

New outfit planned entry with a bang

Says Rab about Jama'atul Ansar Fil Hindal Sharqiya, details journey of its military wing chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With an aim to "launch" itself as a militant outfit, the Jama'atul Ansar Fil Hindal Sharqiya made a video of firearms training over the last one year.

The plan was to release it online after conducting a large-scale attack somewhere in the country, Rab officers said.

Key leaders of the outfit, including Anisur Rahman who goes by the alias Mahmood, are seen in the video.

Anisur who is believed to be the ameer of the outfit is seen leading the militants' training that started in the hills of Bandarban in late 2021.

Their way of living in the forests are seen in the 8:43-minute video shown by Rab officers at a press conference in the capital yesterday.

The members, many in brown and grey camouflage outfit, are seen with assault rifles and sharp weapons.

At yesterday's press briefing, Rab also disclosed details

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A pipe, installed by Khulna Wasa across the Bhairab river to carry water from the Madhumati to a water treatment plant in Khulna, is obstructing the flow of the river and movement of boats in Mulghar area of Bagerhat's Fakirhat upazila. Bangladesh Water Development Board had excavated the Bhairab three years ago, but the soil, kept on the banks, slid into the river again during the rainy season, causing a loss of navigability. The photo was taken on Sunday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

PROTEST PROGRAMMES BNP plans to get back momentum

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Fearing that their programmes are losing steam, top BNP leaders are considering new programmes that would bring back the pace to the movement for national election under a non-partisan interim administration.

Excitement among the activists peaked ahead of BNP's December 10 rally in Dhaka, leaders said, adding that their plan now is to revive that momentum through different programmes in February.

The BNP and like-minded parties will hold rallies across the country as part of their simultaneous movement to mark the "democracy killing" day today.

The BNP will hold a rally in front of its Nayapaltan headquarters and is likely to announce a fresh programme for February 4 at the event, said a senior leader, wishing not to be named.

Whenever the BNP announces a programme, the ruling Awami League calls for a counter programme, said the leaders, adding that the February 4 rally

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AL SEEKS TO KEEP BNP AT BAY - PAGE 3

ERRORS IN TEXTBOOKS Govt to form 2 probe bodies

Website link to allow anyone to give feedback, point out mistakes in the books

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Education Minister Dipu Moni yesterday said the government would form two probe committees to identify mistakes in textbooks and ascertain whether the errors were the result of any negligence by National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) officials.

One of those committees would consist of specialists in education, health and religion.

A website link would be made available so that anyone from anywhere can give opinions, file objections and make recommendations, Dipu Moni said at a press conference on the new curriculum at the capital's International Mother Language Institute.

"The expert committee will review all these and take best decisions. If any error is found, it will definitely be corrected," she added.

The minister said another committee would probe whether there was any negligence by NCTB officials.

"We will definitely take strict actions if there is evidence of negligence by anyone," she said, adding that the ministry would provide further details on the committees on Sunday.

Dipu Moni urged all to inform the government about mistakes in textbooks.

She said there are some people who are beating about the bush. "Those might not have read the textbooks at all."

"Being human beings, we can make errors. I think we should not be ashamed of apologising for making errors. But we will have to see whether any mistake was made deliberately, whether we tried to create instability in the society or whether we humiliated anyone."

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HUMAN TRAFFICKING Climate change makes Bangladesh more vulnerable

Says UN report

AFP, Vienna

Human trafficking cases in Bangladesh and the Philippines increased after devastating cyclones and typhoons displaced millions, the United Nations said yesterday.

"Climate change is increasing vulnerability to trafficking," the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) said in a report.

"While a systematic global analysis of the impact of climate change in trafficking in persons is missing, community level studies in different parts of the world point at weather induced disasters as root causes for trafficking in persons," it said.

The report is based on data from 141 countries collected from 2017 to 2020, and the analysis of 800 court cases.

Evidence is emerging that climate-related disasters are becoming a cause of human trafficking as criminal gangs exploit a growing number of uprooted people, the UN drugs agency noted.

