

## US immigration

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to verify the identity of individuals applying for these benefits thus applying another layer of security to the US immigration system.

E-filing, combined with the collection and storage of an applicant's digital photograph, signature and fingerprint, allow the BCIS to produce a high quality immigration document with special security features.

Applications soon to be available for online filing are forms I-765 (Application for Employment Authorization) and I-90 (Application for Replacement of Green Card).

These two forms represent approximately 30 per cent of the total number of benefit applications filed with BCIS annually. BCIS plans to expand the E-filing initiative to cover all BCIS forms over the next few years.

E-filing is quick, easy and convenient for applicants because it allows them, or their representatives, to complete and submit applications at any time, from any computer with Internet access.

Upon completion of the E-filing session, customers will receive instant electronic confirmation that the application was received. Customers can then schedule an appointment to visit an Application Support Center for collection of a digital photograph, signature and fingerprint.

For those who file electronically, BCIS confirms the identity of the customer early in the application process. BCIS also electronically collects a photograph, signature and fingerprint for the individual. These biometrics are stored and can be used later for verification of the person's identity.

Customers whose applications are approved receive high quality immigration documents with special security features produced from BCIS's centralised card production facility. BCIS intends to

add electronic filing capabilities for additional forms in the fall of 2003.

Additional forms include: Form I-129, Petition for Nonimmigrant Worker; Form I-131, Application for Travel Document; Form I-140, Immigration Petition for Alien Worker; Form I-539, Application to Extend/Change Non Immigrant Status; Form I-821, Application for Temporary Protected Status; and Form I-907, Request for Premium Processing.

Filing instructions and eligibility information for e-filing are available at [www.bcis.gov](http://www.bcis.gov).

## PDB

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no fund to supplant old lines," he said.

Meanwhile, multiple power cuts made life of the residents of Mirpur, Kalyanpur, Pallabi, Tejgaon, Mohammadpur, Basabo, Mogbazar, Paribagh miserable yesterday.

However, supply situation at Gulshan, Banani, Baridhara, Mohakhali and in the Cantonment area improved yesterday with the restoration of supply from Bashundhara 132/33 KV Grid Substation on Sunday night.

The 50 KVA transformer at the substation was supplying 75 per cent of its capacity of 60 MW.

"The repaired transformer will not be able to take full pressure; that is why we are supplying 75 per cent of its capacity," said Saleh Ahmed, Managing Director of DESCO.

DESCO was supplying about 100 MW power from its two transformers in the area yesterday evening.

"During peak hours, the areas will experience one hour load-shedding," he said.

But situation will improve after May 1 when DESCO will complete installation of another transformer in the Bashundhara substation, he said.

## OC, 6 cops closed

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Seven policemen, including the officer-in-charge (OC) of Kafur Police Station, were closed yesterday for neglect of duty.

They are OC Intiaz Alam, former OC Abu Yusuf Mollah, Sub-Inspector Fazlur Rahman, Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) Rezaul, Constable Delaware Hossain, ASI Abdul Hamid and Office Assistant of the deputy police commissioner (west) Ali Reza.

The departmental action came after the seven failed to comply with a court order and report to their higher officials in time, according to an investigation. The policemen did not return valuables seized from one Akram Khan despite the High Court order.

The court later served a show-cause notice on the then inspector general of police Modabbir Hossain Chowdhury, Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner Abdul Quayum and the OC of Kafur Police Station.

The notice asked them to explain why a charge of defamation should not be brought against them.

The three made an unconditional apology to the court on April 26, saying they did not get the court order in time. They also told the court that they issued an order of finding out those responsible.

The court verdict will be handed down on May 17.

## Atrai

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Banglar Communist Party (PBCP).

The panic is also palpable among local Awami League leaders and workers who fled home in fear of police harassment. Police arrested ten people, including Atrai thana AL Organising Secretary Akkas Ali.

Sub-Inspector Rois Uddin, also investigation officer of the multiple murder case, believes Friday's gruesome incident has links to a row over khas land and water reservoirs between two groups of Naidighee villagers.

"Five of the six victims were accused in a murder case. The arrest of AL leaders is necessary," said the police officer.

However, police could not arrest any of the Yusuf group accused of the killings.

The outlaws' activities have intensified since May 2001 following a split in the PBCP, according to police records.

One faction fortified its network in the remote Chalan Beel area under Dr Rafiqul Islam nicknamed Tutul Dakta of Kotchandpur in Jhenidah and Madhu Babu of Dinajpur.

Based in Rajshahi city, Tutul was leading the groups in Natore, Rajshahi, Naogaon and Sirajganj and went underground early last year when police identified him.

Besides, Abdul Kader and Quamrul Master are known as leaders of the outlaws in Pabna and Yusuf of Shingra upazila in Natore leads the Atrai-Raninagar-Naldanga belt.

Police failed in arresting the outlaws because of patronisation by influential people, a police official reasoned out preferring anonymity.

Information leakage is also a hindrance to police operations, say police. "We cannot nab criminals if information about our operations leaks out," said Superintendent of Police (Natore) Syed Nazrul Islam.

Police carry out operations based on an old list of more than 1,200 outlaws, says a police source.

Deputy Inspector General Anwar Hussain says, "We have been fighting the outlaws' activities for long."

## Saddam alive

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US intelligence interrogators. He did not elaborate.

"What we don't know is the veracity of it. It will take time," Franks was quoted as saying.

AFP from London adds: There is no possibility of Britain giving asylum to former Iraqi deputy prime minister Tareq Aziz in return for information on Saddam Hussein's regime, Prime Minister Tony Blair said yesterday.

