



Resurgent Taliban take first Afghan provincial capital

Kill top Afghan govt media official; UN says war has entered 'deadlier phase'

AGENCIES

The Taliban captured an Afghan provincial capital and assassinated the government's top media officer in Kabul yesterday, dealing twin high-profile blows to the Western-backed administration.

The developments come as UN special envoy for Afghanistan, Deborah Lyons, yesterday told the Security Council that the war in Afghanistan has entered a "new, deadlier, and more destructive phase" with more than 1,000 civilians killed in the past month during a Taliban offensive.

"A party that was genuinely committed to a negotiated settlement would not risk so many civilian casualties, because it would understand that the process of reconciliation will be more challenging the more blood is shed," Lyons said.

A police spokesman in southern Nimroz province said the capital Zaranj had fallen to the hardline Islamists because of a lack of reinforcements from the government.



DK Menapal

Fighting to reimpose strict Islamic law after their 2001 ousting by US-led forces, the Taliban have intensified their campaign to defeat the US-backed government as foreign forces complete their withdrawal after 20 years of war.

The insurgents have taken dozens of districts and border crossings in recent months and put pressure on several provincial capitals, including Herat in the west and Kandahar in the south, as foreign troops withdraw.

Zaranj was the first provincial capital to fall to the group since the United States reached a deal with the Taliban in February 2020 for a US troop pullout. A local source said the Taliban had seized the governor's office, the police headquarters and an ecampment near the Iranian border.

Taliban sources said the group was celebrating, and Zaranj's fall would boost the morale of their fighters in other

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Guava farmers gather at the Bhimruli canal on boats laden with the fruit in Jhalakathi yesterday. Every year, the largest floating market of guava can be seen on this canal, with farmers from surrounding villages bringing their produce here. Traders from all over the country converge upon the site to buy the fruit and take it back to the capital and other districts.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

Two more doctors die from Covid

STAR REPORT

Two more physicians died from Covid-19 while undergoing treatment in Dhaka and Barishal on Thursday.

Of them, ophthalmologist Farida Yeasmin breathed her last at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, while Prof Sirajul Islam died at Barishal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital.

Farida, associate prof of ophthalmology department at Community-Based Medical College Hospital Bangladesh (CBMCHB) in Mymensingh, had been receiving treatment at DMCH for around 12 days.

She passed away around noon on Thursday.

Farida passed her MBBS from Barishal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital and joined CBMCHB in 1996, said Prof Mirza Manjurul Haque, principal of CBMCHB.

Later, she died her

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Example of applied geometry found on 3,700-yr-old tablet



MAIL ONLINE

The oldest example of applied geometry has been discovered on a 3,700-year-old clay tablet featuring maths attributed to Pythagoras 1,000 years later.

The tablet, known as Si.427 was discovered in the late 19th Century in central Iraq, but its significance had remained unknown until it was analysed in more detail by mathematicians from the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia.

The tablet dates from the Old Babylonian period, which was between 1900 to 1600 BC,

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Man lands in jail over rape of girl

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

A Bogura court yesterday sent a man to jail for his alleged involvement in the rape of a teenage girl in the district.

The accused Monju Mia, of Bogura's Sherpur upazila, is a transport worker by profession, said police.

The victim filed a case against Monju on Thursday and police managed to arrest him early yesterday.

According to the case statement, the accused is a relative of the victim's husband and sexually harassed her once more earlier.

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PRAYER TIMING AUGUST 7

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4:20 12:45 5:00 6:47 8:15
JAMAAT 4:55 1:15 5:15 6:50 8:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Two workers feed oxygen from an oxygen tanker into the central supply of the life-saving gas at the Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College and Hospital in the capital. Amid the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, oxygen produced at home and imported from abroad is similarly stored at different hospitals all around the country to be supplied to wards and ICUs. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

ROAD TO FREEDOM THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

Indira Gandhi writes to Nixon

AUGUST 7, 1971

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

INDIRA GANDHI'S LETTER TO NIXON

India Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, in a letter to US President Richard Nixon, expressed her dissatisfaction over the initiative of deploying UN observers in India and Pakistan.

She said, "It is unrealistic to think that the presence of a group of UN observers could give any feeling of assurance to the evacuees when every day they see new evacuees pouring in with stories of atrocities. Would the League of Nations observers have succeeded in persuading the refugees who fled from Hitler's tyranny to return even whilst the pogroms against the Jews and political opponents of Nazism continued unabated?"

"In our view, the intentions of the UN observers might be more credible if their efforts were directed at stopping the continuing outflow of these unfortunate people and at creating conditions which, to any reasonable person, would assure the safety of life and liberty of the refugee who wishes to return to East Bengal," added Indira Gandhi.

The Indian premier further said the news of fresh supply of US arms to Pakistan was a great embarrassment for her government since the US authority repeatedly assured India of not abetting the Pakistani junta in continuing their killing mission in East Pakistan.

She added, "It was a sad chapter in the history of our subcontinent when the United States began to supply arms to Pakistan in 1954 and continued doing so up to 1965. These arms have been used against us, as indeed we feared they would be. And now these arms are being used against their own people whose only fault appears to be that they took seriously [Pakistan] President Yahya Khan's promises to restore democracy."

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Pabna journalist sued under DSA

Ex-AL lawmaker files case for defamation thru' news report

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Former Awami League lawmaker Azizul Haque Arzu has filed a case against Pabna Press Club Secretary Soikat Afroz Asad under the Digital Security Act over defaming him in a news report.

The accused only came to know about the matter this week, about two months after the filing of the case.

Soikot is the district correspondent of Somoy TV, the Bangladesh Pratidin and bdnews24.com.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Soikot said the former MP from Pabna-2 lodged the case with the Cyber Tribunal in Dhaka on June 9 under section 25(2) of the DSA.

"I came to know about the case a couple of days ago when an official of the Police Bureau of Investigation from Dhaka called me regarding the investigation of the case. On Thursday, I managed to have a copy of the case statement from the Dhaka court," he said.

According to the case statement, the accused defamed Azizul by publishing a news on local web portal pabnamail24.com. The journalist also defamed the complainant on social media, it added.

Soikot, also the editor of pabnamail24.com, said: "I talked to Azizul Haque before publishing the news as per journalistic norms. Reports on the same issue were run by different media outlets, but he filed the case to purposely harass me."

Meanwhile, different journalist

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COVID PANDEMIC

Delta fuels new curbs across Asia

Hospitalisations soar in Sri Lanka as China sees highest daily figure of patients; Manila locks down

AGENCIES

The highly contagious Delta variant of the coronavirus is surging through Asia, prompting some countries to tighten curbs and others to hasten vaccination.

Sri Lankan authorities tightened restrictions yesterday as reports emerged of Covid patients dying while

awaiting admission to overcrowded hospitals.

The government said state ceremonies and public gatherings were banned until September 1 because of the growing health crisis.

Public servants had previously been asked to return to work from Monday but that order has now been revoked and bosses told to decide who should

report for duty on-site.

China yesterday reported its highest daily count of new Covid-19 patients in an outbreak that began in late July, fuelled by a surge in locally transmitted infections.

Officials blamed the latest clusters mainly on the highly transmissible Delta variant, though it has not led to

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