

DERADICALISATION PROGRAMME

Rab gets warm response on hotline

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

People looking for a window to shun the path of militancy have been calling a hotline number and writing to an email address the Rab has dedicated for its deradicalisation programme.

Rab launched the hotline number and email for its Deradicalisation and Rehabilitation Program on January 18.

Officials said most of the callers first wanted to be sure that they are actually communicating with Rab officers.

Intelligence Director Lt Col Mohammad Khairul Islam told The Daily Star that several suspected militants have contacted the officials.

"The suspects from different militant outfits called the hotline and asked how they could surrender. They told us that they were wanted in different cases."

"We asked them for the case documents so that we could examine the papers and give them feedback," said the intelligence director.

People willing to go back to normal life will have Rab's cooperation. But those wanted in criminal cases must go through the legal procedure, he added.

Nine members of different militant outfits surrendered to Rab on January 14.

The Rab initiative is the first institutional deradicalisation programme in the country, officials said, adding that a team of 12 experts are running it.

Additional Director General (operation) Colonel Tofail Mostafa Sarwar is its chief coordinator and intelligence. SEE PAGE 10 COL 6



The construction work of the first Dhaka Elevated Expressway is expected to end in December this year. The 47km expressway, with 19.73km main line, would have several exits between Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport and Tejgaon Rail Gate. The expressway is supposed to alleviate congestion. The photo was taken near Khilkhet.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HUQ

COVID POSITIVITY

Daily rate drops below 3 percent

MOUDUD AHMED SUJAN

The rate of daily positive coronavirus cases dropped to 2.92 percent yesterday, the lowest in more than nine months.

In 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, a total of 14,985 tests were performed in 206 Covid-19 testing centres across the country and 438 tested positive for the virus.

Thirteen people died with the highly transmissible virus over the same period, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) press release.

Now the overall positivity rate stands at 14.53 percent.

Experts, however, said it was too early to say that the virus transmission was under control.

Assuming the transmission may go up anytime, they stressed on maintaining health rules.

The percentage of positive cases is a critical measure because it gives SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

NUSRAT MURDER

No offence in digging out info and publishing

Observes HC; refuses to give convicted OC bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Journalists have curious minds which dig out information and if they are given the scope to publish that information, they will surely do it since there is no element of offence in it, the High Court observed yesterday.

The observation was made by HC bench of Justice Md Habibul Gani and Justice Md Riaz Uddin Khan.

The bench made the observation while hearing a petition filed by convict Moazzem Hossain, former officer-in-charge of Feni's Sonagazi Police Station, seeking bail in a case filed against him for filming madrasa student Nusrat Jahan Rafi's statement and circulating the clip on social media without her consent.

During the hearing, Moazzem's lawyer Murad Reza told the court that the clip was not circulated by his client. He claimed that a journalist had collected the video clip from the mobile phone of Moazzem SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

WORLDWIDE COVID VACCINATION

Weak co-op a major barrier

WHO chief warns nations as study says Oxford jab cuts virus transmission

AGENCIES

Covid-19 vaccine nationalism is harmful for all, World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said on Tuesday, and said weak cooperation between nations is a major barrier to achieving worldwide vaccination at the scale needed to end the coronavirus pandemic.

"Despite the growing number of vaccine options, current manufacturing capacity meets only a fraction of global need," the WHO director-general said in a piece published in Foreign Policy magazine.

"Allowing the majority of the world's population to go unvaccinated will not only perpetuate needless illness and deaths and the pain of ongoing lockdowns, but also spawn new virus mutations as Covid-19 continues to spread among unprotected populations," he wrote.

Countries around the world pin their hopes on vaccines as a way out of the pandemic, as WHO experts yesterday inspected a Chinese laboratory in Wuhan that some US officials said could have been the source of the coronavirus.

Russia is working to increase production of its Sputnik V jab in foreign countries after a report showed strong results for it.

And British pharmaceuticals giant GlaxoSmithKline and German biotech firm CureVac said they were teaming up to jointly develop a vaccine with the potential to counter multi-variants of Covid-19.

