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PBI REPORT ON MILITANCY

Suspects slipped out

At least 18 accused in terrorism cases fled the country; 41 jumped bail

SHARIFUL ISLAM

It was on July 29, 2011.

A Rab team arrested Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury, a member of banned militant outfit Hizb-ut Tahrir, from Madina Market Jame Mosque area in Sylhet city when he was distributing the organisation's leaflets.

Subsequently, an officer of the elite crime busters filed a case against the suspected militant, then 19, on the charge of anti-state activity under the Anti-Terrorism Act.

Hailing from Golapganj upazila of Sylhet, Iftekhar alias Abid later obtained bail from a Sylhet court. Police submitted the charge sheet against him and a court framed charges in his absence on June 5, 2012.

The case is still under trial at the Anti-Terrorism Special Tribunal in Sylhet.

Iftekhar did not appear before the court ever since he got bail. Rather, he snuck out of the country, dodging law enforcers and immigration.

Later, the Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI), dedicated to investigating critical and high-profile cases, tracked him down after multipronged investigations and found he was living in Canada.

Iftekhar's case, however, is not an isolated one.

As many as 18 militants of different outfits, all accused in cases filed for terrorist activities between 2000 and 2016, fled the country either after obtaining bail from the court or without ever being arrested.

They were now living in 13 countries spanning North

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Supporters of Awami League and BNP mayoral candidates clash near Haripur Government Primary School Centre during Tangail's Kalihati municipal polls around 12:30pm yesterday. Five people were injured, two of them seriously. Story on page 1.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Closure of schools extended to Feb 28

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has extended the closure of all educational institutions till February 28.

The education and the primary and mass education ministries issued separate statements on extension of the closure yesterday. However, Qawmi madrasas will remain outside the purview of the government's directive.

On March 17 last year, the government closed all schools to contain the spread of coronavirus. The closure led to cancellation of exams, leaving academic calendars in disarray.

The Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education and the Directorate of Primary Education have already asked all colleges, secondary schools and primary schools to prepare for reopening.

While talking about the reopening of educational institutions on January

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'Democracy is fragile'

Says Biden after Senate acquits Trump

AGENCIES

US President Joe Biden said on Saturday that the Senate's acquittal of former President Donald Trump for inciting an insurrection was a reminder that democracy was fragile, and every American had a duty to defend the truth.

"This sad chapter in our history has reminded us that democracy is fragile," Biden said in a statement issued hours after the Senate failed to muster the two-thirds majority needed to convict Trump.

Biden noted that a 57 senators - including a record seven Republicans - voted to find Trump guilty, following a bipartisan vote by the House of Representatives to impeach the Republican former president.

"While the final vote did not lead to a conviction, the substance of the charge is not in dispute. Even those opposed to the conviction, like Senate Minority Leader (Mitch) McConnell, believe Donald Trump was guilty of a 'disgraceful dereliction of duty' and 'practically and morally responsible for provoking' the violence unleashed on the Capitol," Biden said.

He said he was thinking about Capitol

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PEOPLE OF RAKHINE COMMUNITY Their numbers shrinking in Teknaf

Threats of criminals, influentials blamed



SANJOY KUMAR BARRIA

Ma Ching Rakhine, along with her family members, was forced to leave their ancestral home in Teknaf upazila of Cox's Bazar around 10 years ago in the face of threats from Rohingya criminals.

With a Rohingya refugee camp set up on their ancestral land in Dadundagya Rakhine Para, they are now living in Chowdhury Para Beri Badh area of Teknaf. They live in houses made of plastic sheets with no proper toilet facilities. They do not have safe drinking water either.

Four other Rakhine families, who once lived in Dadundagya Rakhine Para, locally known as Domdomia Rakhine Para, are also with them in Beri Badh area.

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8 more die of Covid-19, 326 get infected

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh recorded eight more Covid-19-related deaths and 326 fresh cases in 24 hours till yesterday morning, showing a small rise in infection rate.

