

Trump asks SC to invalidate

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from any of the nine justices.

The President for weeks has pushed increasingly desperate appeals and baseless conspiracy theories about his second term being stolen.

"Our Country is deeply divided in ways that it arguably has not been seen since the election of 1860," the petition states. "There is a high level of distrust between the opposing sides, compounded by the fact that, in the election just held, election officials in key swing states, for apparently partisan advantage, failed to conduct their state elections in compliance with state election law."

Echoing arguments made by Texas, Trump said the battleground states used the pandemic "as an excuse" and "ignored or suspended the operation of numerous state laws designed to protect the integrity of the ballot."

He asks the court to block the states from using "constitutionally infirm 2020 election results" unless the legislatures of the states "review the 2020 election results."

He stressed that if any of the states have "already appointed electors to the electoral college using the 2020 election results," the legislatures have the authority to appoint "a new set of electors."

Or the election could go to the House, where Trump would presumably win.

"Defendant States' electors will determine the outcome of the election," the President states. "Alternatively, if Defendant States are unable to certify 38 or more electors, neither candidate will have a majority of the total number

of electors in the Electoral College, in which case the election would devolve to the House of Representatives under the Twelfth Amendment."

Paxton -- who was indicted on for securities fraud charges in 2015 and seven top aides in October accused him of bribery and abuse of office -- was expected to be at the White House yesterday, a day after Trump's request was filed at the court, CNN has learned.

He will be in Washington for a lunch with other attorneys general that a White House official said had been previously scheduled. The lunch with the attorneys general is on Trump's public schedule. An official confirmed separately that Paxton is expected to attend.

Not all of the contested states' attorneys general are on board with the Texas effort.

Wednesday night, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported that Trump warned Georgia Attorney General Chris Carr, a Republican, not to rally other GOP officials against the lawsuit in a telephone call.

Carr's office had called the lawsuit "constitutionally, legally and factually wrong" earlier in the day, the newspaper reported, but the state's two incumbent US Republican senators, Kelly Loeffler and David Perdue, who are running for reelection, have publicly supported the effort.

Carr told Trump it wasn't true that he was urging other AGs to stand against the challenge, the AJC reported, according to a person on the call, who described it as cordial.

The White House declined to comment on the report to CNN.



Activists destroy an effigy depicting Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte during a protest in observance of Human Rights Day, in Manila, Philippines yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Hackers steal vaccine data

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regulatory bodies, we are talking confidential information about the vaccine and its mechanism of action, its efficiency, its risks & known possible side effects and any unique aspects such as handling guidelines," said Marc Rogers, founder of a volunteer group fighting Covid-related breaches, CTI-League.

"It also provides detailed information on other parties involved in the supply and distribution of the vaccine and potentially significantly increases the attack surface for the vaccine," adding more ways the formulas or production could be hacked or stolen.

The companies said "no BioNTech or Pfizer systems have been breached in connection with this incident and we are unaware that any study participants have been identified through the data being accessed."

A spokeswoman for BioNTech declined further comment. Pfizer did not respond to a request for further comment.

The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is a top contender in the global race to beat back Covid-19. It is already being administered in Britain.

The coronavirus has killed at least 1,570,398 people since the outbreak emerged in China last December, according to a tally from official sources compiled by AFP yesterday.

US TOPS 3,000 DAILY DEATHS

The US prepared to roll out a vaccine within days as the country's daily death toll surpassed 3,000 for the first time, exceeding the number of lives lost from the attacks of September 11, 2001.

Covid-19 deaths reached 3,253 on Wednesday, pushing up the US total since the start of the pandemic to 289,740, with a record 106,219 people hospitalized with the highly infectious respiratory disease.

Healthcare professionals and support staff, exhausted by the demands of the pandemic, have been watching patients die alone as millions of Americans refuse to follow medical advice to wear masks and avoid crowds in order to curb the virus' spread.

Potentially helping to rein in the outbreak, a vaccine could start reaching healthcare workers, first responders and nursing home residents as soon as Sunday, though more likely early next week, according to Trump administration officials.

US Army General Gustave Perna, the chief operating officer of the Trump administration's Operation Warp Speed vaccine development program, said all the vaccine doses remained in the hands of the pharmaceutical companies.

"But we've worked many rehearsals and planning cycles ... and that's why I'm confident that as soon as EUA (emergency use authorization) comes aboard, we'll start packing to the final destinations and distribution will begin within 24 hours," Perna said.

A panel of independent medical experts was set to decide yesterday whether to recommend a vaccine from Pfizer Inc and German partner

BioNTech SE for emergency use authorization from the US Food and Drug Administration.