Bangladesh acceded to the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children in 2019.

The continuing war in Ukraine is also another risk factor for increased human trafficking, the UNODC said in a report.

The Covid-19 pandemic limited the ability to detect cases, especially in low-income countries in Asia, Latin America and Africa, the report added.

Bangladesh acceded to the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children in 2019. The current legislation on trafficking in persons in Bangladesh - Section 3 of the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act (2012) - covers all forms of trafficking indicated in the Protocol.

In 2020, national authorities recorded 730 cases of trafficking in persons in Bangladesh. In 2017 and 2018, the Bangladeshi Police reported 778 and 561 cases of trafficking in persons for each year respectively.

The impact of climate change

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'They treat us like animals' Ethnic groups accuse Myanmar junta of war crimes

AFP, Bangkok

A group of people from Myanmar have filed a criminal complaint in Germany accusing their country's military of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, a rights organisation said yesterday.

The case was lodged with Germany's Federal Public Prosecutor General under the principle of universal jurisdiction, which allows the prosecution of certain grave crimes regardless of where they took place, and has been used to try Syrians over atrocities committed during the civil war.

The 16 complainants live in several countries, including Myanmar, and are drawn from a cross-section of the country's numerous ethnic groups - including Rohingya, the dominant Burman and minority Chin communities.

Their accounts date from 2017, when the country was run by a civilian government, to 2021, after the coup that

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Earth's inner core may have started spinning other way

AFP, Paris

Far below our feet, a giant may have started moving against us.

Earth's inner core, a hot iron ball the size of Pluto, has stopped spinning in the same direction as the rest of the planet and might even be rotating the other way, according to a research.

Roughly 5,000 kilometres (3,100 miles) below the surface we live on, this "planet within the planet" can spin independently because it floats in the liquid metal outer core.

Exactly how the inner core rotates has been a matter of debate between scientists.

What little we know about the inner core comes from measuring the tiny differences in seismic waves - created by earthquakes or sometimes nuclear explosions - as they pass through the middle of the Earth.

Seeking to track the inner core's movements, the new research, published in the journal Nature Geoscience recently, analysed seismic waves from repeating earthquakes over the last six decades.

The study's authors, Xiaodong Song and Yi Yang of China's Peking University, said they found that the inner core's rotation "came to near halt around 2009 and then turned in an opposite direction".

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Classified docs found at former US VP Mike Pence's home

REUTERS, Washington

Documents marked as classified were discovered at former US Vice President Mike Pence's Indiana home last week, and he has turned those classified records over to the FBI, his representative said in letters seen by Reuters.

Pence's representative sent a letter to the National Archives notifying them of the documents and in a separate letter said the FBI came to the former vice president's home to collect the documents.

The discovery puts Pence in the company of his former boss, former President Donald Trump, and President Joe Biden after documents with classified markings were found at their residences.

Pence's representative, Greg Jacob, said in a letter dated Jan. 18 to the National Archives that "out of an abundance of caution" Pence had engaged outside counsel to review records stored in his home after reports about the materials found at Biden's residence.

"Counsel identified a small number of documents that could potentially

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Beaming proudly amongst his cucumber plants, Abdur Rahim says he is confident that he would be able to sell the vegetable for Tk 100,000. The farmer spent only about Tk 7,500 to sow the seeds on his one bigha of land in the Alankari area of Biswanath, Sylhet.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Nominations for Oscars announced



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The nominations for the 95th Academy Awards, better known across the world as the Oscars, were announced at yesterday, ahead of the ceremony slated for March 12.

Kicking off at 7:30pm Bangladesh time, the nominees, at an event held at the Academy's Samuel Goldwyn Theatre, were presented by 2022 Oscar Winner Riz Ahmed and Allison Williams, actress and producer of "M3gan".

The first nominations to be announced were for "Actress in a Supporting Role". Following this came the announcements for various other categories such as "Costume Design", "Sound", "Original Score" and more.

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