

Americans lost \$1.52 billion to identity theft, scams in 2011

Cybercriminal target phones, Android most exposed

BARCELONA, Feb 29, (Agencies): Cybercriminals are sneaking a soaring number of malware into smartphones to steal data or even money, with those running on Google's Android most exposed to security threats, analysts said.

While the Android open concept has gained the hearts of those who find the iPhone too closely managed by Apple, it is also turning out to be the Google operating system's Achilles heel.

"Something really worrying about the Google model, which is also the beauty of that model, is the openness of the environment," Cesare Garlati, consumer specialist at security firm Trend Micro, told AFP.

Anyone can create or install an application on an Android phone, Garlati pointed out, as opposed to the Apple controlled Appstore which imposes a layer of screening.

"Android's security model basically

says, it is the responsibility of the end user to judge if an application is secure.

"I think that is asking too much from the user. Who is able to understand if a vendor is legitimate?" he asked.

Trend Micro surveyed independent analysts about security features on the four main mobile operating systems — Apple's iOS, RIM's BlackBerry, Microsoft's Windows and Google's Android — and found that BlackBerry was ranked most secure and Android the least.

BlackBerry benefited from the fact that it was originally designed more as a platform than a device, while iOS, ranked second most secure, was tightly controlled by Apple.

Nevertheless, Garlati stressed that "no platform is immune from problems."

With over a billion people expected to own a smartphone by 2013, cybercheats are increasingly setting their sights on the

New changes aimed at smartphones

Universal charger tantalisingly close for mobile phones

BARCELONA, Feb 29, (AFP): Mobile phone users are tantalisingly close to the day when they can power up any phone with the same charger.

But industry players gathered at the World Mobile Congress in Barcelona still have some way to go.

Three years ago, 17 manufacturers and operators agreed at this same conference to share the same stan-

dard for mobile phone chargers fitting into a micro-USB socket.

The relatively modest goal, defined by the global industry's GSM Association, was that most mobile phones sold in 2012 should be compatible with the new universal charger.

Despite European Union pressure on the industry to ensure all phones

share the same type of charger and thus avoid hassle for users and vast amounts of unnecessary waste, results have been mixed.

"It has been announced so many times and the customers are still waiting for it," sighed Flavio Cuchietti, one of the project's supervisors at the UN agency, the International Telecommunication Union.

market.

Several sessions at this year's Mobile World Congress therefore addressed security, with companies including McAfee, SAP,

Kaspersky Lab all trotting out new security products for tablets or smartphones.

Technology company Juniper Networks compiled a "record number of

mobile malware attacks" in 2011, particularly on Android phones.

In 2010, just 11,138 mobile malware samples were recorded, but they soared

155 percent to 28,472 in 2011, the company said.

Also:

WASHINGTON: Identity theft and other scams cost Americans \$1.52 billion last year, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) said on Tuesday.

In a nationwide sampling of consumer complaints, law enforcement and other agencies received 1.8 million complaints last year, up from 1.4 million in 2010 and double the level in 2006, the FTC said in a statement. Identity theft remained the top category.

The increase reflects the growing number of agencies that contributed to the Consumer Sentinel Network, a database that is the basis of the report, rather than an uptick in fraud, David Torok, head of the FTC's planning and communications unit, told Reuters.

One dictatorship

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Ministry of Awkaf and whose minister is a member of the Brotherhood Movement.

He divided Tunisia into atheists and Muslims. He mocked their national anthem. He issued a fatwa allowing men to beat women if necessary. He also allowed their circumcision. He considered the sovereignty of the nation a kind of atheism and likened personal freedom to corruption.

Moreover, he allowed punishing apostates, particularly those who adopted the principle of piety.

We express sympathy for Tunisia because of extremism promoted in their society by this visitor, although his influence will gradually vanish. But, our situation is much tougher because we are afflicted with similar examples — examples of people who have entered our Parliament on the strength of the ballot box.

We thank them for their viewpoints which run parallel to their extremist Salafist preacher through which they have accused people of atheism and extremism.

Since they are opportunists, the members of the Brotherhood movement did not attack Al-Ghunaim.

Their leader Rashed Al-Ghanoushi said, "The problem does not lie with preachers, but the media." This statement reminds us of Al-Ghanoushi's Kuwaiti colleagues, who belong to the Brotherhood Movement, which also accused the media that had unveiled their scandals.

