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Bail fix allegation

Rokan divulges judge's name

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

President of Supreme Court Bar Association Barrister Rokanuddin Mahmud yesterday named Syed Shahidur Rahman as the judge to have allegedly taken money from a person for fixing bail.

Rokanuddin in a letter to Chief Justice (CJ) KM Hasan yesterday disclosed the name of the judge and the evidence he has against the judge. He met the CJ at his residence after Hasan asked him on October 6 to garnish facts about his allegations.



Barrister Rokanuddin Mahmud

Shahidur applied for a two-month leave yesterday.

"My letter contains the name of Additional Judge Syed Shahidur Rahman and details of his corruption," Rokanuddin told journalists at his chamber at the Supreme Court but refused to elaborate on the content of the letter.

"This judge, appointed on April 24, was rumoured to be a corrupt person. He should not be allowed to sit in the court after his name has been revealed. Lawyers have been aggrieved and I

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Khaleda calls for floating Islamic common market

UNB, Putrajaya, Malaysia

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has called for establishing Islamic common market through forging an effective partnership between the governments and the private sectors.

"This is necessary to promote and protect our individual and collective interests," she told the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) Business Forum at Putrajaya Marriott Hotel last night.

The Bangladesh prime minister was speaking at the dinner session

hosted by the business forum on the opening day of its two-day meeting.

Co-organised by Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute (ASLI), Malaysia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the OIC and Malaysian South-South Association, the two-day meeting will discuss opportunities for business collaboration and smart partnerships.

Government leaders, captains of industry, regional experts, and corporate managers are attending the business meet.

Malaysian Prime Minister SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

'Besieged' Muslims gather for biggest summit since 9/11

AFP, Putrajaya, Malaysia

A sense of siege pervaded this designer-city of domes and spires as the world's Muslim leaders gathered for a summit opening today in the shadow of a war on terrorism which many see as a war on Islam.

With Islamic countries under foreign occupation or threat and Muslims treated with suspicion in the West, the kings, sheikhs, princes and presidents of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) are confronting a turning point in history.

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OIC set to come up with Iraq document

ANN/ THE STAR, Putrajaya

The Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) is set to come up with a separate document just on Iraq, after two days of intense lobbying and debate by the foreign ministers.

According to the draft document, the organisation welcomed the establishment of the transitional government in Iraq but wanted the United Nations to play a more central role.

The 11-point draft was a compromise reached in an intense meeting SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

Absence of written order led to anthem glitch

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Technicians could not play the national anthem on audio at the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association conference, as the parliament secretariat did not inform Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in writing beforehand, sources said yesterday referring to preliminary findings of a probe body.

The three-member inquiry committee, formed by Prime Minister Khaleda Zia on October 7, also talked to Deputy Speaker Akhtar Hamid Siddiqui who gave a statement to the body.

"The committee is trying to find out the reason the national anthem could not be played during the conference," the deputy speaker told newsmen after one-and-a-half-hour talks with Chief Whip Khandakar Delwar Hossain, head of the committee.

The body will have to complete its investigation by today as it was asked to submit its report by October 16 -- the new deadline set after it failed to wrap up its probe in 48 hours.

The probe body that interrogated 11 officials, including the parliament secretary on Tuesday, may submit its report to the prime minister today.

Gaza blast hits US convoy, kills 3



REUTERS, Gaza

A roadside bomb ripped through a US diplomatic convoy in the Gaza Strip yesterday, killing three American security men in the first attack on US officials in three years of Israeli-Palestinian violence.

The Israel Radio said the convoy included representatives from Middle East envoy John Wolf's office and the CIA, but US officials said Wolf was not in the region at the time.

A silver, armour-plated jeep used by American diplomats was demolished in the bomb blast, which dug a large crater in the street. Body parts, blood and debris were sprayed meters (yards) away and a black shoelace lay on the ground.

Israeli security officials said three security guards attached to the US diplomatic contingent were killed and a diplomat was wounded in the blast at the entrance to the teeming Jabalya refugee camp, a stronghold of Palestinian militants.

A spokesman for the US embassy SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

Palestinian police collect evidence at the site of a roadside explosion killing three US nationals and wounding one more in northern Gaza Strip yesterday. The first attack on US targets took place hours after the US vetoed a UN resolution condemning Israel's construction of a separation barrier across the West Bank.

Govt takes steps for one-stop land registration

Landowners to pay tax to bank from January

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Landowners in six upazilas under six divisions would be permitted to pay their land development tax in commercial banks from January 1 under reforms aimed at simplifying the land law.

The government is also working to introduce a one-stop land registration service under the initiative instead of the present system that requires one to rush to three relevant offices.

The upazilas where the tax could

be paid to commercial banks are: Sylhet sadar, Hatzahari in Chittagong district, Shibpur under Narsingdi district, Barisal sadar, Sathkira sadar and Paba in Rajshahi district.

Landowners will also be permitted to deposit land tax in advance for the years to come.

Under the planned one-stop service, three offices -- the survey office, the circle office of revenue and the sub-registrar office -- will be combined into one so that people SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

Graft eats away 5pc of public buying budget

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Corruption eats up 10-15 per cent of the country's \$3 billion public procurement budget, leading to the loss of scarce resources and the deterioration of the investment climate, World Bank and ADB officials told a seminar yesterday.

"Pervasive rent-seeking and corruption produce kick-backs, ranging between 10 and 15 percent," said ADB representative Peter L. Peterson at a National Seminar on the Public Procurement Regulations 2003.

Speaking at the inaugural session, Acting World Bank head Mubinder S. Mudahar said over the years the public procurement system suffered from opaque procurement practices, a lack of transpar-

ency and inadequate accountability mechanisms, including rent-seeking practices.

"This situation leads to wasteful use of scarce public resources, domestic or borrowed. At a more fundamental level, it causes erosion of public confidence and adversely affects the national investment climate," he observed.

The success of the reforms in public procurement depends not only on the government's political will but also on support from the employees, Mudahar added.

The Central Procurement Technical Unit of the Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED) of the Ministry of Planning organised the seminar at the Bangladesh Institute of Administration Management

Foundation. IMED Secretary Manik Lal Somadhar chaired the inaugural session.

State Minister for Finance and Planning Anwarul Kabir Talukder attended the seminar as special guest.

Speaking at the seminar, Anwarul Kabir Talukder said the time has come to fight unitedly against corruption. "Corruption will reduce if there is a combined effort," he said.

The state minister termed the formulation of the public procurement regulation a major reform, adding that it was done in a relatively short time.

In his speech, Peterson said good practices reduce costs and produce timely results; poor practices lead to SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

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Rokia Afzal Rahman

Rokia, Sheraton win AmCham business awards

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rokia Afzal Rahman, a leading entrepreneur, and Dhaka Sheraton Hotel have won the annual business awards of American Chamber of Commerce in Bangladesh (AmCham).

The awards, AmCham Annual Business Awards-2002, were presented at a gala ceremony at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel yesterday.

Rokia, chair and managing director of RR Cold Storage Ltd. and also chairman of Arlinks Group, received the award in business executive of the year category.

Dhaka Sheraton Hotel got the award as the outstanding American company of the year.

US Ambassador Harry K Thomas gave away prizes to the recipients.

Rokia was given the award for demonstrating strong ethical principles in business and trade, AmCham said.

She has combined success in business with commitment and dedication to women entrepreneurship development. Through her SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

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