

Saddam judge resigns from trial

BBC ONLINE
Iraqi government officials are considering the resignation submitted by the chief judge at the trial of the former Iraqi leader, Saddam Hussein.
Before the judge, Rizgar Amin, can step down, his departure has to be approved by the offices of both the president and the prime minister.
A source involved in the tribunal told the BBC he is disappointed by public reaction to his running of the trial.
He has been accused of being too lenient on Saddam Hussein in court.
The source said his resignation has not yet been accepted and colleagues are trying to persuade him to reconsider.
Judge Rizgar is overseeing the trial of Saddam Hussein and seven former members of his regime over

the killing of 148 people in Dujail in 1982.
The defendants all deny the charges.
There are four other judges involved in the tribunal, but Judge Rizgar has been very much the public face of the court.
Amid security fears, highlighted by the killing of two defence lawyers, only one other trial judge has appeared on camera and many witnesses have kept their identities secret.
Some members of the Iraqi government and US politicians have complained that Judge Rizgar has been too soft on the former president, allowing him to take over the court.
However, the source within the tribunal told the BBC's Alistair Leithhead in Baghdad that Judge Rizgar is not resigning over pressure from the Iraqi government, but because of his disappointment

at the public's reaction.
The source said that the judge had simply been trying to ensure that the trial is fair and that everyone involved gets their say.
The BBC's world affairs editor, John Simpson, who has attended the trial in Baghdad, says Judge Rizgar knows his resignation will be a terrible blow to the whole project of bringing Saddam Hussein to justice.
He may be hoping that public opinion will now swing behind him.
Judge Rizgar has been remarkably lenient to Saddam Hussein and his half-brother, Barzan al-Tikriti, and they have taken advantage of this, our correspondent says.
However, he says that this does not mean that the senior judge has lost control of this court.
Judge Rizgar is a polite, highly

Fog hampers road, river, air communication

STAR REPORT
A shroud of dense fog continued yesterday to hamper road, river and air communications between Dhaka and the rest of the country, causing sufferings to the passengers returning from the hajj and Eid vacation.
Most of the outgoing or incoming passengers are facing long delays or remain even stranded at the launch and bus terminals and airports.
Nearly 15,000 passengers on at least 300 buses were stranded at Daulatdia and Paturia ferry terminals as dense fog prevented ferries from crossing the Jamuna and Padma rivers.
A ferry carrying over 1,200 passengers was also stuck in the middle of the river due to the foggy weather, our Manikganj correspondent reports.
The passengers suffered amid claims by some ferry masters that the authorities did not pay heed to their persistent demands for improving ferry services, UNB adds.



EID HANGOVER PERSISTS: The usually busy downtown Motijheel in the city looks almost deserted yesterday after consecutive five days of Eid vacation and weekend.

HAIJ STAMPEDE 3 Bangladeshis still missing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Three Bangladeshis in Makkah are still reported missing while the Bangladesh Hajj Mission has found 11 of the persons who had been missing until Saturday night.
A hajj agency gave the information of the new developments, Consul of the mission Zafar Ullah Khan told The Daily Star yesterday.
The missing include Abdur Razzak, son of late Abdur Rahman, Tozammel Haque, son of late Tamizuddin, and Mozammel Haque, son of late Abdur Aziz. All three hail from Gobindaganj of Gaibandha.
"The condition of those [four] hospitalised is improving," he said.
The consul also corrected some information published in the newspapers yesterday, referring to the foreign ministry.
Adidul Haque will actually read A'aul Haque of Gobindaganj, Gaibandha while Belal Karim Biswas will be Belal, son of Karim Biswas of Magura, and Siddique Bajjabi will be Siddique Bepari, 43. Belal was travelling on passport No-098927 and Bepari on passport No-0224285.
Besides, he gave some more information on some of the victims. Abdul Mannan, 43, son of Abdul Khair, used to work as a driver in Al-Gasim Buraidia area of Saudi Arabia, while Belal Hossain, 38, son of Abdul Kashem, was an agriculture worker in the same area.
Abdul Latif, 52, son of Abdul Kader, was working as a driver in Jeddah of the kingdom, Zafar Ullah



Boatmen extract sand from the riverbed of the Karnaphuli in Chittagong as the river loses navigability in winter. The photo was taken yesterday.

