

New judge to preside Saddam trial tomorrow

AFP, Baghdad

The trial of ousted Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein is set to resume tomorrow with a new presiding judge after his predecessor quit over charges he was not firm enough with the accused.

Said al-Hammashi will replace Rizkar Mohammed Amin as head of the five-judge panel hearing the case against the former dictator and seven co-accused charged with mass killings of residents from the town of Dujail, where Saddam escaped a plot to kill him in 1982.

The accused face death by hanging if found guilty.

Amin, a Kurdish judge who chaired the first seven hearings after the trial started on October 19, resigned earlier this month after critics said he was allowing defendants' theatrics to undermine the dignity of the court.

Israel mulls options to snub Hamas win

AFP, Jerusalem

Israel is yesterday formulating a strategy to prepare for a possible Hamas victory in the Palestinian election as international observers monitoring Wednesday's vote met for talks with organisers in the violence-racked Gaza Strip.

With only three days to go before the election, Acting Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert was to convene top-level talks with senior political and defence officials to formulate an Israeli response to every possible scenario.

Thousands of security personnel across the Palestinian territories were casting their ballots in an early round of voting in order to be free to protect polling booths on the official election day.

As hundreds of observers, both

local and international, kept a watchful eye on the voting, the head of the EU monitoring team, Veronique De Keyser, was due to hold talks with Palestinian election officials to finalise arrangements.

She was also due to hold talks with Palestinian civil affairs minister Mohammed Dahlan, officials said.

With polls showing Hamas significantly narrowing the gap with the ruling Fatah party, Israeli officials are acutely aware that militant Islamist faction, which has been behind most of the attacks on Israel, could cut the ruling Fatah party out of power and even form the next Palestinian government.

Two months before Israel's own election in March, whose course could be radically altered by a Hamas romp to power in the terri-

ories, officials acknowledge that success for the Islamist faction would spell big problems at home.

At Sunday's meeting, officials will look at the implications for Israel of the rise of a Palestinian Authority including Hamas ministers, and whether negotiations with such an entity would be construed internationally as a de facto Israeli recognition of the radical movement.

Top defence officials are divided over Hamas's likely approach towards Israel in the wake of an election victory.

"We have to be prepared for an additional round of (Palestinian) escalation. It depends on the elections," chief of staff Dan Halutz told delegates at a political-security conference in Herzliya just north of Tel Aviv.



The jailed leader of the Palestinian uprising, Marwan Barghout, speaks to the Dubai-based Al-Arabiya satellite news channel from his jail cell yesterday after Israel gave him permission to speak to Al-Arabiya and Qatar-based Al-Jazeera, days ahead of Palestinian parliament elections.

Thousands rally against US in Pakistan

AP, Inayat Qala

Thousands of angry Pakistanis protested yesterday against a US airstrike that killed civilians, chanting "Long live Osama bin Laden!" as anti-American rallies in the country entered their second week.

Pakistanis authorities, meanwhile arrested a relative of a man suspected of hiding the bodies of four suspected al-Qaeda operatives believed killed in the Jan. 13 attack, said a security official who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorised to speak to the media.

The man, who was not identified, was arrested in Damadola, the remote hamlet near the Afghan border where US missiles struck Jan. 13, the official said. The suspect was related to Faqir Mohammed, a pro-Taliban cleric who intelligence officials believe was responsible for hiding the bodies.

Iran denies shifting foreign assets

REUTERS, AFP, Tehran

Iran has transferred no money from its foreign accounts, Foreign Ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi said yesterday, denying reports from the central bank governor that such transfers had begun.

"So far we have not moved any hard currency, we have not transferred it," he told reporters at a news conference.

Iran faces possible UN economic sanctions over its disputed atomic program and has bitter memories of its US assets being frozen after the 1979 Islamic revolution.

"The Central Bank is managing, according to Iran's national interests,

the currency reserves of the country and is keeping these reserves in major international banks, notably in Europe and other countries," said a Central Bank statement read out on state television.

"Iran has not moved funds," foreign ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi also told reporters.

Central bank chief Ebrahim Sheibani had said on Wednesday -- according to comments that were only reported two days later by Iranian news agencies -- that Iran was moving funds from Europe to Asia.

But the deputy head of the bank, Mohammad-Jafar Mojarad, issued a denial on Saturday.

