

Trump to issue 100 pardons

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and more controversial ones secured or doled out to political allies.

The pardons are one of several items Trump must complete before his presidency ends in days. White House officials also still have executive orders prepared, and the President is still hopeful to declassify information related to the Russia probe before he leaves office. But with a waning number of administration officials still in jobs, the likelihood that any of it gets done seemed to be shrinking.

The January 6 riots that led to Trump's second impeachment have complicated his desire to pardon himself, his kids and personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani. At this point, aides do not think he will do so, but caution only Trump knows what he will do with his last bit of presidential power before he is officially out of office at noon on January 20.

After the riots, advisers encouraged Trump to forgo a self-pardon because it would appear like he was guilty of something, according to one person familiar with the conversations. Several of Trump's closest advisers have also urged him not to grant clemency to anyone involved in the siege on the US Capitol, despite Trump's initial stance that those involved had done nothing wrong.

"There are a lot of people urging the President to pardon the folks" involved in the insurrection, Trump ally Sen. Lindsey Graham said Sunday on Fox News. "To seek a pardon of these people would be wrong."

One White House official said paperwork had not yet been drawn up for a self-pardon.

Still, Trump is expected to leave the White House on January 20 and could issue pardons up until noon on Inauguration Day.

Other attention-grabbing names, like Julian Assange, are also not currently believed to among the people receiving pardons, but the list is still fluid and that could change, too.

It's also not certain whether Trump's former adviser Steve Bannon will receive a pardon.

Trump is still receiving multiple streams of recommendations on pardons from those advisers who remain at the White House, as well as people outside the building who have been lobbying for months for themselves or their clients.

The expectation among allies is that Trump will issue pardons that he could benefit from post presidency.

"Everything is a transaction. He likes pardons because it is unilateral. And he likes doing favors for people he thinks will owe him," one source familiar with the matter said.

MELGEN CLEMENCY POSSIBLE

Dr. Salomon Melgen, a prominent eye doctor from Palm Beach, Florida, who is in prison after being convicted on dozens of counts of health care fraud, is currently expected to be included in the clemency list, three sources familiar tell CNN.

Melgen, who is noteworthy for being the co-conspirator in a since-dismissed corruption case against Democratic New Jersey Sen. Bob Menendez, was sentenced to 17 years for health care fraud in 2018.

While his name surprised some Trump allies given the President's attitude toward Menendez, Melgen is seen as a wealthy and influential figure in south Florida. The corruption case against Menendez and Melgen was dropped by the Justice Department in January 2018.

Inside the White House, there has been a scramble to petition for pardons on behalf of allies and advocacy groups and names could be added and taken off up until the last minute, sources said.

CNN previously reported there has been a crush of pardon requests during Trump's final days in office from allies, lobbyists and others hoping to cash in on their loyalty to Trump. The New York Times reported Sunday some of those people were getting paid tens of thousands of dollars to lobby on behalf of felons hoping for pardons.



A teacher (L) checks the body temperature of students wearing facemasks upon their arrival at a school in Lahore yesterday, as the Pakistan government reopened educational institutes from grade 9th to 12th after remaining closed as a preventive measure against the coronavirus. PHOTO: AFP

Global vaccine campaign gains

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its homegrown Sputnik V vaccine while Britain imposed a 10-day isolation and negative Covid tests on all travellers.

Arrivals will have to provide a negative Covid test taken within 72 hours of travel or be banned from entering the UK.

New strains believed to be more contagious have emerged in Britain, South Africa and Brazil and have set off alarm bells.

Brazil's health regulator gave emergency approval Sunday for two coronavirus vaccines, kicking off a mass inoculation campaign amid a devastating second epidemic wave killing over 1,000 people in the vast South American nation daily.

Across the European Union there have been concerns that delays in the delivery of Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine could further slow a campaign which critics have condemned as less agile than in the United States or Britain, a recently-departed EU member.

US drugmaker Pfizer said it was working to "significantly" scale up production at its major plant in Belgium in the second quarter.

After a short delay, deliveries

should be back to the original schedule to the EU from January 25.

Australia's international borders are unlikely to open to travellers this year despite the rollout of coronavirus vaccines, a top health official said yesterday.

Health department secretary Brendan Murphy, a key adviser in Australia's virus response, said free-flowing travel to and from the country was not expected to resume in 2021, reports AFP.