With the fresh figures, the death toll from the virus in the country rose to 8,274 and the caseload to 540,592, according to the Directorate General of Health Services.

In a handout, the DGHS said the daily novel coronavirus infection rate in Bangladesh rose to 2.53 percent from Saturday's 2.26 percent. The overall infection rate is now 14.05 percent.

The mortality rate stood at 1.53 percent on Sunday, the handout said, adding that 487,229 patients (90.13 percent) have recovered so far.

As of now, 3,848,116 samples have been tested, including 12,900 in the same 24-hour period.

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UAE's probe sends home first image of Mars



AFP, Dubai

The UAE's "Hope" probe sent back its first image of Mars, the national space agency said yesterday, days after the spacecraft successfully entered the Red Planet's orbit.

The picture "captured the largest volcano in the solar system, Olympus Mons, emerging into the early morning sunlight," it said in a statement.

The image was taken from an altitude of 24,700 kilometres (15,300 miles) above the Martian surface on Wednesday, a day after the probe entered Mars' orbit, it said in a statement.

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4 held over gang rape in Ashulia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

Police yesterday arrested four people on charge of gang rape of a RMG worker in Ashulia, on the outskirts of the capital.

The arrestees are Saiful Islam Babu, 23, Md Arif, 22, Abu Bakkar, 25, and Rana Mollah, 28, of Gazirchat in Ashulia.

The eighteen-year-old victim was sent to the One-stop Crisis Centre of Dhaka Medical College Hospital, said Ziaul Islam, inspector of Ashulia Police Station, adding that they held the accused from Gazirchat area.

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PRAYER TIMING FEBRUARY 15

Fajr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
JAN 5:25	12:45	4:30	5:57	7:15
FEB 6:00	1:15	4:45	6:01	7:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

CLASH NEAR PRESS CLUB 29 BNP men placed on 2-day remand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court placed 29 BNP men each on a two-day remand yesterday in connection with two cases filed over Saturday's clash between BNP activists and police in front of the capital's Jatiya Press Club.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Sadbir Yasir Ahsan Chowdhury passed the orders, court sources said.

Sub-Inspector Golam Hossain Khan produced 16 of the 29 accused before the court asking for a 10-day remand in a case filed with Shahbagh Police Station.

Sub-Inspector Shahidul Osman Masum produced the remaining 13 accused with a seven-day remand prayer before the same court in another case filed with Ramna Police Station.

According to case documents, 74 BNP leaders and activists were accused in two cases filed in this connection.

On Saturday, BNP men

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Filthy water from nearby dyeing factories and sewage stagnated on Shyampur-Kadamtoli street in the capital due to poor drainage system. Almost the entire street has become unusable. Pedestrians in Rajuk residential area in Shyampur suffer the most as they have to endure the stench. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

EARLY DAYS OF COVID US, WHO push China for data

NZ locks down Auckland after 3 new cases; Japan approves first vaccine

AGENCIES

The United States and a WHO expert demanded more data from Beijing about the origins of the coronavirus pandemic, after a WHO mission to China struggled to make headway.

A team of World Health Organization experts and Chinese counterparts visited key sites around the city of Wuhan, where Covid cases were first detected, but said they had not been able to shed light on the nature of early transmissions.

US national security advisor Jake Sullivan on Saturday said his country had "deep concerns" about the early findings of the investigation.

Peter Ben Embarek, who led the WHO mission, told AFP in an interview his team had asked for more data, adding: "There is a mix of frustration but also a mix of realistic expectations in terms of what is feasible under which time frame."

British foreign minister Dominic Raab said yesterday he shared concerns about the level of access given to a WHO's fact-finding mission to China, echoing criticism from the US.

Experts believe the disease -- which has killed nearly 2.4 million people worldwide -- originated in bats and could have been transmitted to humans via another mammal.

But while the virus was first discovered in Wuhan in December 2019, it remains unclear if that is when and where the contagion actually began.

The fallout came as Europe's death toll topped 800,000

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