Anyhow, the Tunisian president-elect Al-Moncef Al-Marzouqi was braver than Al-Ghanoushi because he rightfully portrayed Ghunaim and his host in Tunisia as the germ.

The Salafist members did not remain silent in the face of the humiliation heaped by the president-elect on their favorite preacher.

Consequently, thousands of them rallied last Friday and hoisted black flags of the Liberation Party. In addition, they shouted slogans against the president and the liberals in the country.

Among these slogans was 'Islamic unity against secular attacks', 'I'm a Muslim, I'm not a germ' and 'Media and its secular followers are the germs'.

We cannot help lament our position if this is what the ballot boxes have produced. We have replaced one devastating dictatorship with another which accuses people of atheism.

This kind of dictatorship does not fully believe in the opinion of the third party — for that matter any kind of freedom or the so-called personal freedom. It believes only in its jurists who live in the caves of ancient history.

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MPs call on

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Al-Saadoun adjourned the session for 15 minutes due to a heated argument between the supporters of the resolution — MPs Musallam Al-Barrak and Mubarak Al-Walaan, and those against it — MPs Abdulhamid Dashti and Hussein Al-Qallaf.

The argument started when Al-Barrak said, "This is a butcher regime that is killing its own people and has lost its legitimacy." Dashti then interrupted and asked him to refrain from using such words. This prompted Al-Barrak to accuse the latter of having interests in the regime. Qallaf butted in to defend Dashti and urged Al-Barrak to stop hurling baseless accusations. Al-Walaan also joined the heated debate, stressing no religion will accept the massacres being committed by the Syrian regime. The exchange of heated words continued for some time, so the speaker had to intervene and stop the session for awhile to give both sides enough time to calm down.

It can be recalled that last week, five opposition MPs, including Al-Saadoun, submitted a draft bill on scrapping all economic cooperation agreements with Syria. The proposal also requires the government to cancel a host of agreements, sever diplomatic ties with Damascus and ban all loans to Syria.

Earlier this month, Kuwait joined other Gulf states in expelling the Syrian ambassador and recalling its own envoy from Damascus.

Kuwaitis have held repeated demonstrations against the deadly crackdown in Syria by Assad's regime, which the United Nations says has left more than 7,500 people dead since March last year.

In another development, the Parliament approved recommendations on urging the government to exert more efforts in securing the release of two Kuwaitis, Fayiz Al-Kandari and Fawzi Al-Odah, who have been languishing at Guantanamo Bay Prison since 2002 for their alleged membership in a terrorist organization.

During the session, the legislature also

endorsed a proposal to assign the Human Rights Committee to follow up on the Guantanamo case and those of other citizens detained in Iran or any other country without trial.

While commending HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for seeking the release of the Kuwaiti detainees in Guantanamo, the lawmakers stressed the need for the government to intensify efforts to push for the immediate release of the prisoners. They said the USA must allow the two detainees to hire lawyers and to stand trial. They also expressed disappointment over the way the US administration handles the case, especially since Al-Kandari and Al-Odah have been in prison for several years without trial.

The lawmakers also called for the immediate release of Kuwaitis detained in Iran and elsewhere, criticizing the government for doing so little in following these cases.

Meanwhile in a press statement Wednesday, Attorney Adel Abdulhadi, lawyer for Al-Kandari, revealed the lawmakers unanimously accepted the following recommendations:

■ Members of Parliament should issue a condemnation against the continued detention of the two Kuwaitis at Guantanamo — Fayiz Al Kandari and Fawzi Al Odah — who have been in prison for 10 years;

■ An official delegation consisting of Members of Parliament, family members of detainees and specialist doctors and physicians must be sent immediately to Guantanamo to meet with the Kuwaiti detainees and observe their current condition;

■ A Parliament committee must be formed or the legislative Human Rights Committee must be assigned the function of following all developments in the case of the detainees and demand periodical reports from the Kuwaiti Embassy in Washington DC regarding all efforts that have been made to secure the release of the Kuwaiti detainees and further demanding a detailed report on how funds were spent and allocated to cover all expenses (including legal and media fees) of public committees that have been working on the case of Al-Kandari and Al-Odah;

■ The Kuwaiti government must honor the wishes and rights of Al-Kandari and Al-Odah to appoint their own Kuwaiti and international lawyers who will work on all efforts and necessary procedures on their behalf in Kuwait or internationally. It is further demanded that the Kuwaiti government allocates funds to pay the selected lawyers' fees; and

■ The American Defense team appointed by the Pentagon for this case should be invited to meet with Members of Parliament and that scheduled meetings should be held with the team every two months.