US officer guilty in Iraqi general's death case

REUTERS, Fort Carson

The highest-ranking US Army officer charged with killing a detainee in Iraq was found guilty on Saturday of negligent homicide but not guilty on the more serious charge of murder of an Iraqi general during an interrogation.

A jury of six Army officers convicted Chief Warrant Officer Lewis Welshofer Jr. in charges resulting from the suffocation death of Iraqi Maj. Gen. Abed Hamed Mowhoush.

The general was placed head-first in a sleeping bag as Welshofer covered his mouth and sat on his chest during a fatal interrogation in November 2003. Prosecutors accused Welshofer of using harsh techniques to try to get information from Mowhoush, describing them as "torture."

Red Cross chopper missing in Pakistan

AP, Muzaffarabad

A helicopter used by the Red Cross for earthquake relief operations in Pakistan has gone missing with seven crew on board, officials said yesterday.

The helicopter lost contact with the air control tower after leaving the northwestern city of Peshawar on Saturday, Red Cross quake relief chief Andre Paquet said.

The helicopter had been chartered by Turkmenistan to the International Committee of the Red Cross for relief work in the quake zone for the past three months. The Mi-8 transport craft was returning to Turkmenistan, Paquet said.

The helicopter left Peshawar around noon Saturday and lost contact with the tower half an hour

later after crossing the Afghan border, said Paquet, who did not have any more details.

"We are still searching for the helicopter," he said.

Officials in Afghanistan's Interior Ministry and the airport in Kabul said they were unaware of any reports of a crash inside Afghanistan.

The Oct. 8 quake killed 87,000 people and left around 3.5 million people homeless. Dozens of helicopters are involved in the mammoth relief effort.

In October, four people were killed when a UN helicopter heading for the quake zone crashed in Azerbaijan. A Pakistan army helicopter also went down in bad weather that month, killing all six on board.

Saudi king to push for better ties with India

REUTERS, New Delhi

Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah visits New Delhi this week to build on steadily improving ties between the world's top oil exporter and India, eager to meet the future energy needs of its booming economy.

King Abdullah will be accompanied by strong business and government delegations, including Oil Minister Ali al-Naimi, during the

four-day trip starting on Jan. 24, the first by a Saudi monarch in 50 years.

The king, who will be in India as part of a four-nation Asian tour that includes China and Pakistan, will be the chief guest at India's annual Republic Day parade on Jan. 26 and hold talks with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, among others.

Ties between Saudi Arabia, Islam's birthplace, and India,

Asia's third-largest economy and home to a huge Muslim minority, have improved incrementally since the early 1990s.

"Both countries are looking to build on their common area of agreement which has been expanding over the past few years," Mohammad Hamid Ansari, a former Indian Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, said.



Kosovars light candles in Pristina to pay tribute to Kosovo President Ibrahim Rugova yesterday. Rugova died Saturday of lung cancer, just days before delicate talks on the province's future status.

Kosovo seeks to fill Rugova vacuum

AFP, Pristina

The funeral of Kosovo president Ibrahim Rugova will be held Thursday, his office said as the UN-administered region began the difficult task of finding a successor to the man whose death left a vacuum on the fractured political scene.

Rugova, whose strong leadership was seen as crucial in upcoming direct talks on Kosovo's future status, died of lung cancer on Saturday at the age of 61, leaving many in the province worried about the prospects of the ethnic

Albanian push for independence.

His death forced the United Nations to postpone until early February the first face-to-face talks between Kosovo's Albanian leaders and Serbia that were scheduled to begin in the Austrian capital Vienna on Wednesday.

Legally still a part of Serbia, Kosovo has been run by the United Nations and NATO since mid-1999, when the alliance drove out the forces of then Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic due to grave human rights abuses in a crackdown against separatist Albanian rebels.

Iraqi parties to appeal vote results

AFP, Baghdad

Iraq's electoral commission was set yesterday to start receiving appeals by political parties contesting results from last month's election, with both winners and losers complaining they should have won more seats.

The ensuing weeks are also expected to witness lengthy and complex negotiations to form a national unity government to rule the country for the next four years -

a process that observers say could take at least two months.

A number of political parties, including the conservative Shia United Iraqi Alliance, which took the lion's share of seats in the December 15 vote, are complaining over calculations used to distribute 45 seats allocated to parties on the basis of their overall performance.

The parliament's other 230 seats were allocated on a constituency basis in the country's 18 provinces with some parties also

complaining about the count.

