

BANGLADESH UPDATE



7,535
New cases in 24hrs



14,33,396
Total cases



24,547
Deaths



13,14,914
Recoveries

GLOBAL UPDATE



4,390,686
Deaths



209,145,308
Total cases

FB designates Taliban as terrorist group

Bans its content from platforms

REUTERS

The Taliban's rapid takeover of Afghanistan poses a new challenge for big US tech companies on handling content created by a group considered to be terrorists by some world governments.

Social media giant Facebook confirmed on Monday that it designates the Taliban a terrorist group and bans it and content supporting it from its platforms.

But Taliban members have reportedly continued to use Facebook's end-to-end encrypted messaging service WhatsApp to communicate directly with Afghans despite the company prohibiting it under rules against dangerous organizations.

A Facebook Inc spokesperson said the company was closely monitoring the situation in the country and that WhatsApp would take action on any accounts found to be linked with sanctioned organizations in Afghanistan, which could include account removal.

On Twitter Inc, Taliban spokesmen with hundreds of thousands of followers have tweeted updates during the country's takeover.

Asked about the Taliban's use of the platform, the company pointed to its policies against violent organizations and hateful conduct but did not answer Reuters questions about how it makes its classifications. Twitter's rules say it does not allow groups who promote terrorism or violence against civilians.

The Taliban's return has raised fears it will crack down on freedom of speech and human rights, especially women's rights, and that the country could become a haven once again for global terrorism.

Taliban officials have issued statements saying they want peaceful international relations and have promised to protect Afghans.

Major social media firms this year made high-profile decisions on handling sitting world leaders and groups in power.

These include controversial blocks of former US President Donald Trump for inciting violence around the January 6 Capitol riot and bans on Myanmar's military amid a coup in the country.

Facebook, which was long criticized for failing to combat hate speech in Myanmar, said the coup escalated risks of offline harm and its history of human rights violations contributed to the ban on the ruling military or Tatmadaw.

The companies, which have come under fire from global lawmakers and regulators for their outsized political and economic influence, often depend on state designations or official international recognitions to determine who is allowed on their sites.

These also help determine who might be verified, allowed official state accounts or may receive special treatment for rule-breaking speech due to newsworthiness or public interest loopholes.

However, the differences among the tech companies' stances suggest the approach is not uniform.

Alphabet Inc's YouTube, asked whether it has a ban or restrictions on the Taliban, declined to comment but said the video-sharing service relies on governments to define "Foreign Terrorist Organizations" (FTO) to guide the site's enforcement of its rules against violent criminal groups.

YouTube pointed to the US State Department's list of FTO's of which the Taliban is not a member. The US instead classifies the Taliban as a "Specially Designated Global Terrorist," which freezes the US assets of those blacklisted and bars Americans from working with them.

Sister seeks further probe

FROM PAGE 1

(1) (rape) of the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act.

But the IO, officer-in-charge of Gulshan Police Station, did not inform her before submitting the probe report to the court, she mentioned.

The investigator submitted a false report without examining vital witnesses of the incident and tried to ruin the case from the very beginning, she stated in the petition.

The closed-circuit (CC) camera in the victim's building was a very important evidence. It's possible to identify the accused through video footage captured by the camera, but the IO did not seize it, she said.

Citing from the forensic report, the complainant further said the DNA of a male was found on the victim's clothes, but the investigator did not take any steps to conduct a DNA test on the accused for matching. The IO acted against the law by saying in the probe report that such a step would be "unreasonable".

The IO tried to save the accused by hiding the rape evidence though the medical and forensic reports said the victim was raped before death.

The IO didn't arrest the accused for

interrogation, allowing the accused to influence the probe, the petition said.

The IO showed negligence in the probe and did not try to unearth the mystery of the victim's rape and murder. Instead, he unethically tried to assassinate the victim's character in the probe report, it added.

On July 19, Abul Hasan submitted the probe report to Dhaka Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court and appealed to it to relieve Anvir of the charges of abetting suicide.

