

# Business

FRIDAY, MARCH 23, 2018

**39** Public sector, rail workers strike in test for Macron



**40** China raises a key market rate, following Fed's move



**41** US spending deal clinched, could avert govt shutdown



PARIS: An illustration picture taken yesterday in Paris shows a close-up of the Facebook logo in the eye of an AFP collaborator posing while she looks at a flipped logo of Facebook. —AFP

## #DeleteFacebook movement gathers momentum

### Zuckerberg apologizes but Britain says FB must go further

**SAN FRANCISCO/LONDON:** As Facebook reels from the scandal over hijacked personal data, a movement to quit the social network has gathered momentum, getting a boost from a high-profile co-founder of the WhatsApp messaging service acquired by the huge social network in 2014.

"It is time. #deletefacebook," Brian Acton said in a tweet, using the hashtag protesting the handling of the crisis by the world's biggest social network. The WhatsApp co-founder, who now works at the rival messaging application Signal, posted the comment amid a growing uproar over revelations that Facebook data was harvested by a British political consulting firm linked to Donald Trump's presidential campaign.

"Delete and forget. It's time to care about privacy," he said.

Several websites offered tips on how to quit Facebook, while noting that the process is more complicated than it appears.

Facebook offers users the option to "deactivate" an account for users who want to take a break and return later, or to "delete" the account and its data entirely.

Meanwhile, Facebook chief Mark Zuckerberg has vowed to "step up" to fix problems at the social media giant, as it fights a snowballing scandal over the hijacking of personal data from millions of its users.

"We have a responsibility to protect your data, and if we can't then we don't deserve to serve you," Zuckerberg said Wednesday in his first public comments on the harvesting of Facebook user data by a British firm linked to President Donald Trump's 2016 campaign.

Zuckerberg announced new steps to rein in the leakage of data to outside developers and third-party apps, while giving users more control over their information through a special toolbar.

"This was a major breach of trust and I'm really sorry that this happened," Zuckerberg said in a televised interview with CNN.

"Our responsibility now is to make sure this doesn't happen again."

Zuckerberg said he will testify before Congress if he is the person at Facebook best placed to answer their questions, and that he is not opposed to regulating internet titans such as the social network.

"I am actually not sure we shouldn't be regulated," the Facebook co-founder and chief told CNN. The scandal erupted when a whistleblower revealed that British data consultant Cambridge Analytica had created psychological profiles on 50 million Facebook users via a personality prediction app, created by a researcher named Aleksandr Kogan.

The app was downloaded by 270,000 people, but

also scooped up their friends' data without consent as was possible under Facebook's rules at the time. Facebook says it discovered last week that Cambridge Analytica may not have deleted the data as it certified.

Britain's culture minister said yesterday that Facebook chief Mark Zuckerberg's plan to fix problems at the world's biggest social media network did not go far enough. A scandal erupted last weekend when a whistleblower revealed that British data consultant Cambridge Analytica (CA) had created psychological profiles on 50 million Facebook users via a personality prediction app.

Matt Hancock, Britain's minister for culture and digital, said it should not be down to companies such as Facebook to set their own rules on data privacy.

"Zuckerberg has apologized and said that they are going to make some changes, but frankly I don't think those changes go far enough," he told BBC radio.

#### 'Breach of trust'

"This was a breach of trust between Kogan, Cambridge Analytica and Facebook," Zuckerberg wrote in a post at the social network.

"But it was also a breach of trust between Facebook and the people who share their data with us and expect us to protect it." "We need to fix that."

Separately, in an interview with The New York

Times, Zuckerberg said that even if the platform cuts developer access to Facebook data, as it plans to do, "there's still this issue of: Are there other Cambridge Analyticas out there, or other Kogans".

He also said that since the 2016 US election, Facebook has taken steps that make it harder for foreign governments to interfere in elections.

But, he added, "we need to make sure that we up our game" ahead of the US midterm elections in November because Russia and other states are going to get more sophisticated when it comes to meddling. Zuckerberg's apology followed another day of damaging accusations against the world's biggest social network as calls mounted for investigations on both sides of the Atlantic.

Max Schrems, a Vienna-based activist who has brought online data protection cases before European courts, told AFP he complained to the Irish Data Protection Authority in 2011 about the controversial data harvesting methods. Yesterday, Britain's culture and digital minister Matt Hancock said it should not be down to companies such as Facebook to set their own rules on data privacy.

The British firm has maintained it did not use Facebook data in the Trump campaign, but its now-suspended CEO boasted in secret recordings that his company was deeply involved in the race. —AFP