Slovakia yesterday began a new round of nationwide Covid-19 screening -- a process aimed at easing curfew restrictions for people who test negative.

Tests will also serve as a basis for new localised restrictions in the country's 73 districts.

Malawi is set to roll out a first set of anti-coronavirus restrictions this week, the president said, after overruling a court ban on lockdown measures to tackle a surge in cases.

Unlike the rest of the continent, daily life had been unfolding normally in the southern African country since its High Court barred the government from confining citizens to limit the spread of

Covid-19.

DOUBT ON 2020 OLYMPICS

Japan's Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga yesterday pledged to tackle surging coronavirus cases and restore normal life "as soon as possible" as polls showed plunging support for his government.

The latest wave in Japan and abroad has also cast doubt on whether the pandemic-postponed Tokyo 2020 Olympics can go ahead, but Suga repeated he was still committed to holding the Games as "proof of mankind's victory over the virus".

In the world's worst-hit country, President-elect Joe Biden's goal of seeing 100 million vaccine doses injected within his first 100 days in office is meanwhile "absolutely" achievable, top US scientist Anthony Fauci said, days before he becomes the new president's chief advisor on Covid-19.

"The feasibility of his goal is absolutely clear, there's no doubt about it," Fauci told NBC's "Meet the Press".

Biden has unveiled a \$1.9 trillion stimulus plan to revive the economy of the US, where the new coronavirus has claimed over 397,000 lives.

Twitter suspends QAnon-linked Republican lawmaker's account

AFP, Washington

A newly elected Republican congresswoman known for promoting QAnon conspiracy theories accused Twitter of censorship on Sunday after her account was temporarily suspended for "multiple violations".

Marjorie Taylor Greene was hit with the 12-hour suspension after she tweeted claims of alleged election fraud in Georgia, her home state.

Twitter flagged at least two tweets as "disputed" and prevented them from being shared or retweeted, saying they carried the "risk of violence".

The lawmaker's account was suspended due to "multiple violations of our civic integrity policy", a Twitter spokesman said.

Greene, an ardent Donald Trump supporter, has echoed his baseless claims of rigging in the 2020 election.

She has also embraced QAnon

conspiracy theories in the past and was endorsed by the president as a "future Republican star".

QAnon followers believe that Trump is waging a secret war against a global liberal cult of Satan-worshipping pedophiles. They have not offered any credible evidence for it.

Greene's suspension is the latest in a series of high-profile social media bans and lockouts in the wake of the January 6 riot at the US Capitol.

Twitter banned Trump two days after the incident, and since then has scrubbed more than 70,000 accounts with QAnon ties.

Apple and Google have also barred downloads of Parler, a Twitter-like app popular among conservatives, and Amazon has kicked the platform off its servers.

That has outraged many Republicans, who say tech giants are infringing on their free speech.

Slovakia begins new mass virus testing

AFP, Bratislava

Slovakia yesterday began a new round of nationwide Covid-19 screening -- a process aimed at easing curfew restrictions for people who test negative.

Tests will also serve as a basis for new localised restrictions in the country's 73 districts.

"We have decided to combine lockdown with massive testing," Prime Minister Igor Matovic told a press conference yesterday.

"Subsequently, we will intervene in districts where it is necessary to get the situation under control," he said.

The latest tests will end on January 26. From January 27, Slovaks aged between 15 and 65 will be able to circulate freely with a negative antigen or PCR test.

Health Minister Marek Krajci said that after testing, Slovakia will be divided into 37 worse and 36 better districts.

"In worse districts, the screening will be repeated. From February 3, it will be necessary to prove a negative test there even when entering your place of work.

"This will be valid until February 7. In better districts, the situation will return to the state it is now.

Sixth census deferred to October due

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"The census is one of our most important tasks," he said at the inauguration of a training programme at the BBS in the capital.

Statistics generated from the census is required in almost all government activities, including preparations of different development projects, he said.

He called upon everyone involved in the census-listing activities to conduct it correctly and with utmost sincerity.

A Geographic Information System will be used in the latest census as a new feature, says a

handout provided by the BBS to the media.

Besides, a "combined census management system" will be introduced while data will be collected using a multi-modal system, the handout says.

At yesterday's training programme, some 144 master trainers took part, who will later provide training to field-level individuals to collect data for the census through door-to-door activities.

