Court has scrapped a petition filed by Kader Siddique, putting an end to his chances of contesting in the Tangail-4 by-polls.

Thursday's verdict also meant there were no legal hurdles to holding the election, the Election Commission's lawyer has said.

The Krishak Sramik Janata League (KSJL) president had filed the petition against the commission's decision to cancel his nomination.

Justices Md Ashfaul Islam and Zafar Ahmed announced the verdict after ruling that the writ filed by Siddique was not acceptable for the High Court.

Broadcast Law in June: Inu

Information Minister Hasanul Haq Inu on Thursday said the draft of a 'Broadcast Law' will be placed at the next session of Parliament in June after getting clearance from Cabinet.

The minister disclosed the information while talking to reporters at the secretariat after a meeting with a UNDP official.

"We will get the draft of the law within next two weeks," Inu said.

After getting the copy of the draft, it will be opened to public for feedback and opinions, he said.

The minister also said the law would come into effect in the light of "National Broadcast Policy 2014", and an independent broadcast commission would also be installed under the new law.

Inu said his ministry was going to arrange a two-day media convention where journalists from across the country are expected to participate.

During the convention, journalists will be urged to play significant roles to save democracy and to work against militancy and terrorism, said the minister.

Earlier, Inu joined a meeting with Resident Representative of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Robert D Watkins.

Inu said UNDP has proposed to train journalists to play a role to deal with earthquake.

The UNDP has also offered to increase the aptitudes of the Community Radios, Inu said.

Tea-seller burnt in 'police attack' dies in Dhaka hospital

A tea-seller in Dhaka has died from burns after police allegedly attacked him, causing an oil spill from a stove.

Babul Matubbor, of Mirpur's Shah Ali area, was rushed to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) after he was brought to Dhaka Medical College Hospital at around 1:30am Thursday.

The 45-year-old had suffered 90% burns, said Burn Unit doctor Partha Sankar Pal.

Babul was attacked by policemen who demanded that he give them money, his family has said.

But police claimed Babul was a drug dealer who had burnt himself while trying to run away from them.

Babul lived in a house near his tea-shop at Mirpur-1 Gudaraghat, his daughter-in-law Moni Begum told bdnews24.com.

She said two women sold marijuana in front of Babul's shop. "Police harassed us in various ways when my father-in-law complained about them."

A couple of policemen tried to take Babul away to Shah Ali Police Station at noon on Wednesday, she said.

"They came to extort money from him at night. But when he refused to pay up, several of them wearing police uniforms hit the stove in the shop with their batons."

Babul's jacket caught fire when oil splashed out of the stove, she said.

"I was there ... I saw everything with my own eyes."

Meanwhile, Shah Ali Police Station OC AKM Shahin Mondol said, "Babul is a drug dealer. He tried to run away when our source Delwar went to his shop at night. His body then caught fire from the stove."

"A police team went there after learning of the fire," he said, brushing aside allegations of extortion.

AL MP Latif sued for distorting Bangabandhu's portrait

MA Latif, the Awami League lawmaker from Chittagong-11 constituency, has been sued for distorting the portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Saifuddin Ahmed Robi, a former central committee member of AL's youth front Jubo League, filed the Tk 1,000 crore defamation suit with Chittagong Metropolitan Magistrate's Court today, reports the Bangla daily Prothom Alo.

Taking the case into cognisance, Judge Farid Ahmed ordered an additional deputy police commissioner to investigate the matter and submit the report by the next 15 days.

According to the case statement, Latif has made a poster in which he has put his head on the portrait of Bangabandhu.

"The AL lawmaker has mocked the father of the nation by this act. I have lodged the case as a conscious citizen of the country," Robi said.

Transport owners to be punished for road crashes: Quader

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader today held transport owners responsible for road crashes and indiscipline in the sector.

“They (owners) too are responsible for road crashes. That’s why we are going to bring them under purview of punishment,” he told reporters while visiting a mobile court at Dhaka’s Agargaon.

“We have drafted a new road transport law. There, transport owners will be brought to book for road crashes and indiscipline in the sector,” Quader told reporters.

As per the existing Road Transport Act, only drivers are held responsible and punished also for road accidents and indiscipline in public transport sector, he said.

Loss of lives in road crashes has become a nightmare for Bangladesh. Last year alone, more than 8,500 people were killed in road crashes throughout the country.

On the note of jam in the Dhaka, Quader underscored the need for collective efforts of city corporations, public works ministry and police department to reduce the plight of commuters.
