

Pakistan siege ends; all 33 captors killed

AFP, Bannu

All 33 suspected militant prisoners who seized a Pakistan police station over the weekend were killed and their hostages freed in a clearance operation by special forces yesterday, the defence minister said.

The hostage takers, who were suspected of being members of various militant groups including the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), overpowered their jailors and snatched weapons on Sunday.

"All the hostages have been freed," Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif told parliament.

Elite troops stormed the police station around noon when differences broke out between the hostage takers over how to handle their captives, with witnesses reporting blasts and heavy firing.

The suspected militants, who were being held on suspicion of terrorism, had demanded safe passage to Afghanistan in return for releasing the hostages -- at least eight police officers and military intelligence officials -- a spokesman for the provincial Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government, said earlier.

"There were 33 terrorists from different groups who had been arrested and jailed in the counter-terrorism department compound," Asif said.

"One of them hit his guard on the head with a brick while going to the toilet and snatched his weapon," he added, explaining how the siege unfolded.

The police station is within a cantonment area in Bannu, adjacent to the border with Afghanistan.



A woman holds a picture frame of a loved one at a crematorium in Beijing, yesterday. Crematoriums across China are straining to deal with an influx of bodies as the country battles a wave of Covid cases. Chinese authorities earlier this month lifted years-old Covid restrictions facing widespread protests.

PHOTO: STAR

US CAPITOL RIOT PANEL

Trump should face charges

REUTERS, Washington

The US House of Representatives panel probing the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol asked federal prosecutors on Monday to charge Donald Trump with four crimes, including obstruction and insurrection, for his role in sparking the deadly riot.

The Democratic-led select committee's request to the Justice Department - after more than 1,000 witness interviews and the collection of hundreds of thousands of documents - marked the first time in history that Congress has referred a former president for criminal prosecution.

The request does not compel federal prosecutors to act, but comes as a special counsel is overseeing two other federal probes of Trump related to the Republican's attempt to overturn his 2020 election defeat and the removal of classified files from the

White House.

The committee asked the Justice Department to charge Trump with four potential felonies: obstruction of an official proceeding of Congress, conspiracy to defraud the United States, making false statements, and aiding or inciting an insurrection.



Trump accused House lawmakers on Monday of recommending "fake charges" against him as part of an attempt to prevent him from running for the White House again.

"The Fake charges made by the highly partisan Unselect

Committee of January 6th have already been submitted, prosecuted, and tried in the form of Impeachment Hoax #2," Trump said in a post on his Truth Social platform. "I WON convincingly."

Trump gave a fiery speech to his supporters near the White House the morning of Jan. 6, and publicly chastised his vice president, Mike Pence, for not going along with his scheme to reject ballots cast in favor of Democrat Joe Biden.

Monday's meeting was the last public gathering of the panel that spent 18 months probing the attempt to prevent the peaceful transfer of power by thousands of Trump backers, inspired by his false claims that his 2020 election loss to Biden was the result of widespread fraud.

UNSC likely to vote today on Myanmar

REUTERS

The UN Security Council is likely to vote on Wednesday on a draft resolution demanding an immediate end to violence in Myanmar and urging its military junta to release all political prisoners, including ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi, diplomats said.

Myanmar has been in crisis since the army took power from Suu Kyi's elected government in February last year, detaining her and other officials.

The 15-member council has long been split on Myanmar with diplomats saying China and Russia would likely shield the junta from strong action. So far it has only agreed formal statements on Myanmar, where the army also led a 2017 crackdown on Rohingya, forcing more than 700,000 to flee to Bangladesh.

Negotiations on the British-drafted resolution began in September. The initial text - seen by Reuters - urged an immediate end to the transfer of arms to Myanmar and threatened UN sanctions, but that language has since been removed.

The draft resolution, seen by Reuters, expresses "deep concern" at the ongoing state of emergency imposed by the military when it seized power and its "grave impact" on the people of Myanmar.

It urges "concrete and immediate actions" to implement a peace plan agreed by the Asean and issues a call to "uphold democratic institutions and processes and to pursue constructive dialogue and reconciliation in accordance with the will and interests of the people."

Blast shuts part of Russia-Ukraine gas export pipeline

REUTERS, Moscow

A blast ripped through a gas pipeline in central Russia, killing three people and disrupting some of the limited amount of Russian gas that is still reaching Europe, local officials said yesterday. The flow of gas through a section of the Urengoi-Pomary-Uzhhorod pipeline that takes gas from Russia's Arctic to Europe via Ukraine had been halted as of 1:50 pm (10:50 GMT), the local officials said on the Telegram messaging app. Oleg Nikolayev, governor of the Republic of Chuvashia, told state TV that three people, who were carrying out servicing work, had died in the accident, while another, a driver, "was in a state of shock". He said it was unclear when gas supplies via the pipeline could resume, and authorities were trying to work that out. The Chuvashia regional Emergency Ministry said an explosion had ripped through the pipeline during planned maintenance work near the village of Kalinino, about 150 km west of the Volga city of Kazan. The pipeline, built in the 1980s, enters Ukraine via the Sudzha metering point, currently the main route for Russian gas to reach Europe.

Nazi typist guilty of complicity in over 11,000 murders

REUTERS, Berlin



A German court convicted a 97-year-old woman of having contributed to the murder of over 11,000 people during her time working as a typist at a Nazi concentration camp in World War Two, NDR broadcaster and other media reported yesterday. The district court in the northern town of Itzehoe handed Irmgard Furchner a two-year suspended sentence, according to the report. She was sentenced under juvenile law, owing to the fact that she was only 18 years old at the time of the crimes. She worked at the Stutthof concentration camp between 1943 and 1945. Some 65,000 people died of starvation and disease or in the gas chamber at Stutthof near Gdansk, in today's Poland. They included prisoners of war and Jews caught up in the Nazis' extermination campaign.

Search and rescue them

Countries urged to save 200 Rohingyas adrift at sea for weeks

AFP, Jakarta

Southeast Asian politicians yesterday called for the rescue of a boat carrying as many as 200 Rohingya refugees including women and children stranded at sea for several weeks.

Thousands of the mostly Rohingya, heavily persecuted in Myanmar, risk their lives each year on long, expensive sea journeys -- often in vessels in poor condition -- trying to reach Malaysia or Indonesia.

The boat carrying the refugees has been reported in waters close to Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and India in the Andaman Sea and the Malacca Strait, one of the world's busiest shipping routes.

"We urgently call on Asean member states and other countries in the region to... launch search and rescue operations," said ex-Indonesian MP Eva Sundari, who is a member of advocacy group Asean Parliamentarians for Human Rights (APHR), in a statement.

Charles Santiago, a former Malaysian MP and chairman of APHR, said in the same statement that the delay in rescuing the stranded refugees likely "has already caused untold suffering and loss of life".

The vessel's current location is unknown and it is unclear when or exactly from where it departed.

UNHCR said last week that the boat has been in waters since late November, and it had received reports of at least a dozen people dying on board.

Advertisement for Bangladesh Agriculture Research Station (বাংলাদেশ কৃষি গবেষণা ইনস্টিটিউট) featuring a table with 8 rows of job details including position, number of posts, and application procedures.

Advertisement for Bangladesh Government (গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার) regarding the Public Service Commission (পরিচালনা কমিশন) recruitment process, including a table of job openings and detailed application instructions.