There are fears that the momentum from the elections could be lost during a lengthy negotiation period, especially one marked by increased bloodshed as happened during the formation of the transitional government last year.

Violence continued on Sunday with a bomb blast in Baquba, northeast of Baghdad, that killing four Iraqi policemen and wounding eight as they patrolled the restive city.

WE MOURN

We are deeply shocked and saddened by the untimely demise of our beloved Director, **Khorsheidi Alam (Dolly)** breathed her last on 21 January, 2006 (Inna lillahi.....Rajeun).

In her death we have lost not only a guardian but also a great and devoted social worker and philanthropist. She was the founder President of Gulshan Ladies Community Club, an Honourary Rotarian and a founder member of North South University. She was also President of Women's Voluntary Association and Women's Club of Business and professionals. She is survived by her husband, Mr. Iftekharul Alam and a host of relatives, friends and their families to mourn her death.

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Insurgent attacks kill 11 near Baghdad

AP, REUTERS, Baghdad

Roadside bomb blasts, shootings and rocket-propelled grenade attacks killed at least 11 people north of Baghdad, including a police officer's four children, officials said yesterday.

Insurgents fired rocket propelled grenades at the home of an Iraqi police officer in Balad Ruz, 45 miles northeast of Baghdad, said a spokesman for the Iraqi police Joint Coordination Centre. The officer's children, ages 6 to 11, and their uncle were killed, the spokesman said on condition of anonymity due to fears of reprisal attacks. The officer was unharmed, but his wife was wounded.

Also Sunday, the bodies of a prominent Sunni Arab tribal leader and his son were found in a field near Hawija, 150 miles north of Baghdad, said police Capt. Farhad Talabani. Sayid Ibrahim Ali, 75, and his 28-year-old son Ayad were shot as they left a funeral Saturday, Talabani said.

Four policemen were killed and nine were wounded in a pre-dawn roadside bomb blast that targeted their patrol in Baqouba, 58km north-east of Baghdad, the police centre said.

Legal Notice

In the Supreme Court of Bangladesh High Court Division (Statutory Original Jurisdiction)

Matter No. 04 of 2006

In the matter of: An application under Section 151 of the Companies Act, 1994 and

Mosharif Hossain Sharif Petitioner.

Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and Firms. Respondent.

Notice is hereby given that in application under Section 151 of the Companies Act, 1994 was moved before the High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh by the petitioner for condonation of delay filing allotment of share return of the company name & style as Noorun Nahar Knit Wear Ltd to the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies & Firms. This petition has been admitted by the Hon'ble Company Judge on 03.01.2006 and fixed for hearing on 06.02.2006. Any person interested in the said application may appear before the court on the date fixed for hearing either himself or through his Advocate. A copy of the said application may be obtained from the undersigned on payment of prescribed fees.

Jashim Uddin Ahmed
 Advocate
 Supreme Court of Bangladesh
 GA-165/1, Mohakhali
 Gulshan, Dhaka-1212

Islamic Development Bank-Bangladesh Islamic Solidarity Educational Wakf (IDB-BISEW)

Tender Notice

SEALED TENDERS in the prescribed schedule are hereby invited from reputed firms for construction of 720 sft. checking room, 618 sft. covered walkway, 6 nos. of fixed barriers, 2 nos. of boom barriers, repair and re-fixing of existing boom barrier, etc.

Documents to be attached with tender document:

- Satisfactory documents showing experience in civil construction work of any Govt. / Semi Govt. / Autonomous or Private organization supported by completion certificate issued by an Engineer.
- Photocopy of valid license as Contractor and trade license, VAT and Tax certificates, memorandum and articles of association of a limited company / partnership deed, etc.

Interested bidders may purchase the tender document from the office of IDB-BISEW on submission of an application on letterhead alongwith completion certificate as stated in item (a) above, and a pay order (non refundable) for an amount of Tk. 1,000 from a scheduled Bank in favour of "IDB-BISEW" during office hours upto 5 February 2006.

Bids, alongwith the earnest money of 3% of quoted amount in the form of Pay-Order from a scheduled Bank of Bangladesh in favour of "IDB-BISEW", in sealed envelope must be submitted on or before 11:00 am on 6 February 2006 and will be opened at IDB-BISEW office on the same day at 11:05 am.

IDB-BISEW reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bid(s) in part or in full and may correct, modify or rectify discrepancy, if any, in the tender document without assigning any reason whatsoever in the interest of IDB-BISEW.

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