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FINAL FULL DAY IN OFFICE

Trump to issue 100 pardons, commutations

Clemency actions not expected to include the president himself

CNN ONLINE

US President Donald Trump is preparing to issue around 100 pardons and commutations on his final full day in office today, according to three people familiar with the matter, a major batch of clemency actions that includes white collar criminals, high-profile rappers and others but -- as of now -- is not expected to include Trump himself.

The White House held a meeting on Sunday to finalise the list of pardons, two sources said.

Trump, who had been rolling out pardons and commutations at a steady clip ahead of Christmas, had put a pause on them in the days leading up to and directly after the January 6 riots at the US Capitol, according to officials.

Aides said Trump was singularly focused on the Electoral College count in the days ahead of time, precluding him for making final decisions on pardons. White House officials had expected them to resume after January 6, but Trump retreated after he was blamed for inciting the riots.

Initially, two major batches had been ready to roll out, one at the end of last week and one on today. Now, officials expect the last batch to be the only one -- unless Trump decides at the last minute to grant pardons to controversial allies, members of his family or himself.

The final batch of clemency actions is expected to include a mix of criminal justice reform-minded pardons

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Fourth-year students of Sirajul Islam Medical College yesterday queue up for Covid-19 tests at Mugda General Hospital in the capital. With their exams slated for January 24, the students are required to bring Covid-negative certificates to the exam halls, without which they will not be permitted to sit for the exams.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

EXPLOSIVES CASE

5 get life term over killing of journalist

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A Khulna court yesterday sentenced five outlaws to life imprisonment in a case filed in connection with the murder of Ekushey Padak recipient and journalist Humayun Kabir Balu in 2004.

Judge Saifuzzaman Hero, of Khulna Jono Nirapotta Bignokari Aporadh Daman Tribunal, announced the verdict in the explosives case.

The court also fined each convict Tk 10,000.

The convicts are:

Syed Iqbal Hossain alias Swadhin, Nazul alias Ripon alias Nazul Islam alias Khora Nazul, Masum alias Jahangir, Rimon alias Asaduzzaman and Zahid Hossain alias Sabuj alias Zahidur Rahman. They are members of outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (Jonojuddho).

Zahid, Nazul, Rimon and Swadhin were present in the court, while another convict Jahangir is on the run.

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Fraudster arrested in capital

He posed as NGO high-up to swindle people out of crores

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

He used to travel in a helicopter from Dhaka to remote towns and introduced himself as the CEO of the Canadian Council for International Cooperation.

He then convinced people to invest in different projects of the council and allegedly swindled them out of crores of taka.

Rubel Ahmed, known among locals in Kushtia, Magura and Khagrachari districts as Helicopter Rubel, was arrested in the capital's Uttara on Sunday night by the Economic Crime and Human Trafficking Division of the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime

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Virgin Orbit reaches space for first time



AFP, Washington

Richard Branson's Virgin Orbit project on Sunday successfully flew a rocket into space from the wing of a 747 plane, paving the way for a new method of launching low-cost satellites.

It was the company's second attempt at the feat after a failed test in May.

"LauncherOne has reached orbit! Everyone on the team who is not in mission control right now is going absolutely bonkers," the company tweeted from its Twitter account at 2:49 pm (2049 GMT).

The plane took off from Mojave Air and

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Five arrested over torture on woman in Noakhali

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

Five people were arrested on Sunday night in connection with a case filed over the torture of two people, including a housewife after an attempt to rape her, in Noakhali's Hatiya upazila.

The arrestees are the main accused Jihad, 30, of Mollahgram, Faruque Hossain, 30, Abu Taher, 27, Nabir Uddin, 32, of Adarshagram and Alamgir Hossain, 42, of Miaji village under Hatiya upazila, said Md Alamgir Hossain, superintendent of police in Noakhali during a press briefing yesterday.

The man who was tortured along with the housewife filed an assault case accusing the arrestees and six others on Sunday night.