According to the statement, Abdulhadi joined the Military Defense team appointed by the Pentagon in 2009 to represent Al-Kandari, while the US defense team consists of Lt Col Barry Wingard and Lt Cmdr. Kevin Bogucki military — attorneys appointed by the Pentagon on October 2008; and Tom Wilner — the civilian American attorney designated by a declaration from Al-Kandari himself in December 2011.

During discussions on the Guantanamo prisoners, MP Ali Al-Rashid disclosed he has obtained information that Hussein Al-Fadallah and another Kuwaiti, who had been reported detained in Iran, are alive. He proposed assigning Dashti to follow-up the case due to his strong ties with Iran and the latter accepted.

Commenting on the same issue, Information Minister Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah Al-Mubarak affirmed the government is serious in its bid to secure the release of the two Kuwaiti detainees in Guantanamo. He said, "The government spares no effort in pushing for the release of our compatriots in Guantanamo. Several letters in this regard have been forwarded to the US State Department, the latest of which is a joint letter from the foreign and interior ministers of Kuwait demanding the release of Al-Kandari and Al-Odah."

Furthermore, the Parliament has accepted the request of the government to postpone for two weeks the implementation of a proposal on assigning the Educational Affairs Committee to look into the way the Information Ministry applies the Audio-Visual Law, as well as the formation of an investigative panel to probe into the questionable money transfers in the Diwan of the Prime Minister and the Central Bank of Kuwait.

Deputy Premier, State Minister for Cabinet Affairs and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khalid explained the Cabinet requested for the two-week postponement of the formation of the investigative panel in accordance with Article 148 of the Parliament bylaws. He pointed out the government recognizes the right of MPs to form investigative committees "but we would like to study the issue thoroughly, so we asked for two weeks and it will be included in the agenda for the next session." He confirmed the government is willing to cooperate with the legislature in line with the Constitution and the



View of the main stone square at the recently discovered Malqui-Machay Inca site, in Sigchos, Ecuador, on Nov 12. The ruins of a late Inca imperial complex probably hide the tomb of the last Inca emperor, Atahualpa. (AFP)

Last Inca emperor's resting place remains mystery

Atahualpa's tomb may have been found

SIGCHOS, Ecuador, Feb 29, (AFP): It has been sought for centuries but remained a mystery, still out of reach. Now an expert has pinpointed a site that could be Atahualpa's resting place: the last Inca emperor's tomb.

"This is an absolutely important find for the history of Ecuador's archeology and for the (Andean) region," said Patrimonio Minister Maria Fernanda Espinosa, speaking of the ruins found by Ecuadorian historian Tamara Estupinan.

The Inca empire, in the 1400s and early 1500s, spanned much of South America's Andean region, over 1,000 miles (1,600 kms), from modern-day Bolivia and Peru to Argentina, Chile, Ecuador and Colombia. It included dozens of ethnic groups with different languages, cities, temples, farming terraces and fortresses.

Parliament bylaws.

Other proposals approved in the session included the designation of the State Audit Bureau to look into all measures taken to establish the Asian Olympic Council building and the formation of a committee to investigate the indiscriminate arrests since the beginning of this year until mid-February, in addition to the death of Mahmood Jowhar Al-Maimouni.

Also, the Parliament has agreed to include six important bills in its agenda for the March 13 session as follows: supporting national manpower, tenders, establishment of a national fund to finance small and medium enterprises, amend social security rules (early retirement), establishment of medical cities, and penal code.

In the meantime, the legislature has rejected a recommendation to assign the Parliament Office to regulate the speech of the elder MP because it touches on controversial issues like the Arab Spring, Syria and usury.

The Parliament has also disapproved the proposal presented by Shiite MPs Abdulhamid Dashti, Saleh Ashour, Faisal Al-Duwaisan, Adnan Al-Mutawa and Hussein Al-Qallaf, along with liberal MP Mohammed Al-Juwaihel, to investigate the allegations that HH the Prime Minister of Qatar Sheikh Hamad Bin Jasssem had previously granted money to some Kuwaiti lawmakers. The government and several lawmakers deem this proposal offensive to Qatar, which enjoys brotherly relations with Kuwait.

