

## **Pak-US efforts to rescue Trump, Mamnoon from cyber bullies**

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ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and America are in correspondence with each other to rescue their presidents from fraudsters and harassers on social media who are faking websites in their names and, in cases, hurling violent threats.

The Pakistani government has been requesting information from the US relating to Internet Protocol (IP) addresses which were used for creating websites and Facebook pages on behalf of President Mamnoon Hussain. American authorities, on the other hand, have sought details of a twitter account used for threatening President Donald Trump.

The Federal Investigation Authority's Cybercrime Wing is in the search of culprits in both cases. The information it requested from America needed to investigate President Mamnoon's complaint hasn't been shared as yet despite the passage of more than two years. Request from America regarding the tweet about Trump is a fresh one.

President Mamnoon, it has been learnt, lodged a complaint in 2016 when some websites and Facebook pages were created. The FIA wrote to the Justice Department of the US for access to the IP address in order to locate the impersonators. Two years down the road, the information has not been shared.

According to an official corresponding with American authorities, the Justice Department has asked for plausible reason that could form the basis of sharing private information. For example, the FIA has been asked to prove that the impersonators injured the reputation or dented credibility of President Mamnoon through these websites.

That politicians are public figures and hence exposed to such threats, Americans told the FIA. It would be unfair to curb freedom of speech unless their personal safety is at risk, they argue. The FIA keeps receiving complaints from politicians but has not been able to take any action because social media giants based in the United States don't entertain such requests, according to officials.

President Trump's case is different from President Mamnoon and we are bound to cooperate. It has been learnt that a twitter account operating from Pakistan hurled life threats to President Trump. An official privy to the correspondence said the twitter handle alleged in this regard was an anonymous and a probe is in progress in this regard.

The News sought the US Embassy's version on the complaint lodged on behalf of President Trump as well as the status of information requests made by Pakistan

regarding the IP addresses of fake websites/pages created in the names of President Mamnoon. “As a matter of policy, we don’t discuss or confirm law enforcement investigations,” Richard W Snelsire, the spokesman, replied.

The FIA’s Cybercrime Wing regularly receives complaints about harassment and cheating wherein social media is used. Most of them are related to Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. As many as 1,795 information requests were forwarded from 2016 onward to these social media companies in furtherance to action initiated on the complaints.

Nature of complaints vary. They range from unauthorised access to accounts, fake accounts and hacking. However, the complaints regarding financial fraud, impersonation and harassment were mostly lodged by the Facebook users. According to Cybercrime officials, Facebook cooperates the most in entertaining the information requests except the ones relating to blasphemous content and freedom of speech.