The BBS conducts the census every 10 years.

In independent Bangladesh, the first population census

was conducted in 1974. Later, population and housing censuses were held in the years 1981, 1991, 2001, and 2011.

According to the 2011 census, the country's population was 15.25 crore.

However, the government estimates that the country's population has reached to over 16 crore at present.

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council, in October 2019, approved a Tk 1,761 crore project for the sixth population census and house listing, said a BSS report.

Fog disrupts ferry service

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The weather forecast for next 24 hours was released at 9:00am yesterday.

"Night and day temperature may rise slightly over the country," the bulletin added.

In a 72-hour outlook, the bulletin forecasts, "Rainfall activity is likely."

Yesterday's lowest temperature was recorded at 8.5 degrees Celsius in Tentulia of Panchagarh, according to the Met office.

On the Paturia-Daulatdia ferry route, the authorities kept ferry services suspended for around 10 hours due to dense fog.

Ferry operations resumed around 10:00am yesterday, said BIWTC officials.

"Marking lights on the route became invisible due to thick fog. It posed risks of accidents. That is why ferry services were suspended," said Zillur Rahman,

deputy general manager of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC) at Anicha office in Manikganj.

Five ferries, which were carrying passengers and vehicles, were stranded in the middle of the Padma river due to dense fog, he added.

On the Shimulia-Banglabazar route, thick fog forced the authorities to suspend ferry operations for around six hours from 4:00am yesterday.

Around 600 vehicles got stuck at both ends of the river, said officials concerned and transport operators.

"We are compelled to suspend ferry services due to poor visibility on the river. Around 10:00am, the ferry operations resumed," said Safayet Ahmed, manager of BIWTC at Shimulia terminal.

In Lalmonirhat and Kurigram, normal lives have come to a standstill due to the cold wave and

thick fog that engulfed the entire region.

Vehicles were seen moving with headlights on during the daytime. People did not venture outside home unless faced with emergencies. The poor are suffering for not having sufficient warm clothes.

Delwar Hossain, 56, a cold-hit labourer in Kurigram Sadar upazila's Jatrapur, said, "I, along with my family members, have been suffering immensely due to insufficient warm clothes. We need assistance from the government and the affluent so that we can survive in the cold weather."

Mujibur Rahman, 52, a farmer of Teesta shoal in Kalmati village of Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila, said, "We are in fear of incurring losses as our Boro paddy plants may be affected due to bitter cold."

[Our correspondents in Manikganj and Lalmonirhat contributed to the report.]

বাংলাদেশ পানি উন্নয়ন বোর্ড	
Office of the Executive Engineer Dhaka O&M Division-1, BWDB WAPDA Building (7th Floor) Motijheel, Dhaka-1000 Telephone No. 9551371 Email: xen.dhaka1.bwdb@gmail.com xen.dhaka1@bwdb.gov.bd www.bwdb.gov.bd	
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Invitation for Tender	
Invitation Reference No.	T-1/2106 Dated: 18-01-2021
e-Tender ID (from e-GP Portal) 538029	Name of the work Precautionary Bank Protective work at left bank of the Padma river from KM 0.600 to KM 0.850 250 Meter to protect Dakkhin Holudia Mosque at Louhajang Upazila in Munshiganj Dist. under Dhaka O&M Division-1 BWDB Dhaka during the FY 2020-21.
This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd) (01762625528-31) (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd).	
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Ranendra Sanker Chakraborty Executive Engineer Dhaka O&M Division-1 BWDB, Dhaka	

5 get life term

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Balu was the editor of local "Dainik Janmabhumi" and president of Khulna Press Club. He was bombed to death while entering his office-cum-residence on Haji Meher Ali road in Khulna city on June 27, 2004.

The next day, Sub-Inspector Maruf Ahmed of Khulna Sadar Police Station filed two cases -- one for murder and another under the explosives act.

On February 13, 2008, all seven accused were acquitted of murder case.

Public Prosecutor Arif Liton told The Daily Star that state lawyer Enamul Haque appealed to the court for further probing the explosives case on April 15, 2009.

On April 20 that year, Judge Muhammad Sakendar Ali of Khulna Jono Nirapotta Bignokari Aporadh Daman Tribunal ordered a further investigation into the case.