State Minister for National Assembly Affairs Shaub Al-Muwaziri asserted, "This is not the right behavior towards a country that helped liberate Kuwait from Saddam's aggression."

Echoing the sentiment of his colleague, MP Mohammed Al-Saqr outrightly rejected the proposal which, he said, is tantamount to offending the Parliament and destroying Kuwait's good neighbor relations with Qatar.

Pain, distress

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"It is painful to us to hear the voice of a Kuwaiti call for excluding another Kuwaiti, a partner in building this home and its authentic fabric, just because he differs with him in religion, and in his anger

farm and a facility for raising fighting cocks.

But in the area called Sigchos, about 45 miles south of Quito, up on a hill dotted with brush, there is more — much more: she found a complex of walls, aqueducts and stonework that lie inside the Machay rural retreat. Machay means burial in the Quechua language.

"This is a late imperial design Inca monument that leads to several rectangular rooms that were built with cut polished stone set around a trapezoidal plaza," Estupinan explained to AFP.

Archeologist Tamara Bray, of Wayne State University in Michigan, and a colleague of Estupinan, confirmed that the site boasts "an Inca edifice that is phenomenally well preserved and quite important scientifically."

calls to deprive him of his natural right to practice his heavenly religion freely and without restrictions. As it is also our hope to forget these voices which sing outside the voice of a nation which allows about 450,000 expatriate Christians living on the land of Kuwait, making a living here and contributing to its development, and which have denied their natural right to practice their religion; one which addresses them saying, 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they are called sons of God' as well as charging them to 'Pray for those who abuse you.'

Other Christian leaders have since expressed their disapproval of the MP's comments and expressed faith in Kuwait's capacity for religious tolerance. Pastor Warren Reeve, Senior Pastor of the Lighthouse Church one of the three primary congregations of the National Evangelical Church of Kuwait states that the churches here served the nationals of the respective countries in a very unique way, "Since there are about 2 million expatriates and there is a great percentage of those that are Christian, it only makes sense to provide a place of worship for them for weekly services as a way to serve Kuwait because a content employee is a better employee. It serves Kuwait and those that come from other countries with different religious perspectives and beliefs other than Islam."

He added, "The construction of churches is an integral part of what it means to practice religious freedom. My understanding of the present constitution of Kuwait is that to stop building the Church would actually contradict what Kuwait has put together in this very unique country."

Reverend Anthony Jaynes, Locum Chaplain of the Anglican St. Paul's Church, highlighted a passage from the book, "The Christian Church in Kuwait, Religious Freedom in the Gulf" by Reverend Andrew Thompson, a former Chaplain of St. Paul's, which quotes from Part 111, Article 35 of the Constitution of Kuwait 1962 — "Freedom of belief is absolute. The State protects the freedom of practicing religion in accordance with established customs, provided that it does not conflict with public policy or morals".

The MP's statements have brought an important issue to the limelight — the pressure on the church's capacity to accommodate its congregants. "We have 350,000 Catholics in Kuwait. How can we accommodate 350,000? If a situation

of panic ensues during a church service, we will have hundreds of deaths", said Bishop Ballin.

He also highlighted that in Rome, Italy, land had been freely given for the construction of a mosque, "Kuwait is one of the countries which collaborated to build the mosque. There they obtained a donation. Here we cannot even have a land for rent", he said.

"3000 sq meters doesn't solve the problem for us. We need at least 30,000 sq meters to solve the problem forever. We looked at land in Jleeb Al Shuyoukh because it is not far from the center and at the same time it is not in the centre of the town. It is in the middle of three towns, Jleeb Al Shuyoukh, Farwaniya and Kuwait City and at the same time it is not in any one of these three towns so it doesn't complicate traffic. It is an open land, outside of the towns but also near the three towns. This would, however, be additional to the Cathedral in Kuwait City and not instead of it. There are many people in this area and thousands of people in that area as well."

