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PLOT ALLOCATION ACC files case against Hasina, Joy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday filed separate cases against former prime minister Sheikh Hasina and her son, Sajeeb Wazed Joy.

Hasina has been accused of abusing her position as the head of government and securing a plot under the Purbachal New Town Project despite owning properties under the jurisdiction of the Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakha (Rajuk), which she failed to disclose in her electoral affidavit.

The case details, confirmed by ACC Director General Akhtar Hossain, reveal that Hasina obtained a 10-katha plot in the prime diplomatic zone of Purbachal New Town by violating several provisions of The Dhaka Improvement Trust (Allotment of Lands) Rules, 1969, including Rules 4,

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In blatant disregard for a "no stopping" sign just a few feet away, a bus makes a stop to let off passengers, creating a hazardous situation for other vehicles. The photo was taken on the Mayor Hanif Flyover in the capital recently.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

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S ALAM, FAMILY
Court orders freezing of 87 bank accounts

16 acres of land in Dhaka to be confiscated

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday ordered the confiscation of around 16 acres of land in Dhaka city and the freezing of 87 bank accounts owned by S Alam Group owner Mohammed Saiful Alam and his family members in connection with corruption allegations.

The order came after Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) launched an inquiry into allegations of laundering \$1 billion to Singapore and other countries.

Judge Md Zakir Hossain of the Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court of Dhaka issued the orders following two separate applications by ACC Deputy Director Md Abu Sayeed, head of the inquiry team, said an ACC official working in the court.

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US to ban smart cars with Chinese tech

AFP, Washington

The United States yesterday finalised a rule effectively barring Chinese technology from cars in the American market, taking aim at software and hardware from the world's second-biggest economy over national security risks.

The announcement, which also pertains to Russian technology, comes as outgoing President Joe Biden wraps up efforts to step up curbs on China, and after a months-long regulatory process.

The rule follows an announcement this month that Washington is mulling new restrictions to address risks posed by drones with tech from adversaries like China and Russia.

"Cars today aren't just steel on wheels -- they're computers," said Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo.

She noted that modern vehicles contain cameras, microphones, GPS tracking and other technologies connected to the internet.



A woman and a child sit with salvaged footwear amidst debris and rubble at the site of Israeli bombardment on a residential block in Jalaa Street in Gaza City yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

'Will break the pen that writes for fallen fascists'

Says Hasnat Abdullah

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

Media and intellectuals who speak in favour of the fallen fascists will face the same fate as them, said Hasnat Abdullah, the convener of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, today.

"Those talk show hosts and intellectuals, who are now vocal about human rights of Awami League men, supported fascism before," he said yesterday at the Shaheed Minar in Chashara of Narayanganj city before distributing leaflets supporting the "Proclamation of the July Uprising".

"We will break the pens that write in favour of fascism," said Hasnat, vowing a strong stand against any media, teacher or intellectual who speaks in favour of fascism.

"If you fail to understand the young generation's spirit, then your fate will be like that of the fallen Awami League," he warned.

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Gaza ceasefire deal 'very close'

Says Qatar; 27 more Palestinians killed in Israeli strikes across the enclave

REUTERS, Doha

Negotiators were meeting in Qatar yesterday hoping to finalise details of a plan to end the offensive in Gaza, after US President Joe Biden indicated a ceasefire and hostage release deal was imminent.

Qatar's foreign ministry spokesperson Majed Al-Ansari told a news conference that talks on the final details were underway and this was the closest point to a deal reached over the past months.

"We do believe that we are at the final stages... certainly we are hopeful that this would lead very soon to an agreement," Ansari said.

Hamas said the talks had reached the final steps and that it hoped this round of negotiations would lead to a deal. A Palestinian source close to the talks told Reuters he expected the deal to be finalised by yesterday if "all goes well".

An Israeli official said talks had reached a critical phase although some details needed to

be hammered out: "We are close, we are not there yet".

The official also said the deal's first stage would include the release of 33 hostages, including children, women, female soldiers, men above 50, and the wounded

► Talks reached a critical phase: Israeli official

► Hamas hopes this round of talks will lead to a deal

and sick and a gradual, partial withdrawal of Israeli forces.

Meanwhile, on the ground, violence continued yesterday, with Palestinian medics reporting at least 27 people were killed in Israeli strikes across the enclave. Israel's campaign in Gaza has killed 46,645 people, a majority of them civilians, according to the health ministry in

the Hamas-run territory.