Showing a reason for not conducting DNA test on the lone accused, the IO said in the report that it is not reasonable to collect and test a suspect's DNA samples solely on the basis of the complainant's allegations without any supporting evidence.

The case was a "matter of factual error" as no evidence against Anvir was found in the probe, the report said.

On April 26, police recovered the body of the 21-year-old college student hanging from the ceiling fan of her bedroom in Gulshan.

Following the filing of the case, the court on April 27 issued a travel ban on the lone accused, barring him from travelling abroad.

Dozens hurt as BNP men

FROM PAGE 1

Police officials and Aminul engaged in an argument and at one stage, police charged truncheons on the BNP men and fired teargas canisters at them, witnesses said.

Several policemen were injured as BNP activists threw brick chunks at the law enforcers who charged truncheons and fired teargas canisters to disperse them.

Of the injured, two BNP leaders - organising secretary of BNP Tejaon Thana Unit Moniruzzaman Tabor and former president of BNP Kamrangirchar Thana Unit Abul Kalam Azad - were taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

"We have come here to offer prayers near the grave of our party founder. But the police did not allow us to do that. Police fired teargas canisters and rubber bullets on us suddenly," Moniruzzaman said.

Md Alauddin, resident surgeon of DMCH emergency unit, said the two injured appeared to have been shot by shotguns, but they were stable.

BNP leader Amanullah Aman alleged that police stopped BNP leaders and activists when they were going to Chandrima Udyan to observe their scheduled programme peacefully. Police chased them and fired rubber bullets at them, agitating the activists.

"Police attacked us without any provocation. Several persons, including BNP Dhaka city north unit's member secretary Aminul Haque were injured in the attack," he alleged.

Jane Alam Munshi, officer-in-charge of Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station, said BNP activists attacked police out of the blue and at least seven police personnel were injured.

"We brought the situation under control," he said.

After the incident, party's Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir

visited the spot and told journalists that the government was disconnected from the people and that was why it wanted to suppress the democratic movement by torturing opposition leaders and activists.

Asked about the police allegations, Fakhru said, "This is a false allegation. It was a peaceful programme. Why would we attack the police?"

After the clash, Fakhru along with other senior leaders placed wreaths at the party founder's grave.

Hours after the incident, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal told journalists at the Bangladesh Secretariat that there was a clear Covid restrictions on rallies and gatherings at any place.

"But violating the restrictions, they [BNP leaders and activists] entered there with hundreds of followers... They started throwing bricks at police indiscriminately. That's why police had to fire teargas canisters."

Md Shahidullah, deputy commissioner of Tejaon Division Police, told The Daily Star yesterday that the BNP had a permission for holding a peaceful programme between 11:00am and 11:30am but without prior notice, they appeared at the spot around 9:00am and started chanting slogans.

"The BNP activists threw brick chunks at us without any provocation, which left around 14 of our members, including myself and our two additional deputy commissioners, hurt," he said.

He further said that they came with long bamboo sticks and they also vandalised metro rail establishments and buses, which seems to be a planned move. "We later took action in self-defence."

He also said that cases were being filed over the incident and that the cases would be for assaulting police and vandalism.



Young farmers in Khagrachhari are taking their harvest of pineapples from the farms to the markets using motorcycles. Pineapples grown in the hill tracts are famous for their taste. The photo was taken last month.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Taliban strike dovish tone

FROM PAGE 1

The Taliban on Monday declared the war in Afghanistan over and a senior leader said the group would wait until foreign forces had left before creating a new governance structure.

The Associated Press news agency has cited an anonymous official as saying that senior Taliban leader Amir Khan Muttaqi is in the Afghan capital negotiating government formation with Kabul's political leadership, including former President Hamid Karzai and Abdullah Abdullah, who once headed the country's negotiating council.

The official said the talks are aimed at bringing other non-Taliban leaders into a government that Taliban spokesman Suhail Shaheen has said will be an "inclusive Afghan government".

Afghans familiar with the talks say some sessions have gone late into the night and have been under way since noon after President Ashraf Ghani's departure.