Vaccines are seen as the only way out of the pandemic that has infected nearly 104 million, left more than 2.2 million dead and devastated the SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

AVIJIT MURDER

Prosecution seeks capital punishment for 6 accused

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Prosecutors yesterday sought capital punishment for six men accused of killing blogger and writer Avijit Roy in February 2015.

The accused are members of banned militant outfit Ansar-al-Islam, officials said.

Assistant Public Prosecutor Golam Sharuar Khan told the tribunal that the prosecutors were able to prove the charges against the accused.

Judge Md Majibur Rahman of the Anti-Terrorism Special Tribunal of Dhaka fixed today to hear arguments of the defence lawyers.

The six accused are Sayed Mohammad Ziaul Haque alias Maj (sacked) Zia, Akram Hossain Abir, Moazzem Hossain Saymon, Abu Siddiqi Sohel, SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

Mummies with golden tongues found in Egypt



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Mummies with "golden tongues" have been unearthed in Egypt, the country's tourism and antiquities ministry has said.

A team of Egyptian-Dominican archaeologists discovered 16 burials in rock-cut tombs at Alexandria's Taposiris Magna temple in western Alexandria.

Experts believe the tongues, made of gold foil, SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

TOXIC LIQUOR

4 homeopathy shop owners held after 13 die in Bogura

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

Police in Bogura yesterday arrested four homeopathy shop owners accused of selling toxic liquor that may have caused at least 13 deaths in the town since Saturday.

After talking to locals, family members of the deceased, and people who fell ill from ingesting the toxic liquor, our Bogura correspondent reported that at least 13 people died reportedly after having poisonous liquor (mainly rectified spirit mixed with methanol) in Bogura in that time.

A press release issued by the Bogura Sadar Police Station, however, said they have found that a total of eight people died in the town since last Saturday after consuming toxic liquor.

"We found that eight SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

MONEY LAUNDERING

Punishment should be enhanced

Observes HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A High Court bench yesterday observed that the punishment for money laundering should be enhanced from existing 12 years' imprisonment to life imprisonment considering the gravity of the offence.

Money laundering is a serious offence and its highest punishment of 12 years' imprisonment under the Money Laundering Prevention Act is insufficient, the bench of Justice Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice Mohi Uddin Shamim said. SEE PAGE 10 COL 3



A seasonal labourer spreads fish under the sun to turn those into dried fish while another person scatters salt on them to preserve them. Dried fish has huge demand in local and international markets and the lion's share is produced during winter and dry seasons. The photo was taken from College Street in Chattogram's Notun Bridge area.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

TRUMP IMPEACHMENT TRIAL

Trump lawyers, Democrats spar at pre-trial brief

REUTERS, Washington

Former President Donald Trump's lawyers said on Tuesday the US Senate lacks the authority to conduct his impeachment trial now that he has left office, while the Democratic lawmakers due to serve as prosecutors called him singularly responsible for the deadly January 6 attack on the Capitol.

Trump's legal team and the nine House of Representatives Democrats set to prosecute him filed briefs with the Senate one week before the trial is scheduled to begin.

His lawyers focused on an argument that last week won the support of 45 of the 50 Republicans in the 100-seat Senate in a failed vote to dismiss the case because Trump is a private citizen, having left office on January 20.

Trump's team also denied he had fomented violence, saying in their 14-page brief that his remarks to supporters shortly before they stormed the Capitol that Democrats contend incited violence were protected under the US Constitution's First Amendment right to free speech.

Challenging the case against Trump on the grounds that the Senate lacks constitutional authority to put a former president on trial would enable his fellow Republicans to vote against conviction without directly defending his incendiary remarks.

The House Democrats, in their pretrial brief, anticipated that post-presidency argument and rejected it. The Democrats urged senators to convict Trump - which would require a two-thirds majority - and then bar him from again holding public office. SEE PAGE 10 COL 3

PRAYER TIMING FEBRUARY 4

Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 5:30 12:45 4:15 5:52 7:15

JAMAT 6:05 1:15 4:30 5:56 7:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION