

Bangladesh ex-PM Hasina's daughter quits top UN job

AFP | New Delhi

The World Health Organization said yesterday Saima Wazed, the agency's Southeast Asia chief and also the daughter of Bangladesh's ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina, has resigned.

Wazed was convicted in absentia in November by a court in Dhaka for corruption and sentenced to five years imprisonment. She has denied her guilt.

Her mother Hasina, who was overthrown in 2024 by a student-led uprising, was found guilty of crimes against humanity in 2025, also in absentia, and sentenced her to be hanged.

The WHO said while Wazed resigned from her post on Wednesday, the organisation was already looking to end her employment.

"The Regional Committee had recommended that Ms Wazed's appointment as Regional Director be terminated," it said.

Wazed has been on leave since 2025, after Bangladesh's anti-graft commission opened cases against her and her family for an alleged land grab of lucrative plots in a suburb of Dhaka.

Nepal flood reconstruction bill to be \$4.78 bn: foreign ministry

AFP | Kathmandu

Nepal estimates the reconstruction bill after deadly floods sparked by a glacial mountain collapse last month will amount to \$4.78 billion, the foreign ministry said yesterday.

Prime Minister Balendra Shah has vowed to "strongly raise" with the international community the disasters that Nepal has experienced as a result of climate change.

The August 26 catastrophe, a tsunami-like flood that began on the China-Nepal border, killed more than 1,400 people and left some 5,600 missing.

Shah will take his first foreign trip as leader to address the UN General Assembly on the urgent issue later this month, the foreign ministry said.

Foreign Secretary Amrit Bahadur Rai told reporters yesterday Shah will address the UN to "draw the attention of the international community to the repeated loss of life and property Nepal has had to face, due to climate change and disasters created by it".

Nepal's leaders say the Himalayan country needs long-term international support to adapt to a rapidly changing mountain environment.

India welcomes world leaders for BRICS summit

Russian and Iranian presidents arrive in New Delhi ahead of major summit



India's Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian, Russia's President Vladimir Putin, India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi and South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa pose for a photo

● China's Xi is set to attend

● Wars dominate the summit agenda

● Modi holds talks with Putin

AFP | New Delhi

The presidents of Russia and Iran were in India for talks yesterday ahead of a BRICS summit that will bring together leaders including China's Xi Jinping, with wars, trade and energy expected to dominate the agenda.

"The world today is going through a period of unprecedented complexity", Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said, speaking in New Delhi at a forum, ahead of the main summit on Saturday.

Wars in the Middle East and Ukraine, as well as global trade turbulence and oil, are expected to feature prominently at the two-day annual summit.

BRICS was created in 2009 as a forum for major emerging economies seeking greater influence



Russia's President Vladimir Putin (L) shakes hands with India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi (R)

in institutions dominated by Western powers.

"BRICS was established to counter unilateralism", said Pezeshkian, who also met with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The Iranian president said that pressure on his country "has reached a critical and dangerous stage in recent months following the military aggression by the United States and Israel".

When the summit begins Sat-

urday, Xi's attendance will be key. Set to arrive on Saturday, it will be his first visit to India since 2019.

"China stands ready to work with India... by strengthening communication, enhancing co-operation, and properly handling differences," Beijing's foreign ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said yesterday.

Modi embraced President Vladimir Putin yesterday before talks. Putin, who last visited In-

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nations now comprise the expanded BRICS grouping as member states assemble in New Delhi for high-stakes geopolitical talks

dia in December 2025, is one of New Delhi's most important strategic partners.

"One should engage in debate and friendship only with the virtuous, and nothing whatsoever with the unvirtuous," Modi wrote yesterday, in a social media message in Sanskrit to welcome leaders to the 11-nation summit.

Posters of a beaming Modi line streets across New Delhi, with heavy deployments of security forces across the capital and widespread traffic restrictions.

As well as Iran, BRICS includes Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

All three have been admitted to the group in recent years, joining founding member states that include India, China and Russia.

Philippines recovers 30 bodies from ferry after blaze



Smoke billows from the M/V June Aster ferry

AFP | Manila

The Philippine coast guard has recovered 30 bodies from a ferry consumed in a blaze that swept through it "in seconds", a spokeswoman said, adding that more remained on the stricken vessel.

The coast guard reported earlier that bodies had been found in the economy accommodation area of the M/V June Aster, which ran aground near the tourist hotspot Coron, Palawan after a fire erupted on Wednesday.

"We have 30 on board our (rescue) boat now that will arrive tomorrow," coast guard spokeswoman Commodore Noemie Cayabyab told AFP, explaining that it was the capacity of the patrol boat being used to transfer them.

Asked if bodies still remained aboard the ferry, she replied: "Yes, there are more."

Photos released by the coast guard showed rows of body bags being placed into a small ship alongside men in hazmat suits.

The discovery brings the known death toll from the incident to 35.

Thirty passengers and 13 crew have been rescued. Fifty-four people are still unaccounted for.

Earlier in the day, Cayabyab had told a radio station that the fire began in the cargo hold and tore through the ship within seconds.

"From the time that they heard the loud explosion, the appearance of smoke, and then fire. It spread very quickly," she said of survivors' accounts.

New York marks 25th anniversary of 9/11 attacks

AFP | New York

New York commemorated the 25th anniversary of the devastating September 11, 2001 attacks yesterday with a ceremony marked by controversy over President Donald Trump's absence and right-wing outrage over the attendance of the city's first Muslim mayor.

In an unusual move, Trump was paying his respects at the Pentagon, rather than joining the event in New York, where hijacked planes destroyed the World Trade Center and killed most of the 2,977 total victims on that world-altering day.

Vice President JD Vance and Trump's four living predecessors -- Republican George W. Bush, who was in office during



US Secretary of Commerce Howard Lutnick stands at the memorial during the 25th anniversary commemoration

the attacks, and Democrats Joe Biden, Barack Obama and Bill Clinton -- were gathering at the

hattan.

The ceremony, which began just after 8:40 a.m (1240 GMT), was designed to be apolitical, with no speeches.

Bereaved family members were reading out the names of all of those killed, with a bell tolling to mark major moments of the attack, which sparked years of US involvement in Middle East wars and bitter controversy over Washington's human rights record.

"Memorials like this and discussions about those events are an important part of keeping it alive and understanding how we prevent tragedies like this from ever happening again," said Robert Kafka, a Chicagoan in his 60s visiting the 9/11 Memorial.

Alongside the former presidents was Democratic Mayor Zohran Mamdani, the Big Apple's first Muslim mayor.

He faced a well organized campaign urging him to stay away spearheaded by the right-wing New York Post and former mayor and Trump-ally Rudy Giuliani.

A petition, which has gathered more than 100,000 signatures, accuses Mamdani of associating with unspecified individuals who are "dismissive of American institutions or insufficiently critical of extremist ideologies."

"It's concerning to me that the mayor is being treated differently simply because he is Muslim," city council member Shahana Hanif told CNN.