In another sign that formation of government is picking up pace, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, the chief of the Taliban's political office and co-founders of the movement, yesterday arrived in Afghanistan's Kandahar province along with a delegation, the group's spokesperson said in a tweet.

Meanwhile, evacuation flights from Kabul's airport restarted yesterday after chaos the previous day in which huge crowds mobbed the tarmac, with some people so desperate they clung to the outside of a US military plane as it prepared for take-off.

Witnesses said at least five people died in Monday's chaos at the airport - media reported two people fell to their deaths from the underside of a US military aircraft after it took off.

The White House yesterday said the Taliban promised 'safe passage' for civilians to Kabul airport.

The Taliban led a pariah regime from 1996 to 2001, infamous for a brutal rule in which girls could not go to school, women were barred from working in jobs that would put them in contact with men, and people were stoned to death.

US-led forces invaded following the September 11 attacks, in response to the Taliban giving sanctuary to al-Qaeda, and toppled them.

Now the Taliban are back in power, they have sought to project an air of restraint and moderation.

Some shops also reopened in Kabul yesterday as traffic police were back

on the streets, while Taliban officials planned a first diplomatic meeting -- with the Russian ambassador.

A Taliban official also gave an interview to a female journalist on an Afghan news channel, and a girls' school reopened in the western city of Herat.

However, schools and universities remained closed, few women openly took to the streets and men had shed their Western clothes for traditional garb.

"The fear is there," said a shopkeeper who asked not to be named after opening his small neighbourhood provisions store.

The Taliban took effective control of the country on Sunday when Ghani fled and the insurgents walked into Kabul with no opposition.

It capped a staggeringly fast rout of all cities in just 10 days, achieved with relatively little bloodshed, following two decades of war that claimed hundreds of thousands of lives.

The collapse came after President Joe Biden withdrew US troops, under the false belief that the Afghan army -- with billions of dollars in American funding and training -- was strong enough to withstand the Taliban.

In his first comments since the Taliban victory, Biden admitted the Taliban advance had unfolded more quickly than expected.

But he heaped criticism on Ghani's government, insisted he had no regrets, and emphasised US troops could not defend a nation whose leaders "gave up and fled".

The United States has also come under criticism for its handling of the evacuations of Afghans. German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier said "the images of despair at Kabul airport shame the political West."

Zabihullah Mujahid, the Taliban spokesman, in the press conference also assured that no one will be allowed to use Afghan territory for attacks against any nation, a main concern for western nation as well as its neighbours.

"In Afghanistan, I would like to assure our neighbors, our original countries we are not going to allow our territory to be used against anybody or any country in the world. So the whole global community should be assured that we are committed to these pleasures that you will not be harmed."

The group said they would not make the full burqa compulsory for women.

"The burqa is not the only hijab

(headscarf) that (can) be observed, there is different types of hijab not limited to burqa," Suhail Shaheen, spokesman for the group's political office in Doha, told Britain's Sky News.

The Taliban yesterday received some encouraging feedback from regional powers. China has already said it was ready for "friendly relations" with the Taliban, while Russia and Iran also made diplomatic overtures.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov yesterday said that the Taliban's initial assurances since completing their military takeover of Afghanistan over the weekend have been a "positive signal".

"I consider it a positive signal that the Taliban in Kabul are declaring and in practice showing their readiness to respect the opinion of others," Lavrov said.

Turkey yesterday said it was in talks with all parties in Afghanistan including the Taliban. Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said they are receiving the Taliban overtures positively.

A senior UAE official yesterday said the statements of the Taliban are "encouraging", in the first comment from the Gulf country since the fall of Kabul to the Islamist movement.

The EU, most critical of the group's rights issues, yesterday said the bloc will only cooperate with the new Afghan government if it respects fundamental rights and prevents the use of Afghanistan's territory by terrorists.

"The Taliban have won the war, so we will have to talk with them," EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said in a blunt statement.

The Biden administration on Monday said it will look at Taliban actions to decide on the long-term relationship.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau meanwhile yesterday announced his country "has no plans to recognize the Taliban as the government of Afghanistan."