Qatari mediators had given Israel and Hamas a final draft of a text for a ceasefire and release of hostages agreement on Monday, an official briefed on the negotiations said, after what he described as a midnight breakthrough in talks in Doha.

US President-elect Donald Trump's incoming Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff and Biden's envoy Brett McGurk have both attended the talks hosted by Qatar's Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani. Israel is represented by David Barnea, director of spy service Mossad, and Ronen Bar, director of the Shin Bet internal security agency.

"The deal ... would free the hostages, halt the fighting, provide security to Israel and allow us to significantly surge humanitarian assistance to the Palestinians who suffered terribly in this war that Hamas started," Biden said on Monday.

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PHOTO: AFP

Jubo Dal leader, 6 others sued for rape

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cumilla

Seven people, including a local Jubo Dal leader, were sued yesterday for raping two women in Nangalkot upazila of Cumilla.

Nangalkot Police Station registered the case after initial investigations, said Officer in Charge (OC) AK Fazlul Haque.

According to police and local sources, the incident occurred on January 9 at a sawmill in the Sebakhola area of Nurpur village under Nangalkot upazila.

The two victims filed a complaint at the police station on January 12.

The two main accused are local Jubo Dal leader Md Mohsin, son of Ranju Mia of Bangadda union, and Khokon Mia, owner of the sawmill. A total of seven individuals have been named in the case.

One of the victims alleged that around 10 to 12

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Northern Aral Sea now has nearly 50pc more water

AFP, Almaty

Kazakhstan said on Monday the northern part of the Aral Sea now contains nearly 50 percent more water than in 2008, a rare environmental success story in a region plagued by pollution.

The Aral Sea between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan was once the fourth largest lake in the world, before Soviet irrigation projects caused most of it to dry up.

The transformation of the freshwater sea -- once 40 metres deep and spanning 68,000 square kilometres -- has been dubbed one of the world's worst environmental catastrophes.

Since 2008, the volume of water in the northern, smaller part of the sea has "increased by 42 percent and reached 27 billion cubic metres", the Central Asian republic's water resources ministry said.

This was "thanks to the implementation of Phase One of the (Northern) Aral Sea conservation project", the ministry told AFP.

The scheme, funded jointly by the Kazakh government and the World Bank, has involved constructing new infrastructure to prevent water flowing out of the sea.

Fire-hit LA faces new peril as winds ramp up

PHOTO: Los Angeles

Hot, powerful winds yesterday threatened to rekindle and whip up major fires that have devastated the hills and suburbs of Los Angeles, killing at least 24 people and changing the face of America's second biggest city forever.

A week after blazes erupted and spread uncontained, forecasters predicted "particularly dangerous" dry Santa Ana winds would spike the wildfire threat for already exhausted firefighters.

"Stay aware of your surroundings. Be ready to evacuate. Avoid anything

that can spark a fire," the National Weather Service warned.

A large part of Southern California was under a Red Flag warning, indicating that intense dryness and furious winds would make conditions ripe for wildfire.

Part of Los Angeles County and much of neighboring Ventura County were in a "Particularly Dangerous Situation," according to the NWS, a designation that was also declared before last week's deadly blazes erupted.

Officials insisted they were poised, with Los Angeles city fire chief Kristin

Crowley telling reporters a huge firefighting operation was well placed.

"I have strategically pre-positioned engine strike teams and task forces which are dedicated to rapid response for any new fire that breaks out," she said.

The renewed danger comes with 24,000 acres (9,700 hectares) of the upmarket Pacific Palisades in ruins and 14,000 acres of the city of Altadena badly charred.

More than 90,000 evacuees are desperate to get back to their homes -- or even just to see if anything at all survived.

WE MOURN
NUHER LATIF KHAN
(1984 - 2025)

It is with heavy hearts that we share the news of the tragic demise of Mr. Nuher Latif Khan, beloved Founder and Managing Director of Joules Power Limited. Mr. Khan passed away on January 14, 2025 (Inshallah Wa Inna Ilayhi Raji'Un).

Our thoughts and prayers are with his family during this difficult time and we pray for the eternal peace of his departed soul.

- Expo Group, Bangladesh & Joules Power Limited



NUHER LATIF KHAN

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