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Ram Madhav, Anupam Kher's twitter accounts hacked

Ram Madhav, Anupam Kher, Swapan Dasgupta, and Kaushik Basu's Twitter accounts were hacked into, allegedly by a Turkey-based pro-Pakistan cyber army called Ayyildiz Tim

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Shaswati Das

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Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) general secretary Ram Madhav. Photo: HT

New Delhi: Some top politicians fell prey to a social media security breach on Tuesday, when the Twitter accounts of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) general secretary Ram Madhav, Rajya Sabha member of Parliament (MP) Swapan Dasgupta, economist Kaushik Basu and actor Anupam Kher were hacked into, allegedly by a Turkey-based pro-Pakistan cyber army called Ayyildiz Tim.

Messages of “I love Pakistan” alongside Muhammad Ali Jinnah’s picture appeared on the hacked accounts, prompting Twitter to temporarily shut down the accounts after complaints.

The Union home ministry said it was looking into the breach.

“As of now their accounts have been suspended and we are trying to get to the bottom of this. The appropriate security agencies have been spoken to and they are working to find out more about this,” said a senior home ministry official, requesting anonymity.

Emails and calls to the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (ICERT), the nodal agency that deals with cyber security threats in India, remained unanswered.

This is not the first time that high-profile accounts on Twitter have been hacked. In December 2016, the Twitter handles of Congress president Rahul Gandhi’s and the Congress party were hacked into within hours of each other. The Delhi Police registered an FIR (First Information Report) in the matter.

Cyber security experts stated that social media sites are most vulnerable to attacks because they lack the fortification needed to secure user data.

“Social media sites don’t give the kind of security that should be given. High-profile accounts are hacked because it usually draws public attention. But Twitter is extremely vulnerable and much more needs to be done to secure its user data, if it wants to retain its customer base,” said Pavan Duggal, cyber law expert at the Supreme Court.

Actor Anupam Kher said, “My Twitter account has been hacked...Just got few calls from friends in India about it. I am in Los Angeles. Got a DM (direct message) yesterday from Mr Swapan Dasgupta’s account about a link—a first from him, so opened it. Have spoken to Twitter already (sic),” Kher told *PTI*.

Twitter issued a statement saying its teams were working to resolve the issue.

“Our teams are working to resolve an issue affecting a small number of Indian users. We will notify affected account holders directly. Reminder: do not click on links in DMs coming from unknown accounts,” the statement from the microblogging site said.

PTI contributed to this story.

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