Only three nations -- Pakistan, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia -- recognized the previous Taliban regime which imposed an ultra-austere interpretation of Islam.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson moved quickly to stop Pakistan, the Taliban's historic backer, from blessing a new government, saying in a call with his counterpart Imran Khan that recognition of a new government should be "on an international, not unilateral basis."

Bangladesh to stay alert about Afghan-trained terrorists

Says Momen

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen said yesterday that Bangladesh will remain alert about Afghan-trained terrorists, although they were "identified and uprooted".

While talking to journalists at an event at the Foreign Service Academy, he reiterated that there was no scope for Bangladesh to give temporary shelter to people from Afghanistan as requested by the US.

Asked what Bangladesh's position will be if other Saarc countries give shelter to Afghan people, Momen said they first need to see the situation on the ground before making a comment.

On Monday night, Momen had said that Bangladesh had turned down a request from the United States to provide temporary shelter to some people from Afghanistan, saying Bangladesh was already facing difficulties after giving shelter to over 1.1 million Rohingyas.

Earlier, the minister said Bangladesh would welcome any government in Afghanistan if it was supported by its people.

"We believe in people's government... We believe in democratic government," he said, adding that Bangladesh's door will remain open if the Taliban government is supported by the people of Afghanistan.

The foreign minister said Bangladesh believes in friendship with all countries and will extend support if any government seeks it.

Jashore BNP office attacked

Party leader stabbed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

A BNP leader was stabbed and the party office was vandalised in an attack by miscreants in Jashore town yesterday.

The party alleged that activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League, the pro-Awami League student wing, launched the attack.

BCL leaders, however, denied the allegation.

The injured was identified as Golam Reza Dulu, a member of Jashore town BNP's convening committee.

Speaking to The Daily Star, the district BNP's general secretary Munir Ahmed Siddique, said they arranged a Doa Mahfil for party chief Khaleeda Zia as she has been ill for long.

The programme began at 11:00am at the party office in Jashore town's Laldighirpara.

Around an hour later, some 40-50 BCL men suddenly launched an attack on the programme and vandalised office furniture, electronics and at least 10 motorbikes parked outside, alleged Munir, adding that Dulu was stabbed during the attack.

"He is now undergoing treatment at a local clinic."

Hours later, BNP leaders and activists brought out a rally in town, demanding that the attackers be punished.

Contacted, Jashore BCL President Salahuddin Kabir Pias denied the allegations and said no BCL man was involved in the incident.

"Rather, it might be a factional clash of BNP," he claimed.

Jashore's Kotwali Police Station's Inspector Sheikh Tasnim Alam confirmed there was an attack on the BNP office, but could not say who was behind it.

"Police are investigating the incident."

No case was filed till filing the report at around 7:00pm last evening.

Four more

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Bangladesh. Unfortunately, the border with Uzbek has been fully sealed," Zahangir Alam said.

Earlier on Monday, at least 17 Bangladeshis were found stranded. Of them, eight were working for telecom companies, six for Brac International, two for the sewerage department and one who got out of jail.

The eight engineers were scheduled to return Monday evening and six Brac officials have air tickets for today.

"It is not sure exactly when the commercial flight operations will start," Ambassador Zahangir Alam said, expressing hope that the Bangladeshi nationals could be evacuated as soon as the stability in Afghanistan is regained.

"We are requesting our nationals to hold patience. We will do everything possible to help them return home," he said.

198 more die

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Seventy-two of them were in Dhaka, 52 in Chattogram, 26 in Khulna, 18 in Sylhet, nine in Rajshahi, eight in Mymensingh, seven in Barishal and six in Rangpur divisions.

In the week until yesterday, 8,564 Covid-19 patients were detected in Dhaka, 2,636 in Chattogram, 1,137 in Sylhet, 994 in Cumilla and 987 in Gazipur districts.

In Covid-19 hospitals across the country yesterday, the general bed occupancy rate was 43 percent, ICU bed 74 percent, and HDU bed 70 percent.