Saudi Arabia yesterday approved the use of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, state media reported, becoming the second Gulf country after Bahrain to green-light the drug.

Britain's medicine regulator said anyone with a history of anaphylaxis to a medicine or food should not get the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, giving fuller guidance on an earlier allergy warning about the shot.

Meanwhile, the full results of a clinical trial for the Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine were published in the New England Journal of Medicine yesterday.

A second vaccine developed by Moderna is a week behind. Widespread inoculations, however, could take months.

Japan hit a record daily number of new infections yesterday as the country struggles to contain the third wave of the pandemic.

Health officials reported 2,820 new cases nationwide, breaking the record for the second day in row after the 2,810 infections registered on Wednesday.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation said yesterday it had pledged \$250 million in additional funding towards the global campaign to fight the pandemic.

Part of the funds will be channelled to the distribution of life-saving doses of Covid-19 vaccines to parts of Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

Salim Khan no more

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trend in Patuatuli market. Around 1985, Salim took its helm and established Sangeeta.

Sangeeta was regarded as one of the pillars of the growing music industry of the era, and eventually, the words "Published by Salim Khan" became an emblem of prestige for a record.

Even though Sangeeta's main office was in Patuatuli, a new office was opened in Paltan for the musicians' convenience.

"Salim Khan was a humble person," singer Kumar Bishwajit said. "I have been featured on countless mixtapes by Sangeeta. My solo album

Shreshtha Gaan from the 90s is especially memorable."

The singer added that he became quite close to Salim when working with the MIB, an association of music producers.

Manam Ahmed of Miles wished peace for the departed soul. "Our albums were published by Sangeeta. We trusted it. Even though Protashaa and Protisuti were first released by another label, both albums were later re-released by Sangeeta. I have many great memories with Salim. His death is a great loss. Wherever he is now, I wish him well."

Lyricist Delwar Arzuda Sharif worked

for Sangeeta from 2000-2011. "I started with Baby Naznin's Duchohke Ghum Ashena. Then I wrote Dolly Sayantani's Ontore Bahire Tumi, mixtape Prem Janena Bondhu Amar and Fazlur Rahman Babu's Indubala. I am indebted to Sangeeta and Salim for the opportunity," he told The Daily Star.

Songwriter and album cover designer Niaz Ahmed Angshu said, "I first met Salim Khan while working on LRB's Shopno. He was super excited about the new album and its promotion. He never said no to anything Bachchu Bhai suggested."

The growth of Bangladeshi music in the 80s and 90s owes a lot to Salim.

Self-driving

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shuttles on public roads in the country were constrained by strict caveats, which required them to have a safety driver inside.

This program is different. In Shenzhen, AutoX has completely removed the backup driver or any remote operators for its local fleet of 25 cars, it said. The government isn't restricting where in the city AutoX operates, though the company said they are focusing on the downtown area.

The company released a video of its minivan — the Fiat Chrysler Pacifica — navigating on its own through the city's downtown area, showing passengers getting in, loading a package into the backseat and letting a dog hop in for a spin.

It also depicts the car navigating around loading trucks, veering past pedestrians, and performing a U-turn.

"It's a dream," AutoX CEO Jianxiong Xiao said in an interview. "After working so hard for so many years, we've finally reached the point that the technology is mature enough, that we feel confident by ourselves, to really remove the safety driver."

Xiao said the company won over regulators after working to improve both its software and hardware. "We have over 100 vehicles driving every day on the road [in China] to capture data," he said. "The AI software is better [now]."

"From a technical point of view, the car is ready," Xiao said. "It's very crucial to have this car, otherwise we cannot go driverless."

AutoX was founded in 2016 by Xiao, a former assistant lecturer at Princeton who still likes to be called "Professor X." The Shenzhen-based firm focuses on making the technology that goes into self-driving cars, and partners with major automakers, such as Fiat Chrysler, to develop and put out its robotaxis.

The body will deal with civil, commercial and criminal cases and serve as a disciplinary court for judges and prosecutors.

It will have the same status as the Supreme Court and will be established on August 1, 2021.

The reforms also introduce a fixed

US blacklists Chinese crime boss, others in anti-corruption sanctions

REUTERS, Washington

The United States on Wednesday slapped sanctions on Wan Kuok Koi, a leader of China's 14K Triad organized crime group, and three entities "owned or controlled" by him, the US Treasury said in a statement.

The Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) was targeting Wan, also known as "Broken Tooth," as part of broader efforts to stamp out corruption across several countries in Asia and Africa, it said.

The statement said Wan was a member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), a largely ceremonial advisory body - a claim refuted by Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying.