Rev. Jaynes, also stressed the point, "There is no room to accommodate any more congregations on a Friday, so there is a search for other premises by Christian groups in order to meet for worship. The same situation applies to the Christian congregations which are legally recognised in Kuwait, as Bishop Camilo Ballin has pointed out, the pressure on the existing Church buildings is severe due to the expansion of the expatriate community which services much of the infrastructure of the business life of Kuwait", said.

He added, "It is far better to have properly licensed and identifiable buildings in which Christians can openly and legally worship, rather than illicit meeting places, which can be a source of discontent and division."

Many members of Kuwaiti society have also responded disapprovingly to MP Al Monawer's agenda. Oorub Al Rifa, a candidate in the recent parliamentary elections from Second Constituency said, "This is not a political issue. If churches need to be built, we need to consider if there is a need for this and then allocate resources towards it. The number of people is a priority. I understand that there aren't as many Kuwaiti Christians. But Christian expatriates have rights too. We have had a historical relationship with the churches here. We have lived with mutual understanding so far. These

people are our guests. We need to welcome them. Let us not make religion a political agenda now."

She added, "I think most members of parliament know that this issue is not a priority at all. We have never had a problem with the church before, so I don't understand why we are starting this conversation now? We need to focus on the progress of our nation, on issues more important like education and health, the welfare of our people. We need to be implementing legislation to strengthen our democracy, not cripple it."

Fayza Al Awadhi, board member of the Women's Social and Cultural Society in Kuwait, said, "The building of churches will not harm Kuwaiti society but on the contrary, people will be more at peace, more content and blend well in society. There is no threat here. There are many more mosques than there are churches."

"We should be focusing on ridding ourselves of corruption, studying weaknesses in our laws related to women's rights in family laws. I hope we can go back to the good old days where we weren't fighting and quarrelling with each other. Kuwait used to function as one unit. There was no discrimination between groups or whether you were Sunni or Shia", she told the Arab Times.

But on Wednesday, a source at the prosecutor's office said the Sheikh was being investigated in connection with the allegations and would be summoned for questioning if the court decided there were grounds to proceed with the investigation.

"Informed legal sources have asserted that the public prosecutor, Judge Dirar Al-Asousi, has transferred a complaint filed against former Prime Minister Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammed to the permanent investigation committee which specialises in trying ministers," the al-Qabas daily said in its main story.

It said the case centred on allegations by an opposition parliament member of "foreign transfers" through Kuwaiti embassies abroad.

Al-Watan, another Arabic-language Kuwaiti newspaper, said the committee would rule on the seriousness of the complaint.

When the allegations first came to light last year angry protesters staged a series of demonstrations outside parliament that culminated in the storming of the chamber, eventually forcing the government to resign and triggering the dissolution of the assembly.

Subsequent elections gave Islamist-led opposition candidates a majority in parliament.

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Kuwait 'orders'

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Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah's government resigned last year after some opposition lawmakers alleged it had made a series of illegal financial transfers via Kuwait's embassies abroad. Sheikh Nasser's government denied any wrongdoing at the time.

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Opposition MP Mussallam Al-Barrak charged in October that Sheikh Nasser, a senior member of the ruling family, transferred around \$200 million of public funds into his overseas accounts through the central bank and the foreign ministry.

Around 30 opposition MPs filed a request on Wednesday to form a parliamentary panel to investigate the allegations with powers to interrogate the finance minister, as well the former premier and central bank governor.

But the government used its constitutional right to demand delaying the formation of the panel for two weeks, saying it wanted to study the request.

Barrak told the house that "the transferred funds could be between \$400 million and \$800 million and we need the committee to search for the truth."

"The belief that public funds are the private property of the ruling family is wrong... We are partners in governance and public funds," Barrak said.

Newswatch

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CAIRO: Egyptian officials say a travel ban on seven Americans employed by pro-democracy US groups has been lifted.

The decision Wednesday appeared to signal the end of the worst crisis in relations between Egypt and the US in 30 years.

The seven are among 16 Americans who are on trial along with 27 others for using illegally obtained funds to foment unrest in Egypt and incite protests against the nation's military rulers. The trial opened on Sunday and adjourned until April 26. (AP)

CAIRO: Egypt will vote on May 23 and 24 to elect its first president since a popular uprising overthrew Hosni Mubarak a year ago, the head of the elections committee said on Wednesday.

Faruq Sultan told journalists expatriates will be allowed to cast their absentee ballots from May 11 to May 17.