The housewife filed a case over the attempt to rape her against five of the accused with Noakhali's

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Membership of 154 Pakistan MPs suspended

Election commission takes action for their failure to submit statements on assets

DAWN ONLINE

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) yesterday announced that the membership of 154 members of the Senate, national and provincial assemblies had been suspended for failing to submit statements of their assets and liabilities.

Minister for Inter-provincial Coordination (IPC) Fehmida Mirza, Minister for Science and Technology Fawad Chaudhry, Minister for Maritime Affairs Ali Haider Zaidi and Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui are among the MNAs whose memberships have been suspended.

According to Section 137(1) of the Elections Act, 2017, lawmakers are required to submit a statement of their assets and liabilities, as well as those of their spouses and dependent children, by December 31 each year.

The membership of the lawmakers will remain suspended until they submit their respective statements.

Reacting to the development, Zaidi tweeted that he had submitted his asset declaration form on January 5 and added: "Don't understand the fuss!"

Almost every year, the ECP suspends the membership of scores of lawmakers for not submitting the statement. Last year, over 300 lawmakers had failed to submit their asset details.

Section 137 (1) of the Elections Act, 2017, reads, "every member of an Assembly and Senate shall submit to the Commission, on or before 31st December each year, a copy of his statement of assets and liabilities including assets and liabilities of his spouse and dependent children as on

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PATURIA, SHIMULIA ROUTES

Fog disrupts ferry service

Several hundred vehicles stuck on both sides of the Padma for hours

STAR REPORT

Normal life came to a near standstill due to the bone-chilling cold coupled with dense fog which also disrupted ferry services and vehicular movement.

Several hundred vehicles had to wait on both sides of the Padma yesterday to cross the river as ferry services were suspended on two major routes -- Paturia to Daulatdia and Shimulia to Banglabazar -- for hours.

Paturia is in Manikganj and Daulatdia in Rajbari. The Shimulia ferry terminal is in Munshiganj and Banglabazar is in Madaripur.

Meanwhile, a weather bulletin yesterday said, "Mild cold wave is sweeping over the regions of Sreemangal, Pabna, Naogaon, Dinajpur, Panchagarh and Chuadanga."

"It may continue," said the bulletin of Bangladesh Meteorological Department.

"The weather may remain dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country. Moderate to thick fog may occur over the country from midnight to morning and it may continue till noon at places over the northern part of the country," it added.

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Sixth census deferred to October due to pandemic

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The sixth population and housing census of the country has been deferred for 10 months due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The nationwide listing, which will be conducted by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), will instead be held between October 25 and October 31.

Earlier, the government fixed January 2-8 to conduct the census.

Planning Minister MA Mannan yesterday said they have already started activities to that end.

"The census is one of our most important tasks,"

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PRAYER TIMING JANUARY 19

Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5:30 12:45 4:15 5:40 7:00
JAMAT 6:05 1:15 4:30 5:44 7:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



Braving a severe cold wave sweeping through the country, fishermen fight the dense fog as they set out on rivers. In order to make ends meet, it is not possible for them to remain cooped up in their homes. The photo was taken at Chattogram's Kaptai river recently.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Global vaccine campaign gains momentum

Brazil approves its first jabs; UK, France prepare to vaccinate people aged above 70

AGENCIES

The global Covid-19 vaccination drive gained pace yesterday as Brazil gave its first injections and France and Britain joined a growing list of nations starting mass vaccinations for all elderly citizens.

The French drive aims to cover all people over 75. Health Minister Olivier Veran said more than one million vaccinations are being targeted by January and between 2.4 and 4 million by February.

France had earlier offered vaccinations to residents of retirement homes and health workers on the frontline.

Britain yesterday extended its own vaccination campaign to people over the age of 70, after first attending to over-80s, and frontline health workers and care givers.

Since the inoculation campaign began on December 8, more than 3.8 million people have received a first dose of vaccine in the UK.

The UK closed all travel corridors until at least 15 February. Travellers arriving in the UK, whether by boat, train or plane, also have to show proof of a negative Covid-19 test to be allowed entry.

Growing concerns over different strains of the virus have prompted governments to tighten curbs and stem a global death toll that has already crossed two million since the pandemic first emerged in China just over a year ago.

Russia also started mass immunisations yesterday using

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