BNP man caught with pistol after firing 2 shots

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur
Locals caught a district unit leader of Jatiyatabadi Swechhasebak Dal with a homemade pistol as he opened fire on a leader of the transport workers' union yesterday afternoon.
The people of Lalbagh area in the town handed over Abdul Hannan, joint secretary of Swechhasebak Dal, a wing of the ruling BNP, to police.
The police quoting the first information report (FIR) said Hannan fired two rounds at Shah

Little progress in Manik Saha murder case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna
There has been little headway in the investigation of journalist Manik Saha murder case.
Investigation officer (IO) of the case also officer-in-charge (OC) of the Khulna Kotwali police station, Abdul Hamid, told The Daily Star that he has no new evidence to base his further investigation on.
Manik Saha, former Khulna correspondent of The New Age also a stringer for the BBC was killed by a bomb thrown at him at noon on January 15, 2004 at Choto Mirzapur near the Khulna Press Club.
Sub-inspector (SI) Ranjit Kumar Das filed two cases with the Kotwali police station on January 17 accusing nobody specific.
SI Asaduzzaman Farazi of the police station submitted a charge sheet under the Explosive Substances Act on March 19, 2004

Defiant Iran calls for atomic talks

REUTERS, Tehran
Iran said on Sunday diplomacy was the only way to resolve the impasse over its nuclear programme but that it would not reverse its widely criticized decision to resume atomic research after a break of more than two years.
Iran raised the stakes in the dispute last week by removing UN seals to gain access to equipment that purifies uranium, which can be used for power or, if highly enriched, in bombs.
Foreign Ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi told a weekly news conference.
"There is no legal basis for referring Iran to the Security Council. But if that were to happen Iran is not afraid," he said.
Asefi declined to clarify whether Iran planned to carry out small-scale uranium enrichment - the most sensitive part of the atomic fuel cycle -- as part of its research work.
"Iran's decision to resume nuclear research activities is irreversible," he said.

Saifur slams WB policy diktats

UNB, Dhaka
Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman criticised the World Bank (WB) yesterday for proposing almost identical policy prescriptions for South Asian and African countries ignoring their different social and economic conditions.
"The WB offers Bangladesh the same policy prescription which they had proposed to Nigeria or Sierra Leone without considering it may not be suitable for Bangladesh's ground realities," he said after a meeting with the Resident Representative of UNDP Renata Lok Dessalieu at his secretariat office.
Talking to newsmen, the minister suggested the policy prescription should be given based on condition of financial institutions,

US State Dept official due shortly

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT
The United States government is sending a high official of the State Department instead of the Undersecretary for Political Affairs Nicholas Burns to Dhaka to discuss affairs between Bangladesh and US.
A highly placed source told The Daily Star yesterday the Ministry of Foreign Affairs came to know that the senior official will arrive shortly with a letter of appreciation over the government's anti-JMB crackdown.
The source said the US appreciated the government's step of banning militant organisations and the crackdown on Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) in the recent months.
The US engages the Bangladesh

Bomb hits Canadian convoy in Afghanistan

2 killed
AP, Kabul
A suicide car bomb hit a Canadian military convoy in a southern Afghan city yesterday, killing two civilians and wounding 13 people, officials said.
The blast occurred as the convoy was driving near the Canadian base in Kandahar city, a former Taliban stronghold, said Interior Ministry spokesman Dad Mohammed Rasa.
He said at least two civilians were killed and 10 were wounded.

Prayer Timing		
January 16		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-30	6-05
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-36	5-40
Esha	7-00	7-30

Source: Islamic Foundation