Hua told a daily news conference in Beijing that Wan was not a member of the CPPCC, and that some U.S. personnel are "fabricating lies and taking any opportunity to smear China."

The comments come as relations between China and the United States have deteriorated rapidly this year.

The United States also blacklisted one Liberian individual and one Kyrgyz individual under Executive Order 13818, which targets corruption and serious human rights abuse.

HC grants 1-yr bail

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According to the case statement, Dilip and the victim were cousins and had engaged in a love affair. The victim became pregnant in 2011 when her age was 14. Dilip then refused to marry her.

On October 25, 2011, the victim filed a rape case with Godagari Police Station accusing Dilip.

On June 12 the following year, Rajshahi Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal sentenced him to life imprisonment.

Several months ago this year, the convict filed a petition with the HC through a lawyer seeking bail.

In the petition, he said he would marry the victim. His lawyer also submitted a document from the victim to the court stating that she would have no objection if Dilip was granted bail following their marriage.

5-yr plan draft

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begins its three-day session in New Delhi. Today's discussion is devoted mainly to a review of the progress in the implementation of the recommendations of the study groups on specific issues such as flood forecasting, drainage of Agartala town and the problem of flood control in the Sagarhali area.

The subjects listed for discussion at this meeting include programmes of joint survey of the Ganges between Farakka and Gorai, augmentation of water flow of certain rivers common to the two countries, and the flood problem of the Sylhet-Cachar area.

DANISH ENVOY CALLS ON PM

Denmark Ambassador Biering calls on Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman today at the Gono Bhaban and spends some time with him. This is the ambassador's farewell call.

Sources: December 12, 1972 issues of Dainik Bangla, Ittefaq and The Daily Observer.

HC rejects bail to MP

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represented the state during the hearing.

Khurshid told The Daily Star that the HC denied bail to Selina and her daughter Wafa as there were specific corruption allegations against them.

The ACC filed the case with its integrated district office in Dhaka on November 11 against Shahid Islam,

popularly known as Kazi Papul, who is now detained in Kuwait, his sister-in-law Jesmin Prodhan, wife Selina and daughter Wafa of laundering Tk 148.41 crore.

In the case statement, the anti-graft body said Shahid deposited Tk 148.41 crore to different bank accounts of his sister-in-law Jesmin Prodhan to cover his tracks.

Papul, Selina, and Wafa have all transferred their ill-begotten money to Jesmin's accounts, it said.

The ACC lodged the case against all

four of them over the matter.

ACC Deputy Director Salahuddin also brought charges against the main accused, Jesmin, of illegally accumulating Tk 2.31 crore.

The allegations surfaced after newspapers in Kuwait reported in February that Papul was running a human trafficking racket in the Middle Eastern country.

The reports said the Bangladeshi lawmakers and their daughter occupied sensitive positions in three major companies that shipped over 20,000 Bangladeshi workers to Kuwait in exchange for an amount believed to be more than Tk 1,391.6 crore.

On November 26, Selina, Wafa and Jesmin filed two separate petitions with the HC seeking anticipatory bail in the case.

In the petitions, they said the case was filed against them with malafide intention to harass them.

APP, Bratislava

Slovak lawmakers on Wednesday approved measures aimed at weeding out corruption in the judiciary, a key priority of the government elected on a wave of protests over the 2018 murder of a journalist probing graft.

The investigation into the gangland-style murder of Jan Kuciak as he probed the murky activities of a well-connected businessman resulted in the sacking of more than a dozen judges on suspicion of corruption and other wrongdoing.

This murder was undoubtedly a catalyst for fundamental changes in justice," political analyst Juraj Marusik of the Slovak Academy of Sciences told AFP, explaining what triggered the changes.

Introduced by the centre-right government of Igor Matovic, the reforms include tightening checks on the property disclosures of judges and a special new court designed to serve as a disciplinary body for them.

The reforms also introduce a fixed

retirement age for judges: 67 years for lower court justices and 72 years for those on the Constitutional Court.

Most of the changes will take effect on January 1, 2021.

The reforms were passed by 89 MPs out of 139 present, while 18 were opposed.

President Zuzana Caputova, a liberal and lawyer by training, said she will sign the reforms into law, calling them an "important step towards justice".

However, former leftist prime minister Robert Fico, whose government had been plagued by accusations of corruption, slammed a provision allowing a non-judge to head the new Supreme Administrative Court.

The body will deal with civil, commercial and criminal cases and serve as a disciplinary court for judges and prosecutors.

It will have the same status as the Supreme Court and will be established on August 1, 2021.

The reforms also introduce a fixed