Shahadat Hasan, assistant superintendent of the Criminal Investigation Department, filed a supplementary charge sheet against the five convicts on December 31, 2015.

Out of 58 witnesses, eight testified before the court.

Fraudster arrested

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(CITC) unit of police.

Officers caught him after a case was filed with Airport Police Station accusing him of fraud, said Towhidul Islam, additional deputy commissioner of CITC.

According to the case statement, Rubel, who is from Shariatpur, visited Betbaria area of Kushtia with seven or eight others and led people to believe that he was working on projects to build houses, schools, and dams to help people affected by climate change.

He then asked his victims to invest in the projects. Investigators suspect that he might have taken several crores from locals in Kushtia, Magura and Khagrachari.

Police have found various documents of the Canadian organisation in his possession.

Virgin Orbit

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Space Port in the desert north of Los Angeles and launched the rocket over the Pacific Ocean.

Founded by British billionaire Richard Branson in 2012, Virgin Orbit wants to offer a quick and flexible service for operators of small satellites, weighing between 300 and 500 kilos (600 to 1,000 pounds), a market which is booming.

The 70-foot (21-meter) Virgin Orbit rocket, named LauncherOne, is strapped to the underside of a wing on a converted Boeing 747 named Cosmic Girl.

When it reaches the required altitude, the plane releases the rocket, whose own engine fires up to push it into Earth's orbit and places its payload in space.

Launching a rocket from a plane is more flexible than a vertical blast off because theoretically all a company needs is an airstrip rather than a space launchpad.

Richard Branson has founded another space company, Virgin Galactic, which is using a similar concept with the goal of taking tourists into space to experience weightlessness some 50 miles (80 kilometers) above the surface of the Earth.

Membership

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the preceding thirtieth day of June on Form B."

The law also provides for what can be called a grace period of 15 days.

Section 137 (3) of the Elections Act reads, "the Commission shall, on the sixteenth day of January, by an order suspend the membership of a member of an assembly and Senate who fails to submit the statement of assets and liabilities by the fifteenth day of January, and such member shall cease to function till he/she files the statement of assets and liabilities."

Five arrested

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Women and Children Repression Prevention court-2 on January 5, four days after the incident.

The incident came to light on Saturday when unverified footage of the torture went viral on social media.

The 32-year-old housewife and the man were tortured on January 1, when the accused led by Jihad and Faruque -- stormed her house in Ardarshagram in Hatiya's Chandni union, while her husband was not home, said inspector Md Abul Hasan of Morshed Bazar investigation centre.

Locals told police that they attempted to rape the housewife while raising allegations that she was in an extramarital affair with the man who was also tortured. Failing to do so, they tortured the woman and the man and stripped off their clothes, police said quoting locals.

Police rescued both victims, who were tied up with rope, after receiving a phone call to the 999 helpline by locals, said the police official.

Israeli warplanes hit Gaza after rocket fire

AFP, Gaza City

Israel's military said yesterday its fighter planes struck Hamas facilities in the Gaza Strip after Palestinians fired rockets at the Jewish state.

Two rockets were fired from the Gaza Strip towards the coast near the southern city of Ashdod, according to a military statement.

"In response...fighter jets struck military targets belonging to the Hamas terror organisation in the Gaza Strip, including tunnel digging sites," the army said.

There were no reports of any damage from Palestinian rockets, with Israeli army sources indicating they had landed in the

Mediterranean sea.

Palestinian security sources in Gaza said the Israeli fire hit "farmland" in the southern Khan Yunis area of the enclave, causing damage but no injuries.

There was no immediate claim for the rocket launches from Hamas-ruled Gaza.

Palestinians in Gaza and the Israeli-occupied West Bank are heading for respective legislative and presidential elections in May and July, the first in 15 years.

The polls are part of a warming of ties between Hamas and Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas's West Bank-based Fatah party.

The dates were announced on Friday in a presidential decree by Abbas.

In the last Palestinian parliamentary elections in 2006, Hamas won an unexpected landslide.

The polls resulted in a brief unity government but it soon collapsed. In 2007, bloody clashes erupted between the two principal Palestinian factions, with Hamas ultimately seizing control of Gaza.

Last week an Israeli tank fired at "a Hamas military post" in the southern Gaza Strip, after shots were fired at a military vehicle working on its side of the border fence, the Israeli army said.