"I'm absolutely mystified by the Tareq Aziz story," Blair told a press conference at Downing Street.

"I do not think that there is any possibility of that happening as far as I'm aware," he added. "No such plan has ever been under discussion anywhere... and I think people would rightly regard this as a very odd thing to do."

Britain's best-selling Sun newspaper said on Saturday that Aziz had told his US interrogators that he was willing to reveal all if he could have a new identity and was allowed to move to Britain.

Quoting an unnamed "insider," the Sun said Aziz feared being executed by Iraqis or being detained by US authorities.

Reacting to the report, the Home Office said Saturday that it was "ridiculous" to suggest that Britain would give asylum to an individual suspected of violating human rights.

## US seizes key Iraqi official

**AFP, Baghdad**

US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld has begun a post-war Gulf tour amid moves to reorganise US forces in the region, as aspiring Iraqi political leaders prepared for a meeting in Baghdad on the country's future.

US forces announced the capture of an Iraqi official once in charge of liaising with UN weapons inspectors and troops also arrested a self-proclaimed "governor" of Baghdad in a warning that until a recognised government is formed, US-led forces remain the sole authority in Iraq.

Rumsfeld arrived in the Gulf on a week-long tour expected to include Iraq. The exact itinerary has been kept secret for security reasons.

The defence secretary visited the United Arab Emirates capital Abu Dhabi and then travelled to the US Central Command (Centcom) in Qatar.

General Tommy Franks, head of Centcom, said a "re-arrangement" of troops in the region was likely, but did not say if this meant a troop reduction.

"There is an understanding that since the regime in Iraq has gone, since there will no longer be a need for Operation Northern Watch and Southern Watch and so forth in the days and months ahead there will likely be a re-arrangement of the footprint," Franks told journalists in Abu Dhabi.

About 150,000 US and British troops are in Iraq. Operation Southern Watch and Northern Watch had enforced flight restrictions on Iraqi aircraft following the 1991 Gulf War.

The capture of General Hossain Mohammad Amin, former head of Iraq's National Monitoring Directorate, brings to 13 the number of Iraqis seized from the US list of the 55 most wanted officials from Saddam Hussein's ousted regime.

The general was ranked 49th. Amin

was in charge of liaising with UN weapons inspectors scrutinising cooperation with UN Security Council resolutions on Iraqi disarmament.

US forces also arrested Mohammad Mohsen Zubeidi, who had proclaimed himself governor of Baghdad. He had "exercised authority he did not have", Centcom said.

Zubeidi "was detained and then removed from Baghdad to prevent his continued misrepresentation of his authority."

Zubeidi, 51, declared himself governor of Baghdad days after Saddam was ousted on April 9.

Centcom said the coalition was committed to ensuring the Iraqi people had a legitimate representative government. "Until such time as that government is formed, the coalition is the only legitimate government authority in Iraq."

## US hosts Iraqi meet

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and the resources you need."

The United States has set no date for when it will hand over power to a future government whose religious and political make-up will be thrashed out in the coming months.

Monday's meeting had tremendous symbolic power for many Iraqis as it comes on the birthday of Saddam, marked in years past by massive state-organised demonstrations to hail his dictatorial rule.

"We want a just state, and an Islamic one would be best because Islam is better than democracy," delegate Sheikh Ali Abdul Aziz, leader of the Islamic Movement of Iraqi Kurdistan, told AFP.

But trader Saadi Abdul Rasul Ali said: "We prefer to have religion separate from the state because it would be better for our country. There are so many different communities."

Washington has said it will not accept an Iranian-style theocracy in Iraq and underlined its willingness to exercise control over Iraq's leadership with the arrest Sunday of a local politician claiming to be Baghdad's governor.

Among the delegates on hand were representatives of the Iraqi National

Congress as well as the main Shiite faction, the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, which boycotted the first US-sponsored meeting two weeks ago.

That meeting agreed on a 13-point declaration to create a democratic, non-partisan Iraq based on the rule of law as the nation seeks a new political future after the end of Saddam's brutal 24-year reign.

The duration of the US military occupation has been one of the thorniest issues in the minds of many Iraqis already frustrated by the anarchy and lack of basic services since the war.

Much of the country remains without electricity and water more than two weeks after Saddam's downfall. Telephones are still not working and the streets are piled high with uncollected rubbish.

"The Americans have done something great by removing Saddam and history will remember what they did," said delegate Abdul Reda Saadoun from the Higher Council for the Liberation of Iraq, a Shiite group.

"We want them to stay until the situation becomes stable," he said.

Tribal leader Hussein Shaanan said: "We thank the forces that have freed us

from the dictatorship, but now we'd like them to leave as soon as possible."

As the delegates gathered at the Baghdad convention centre under extremely tight US military security, thousands of Shiites rallied in the centre of the capital, demanding a nationwide congress to chart the nation's future.

"We want a new national conference," chanted the protestors, led by dozens of religious leaders from the powerful Hawza Shiite school in the southern holy city of Najaf.

## Shahidul Haque

### Jamal made

### JS Whip

**UNB, Dhaka**

Syed Shahidul Haque Jamal MP has been appointed Whip of the Jatiya Sangsad in place of advocate Mujibur Rahman Sarwar.

President Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday appointed Jamal and "relieved" Sarwar of his post as Whip, said an official announcement.

Advocate Sarwar has been elected Mayor of Barisal City Corporation.

## China battles SARS

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of Zhejiang have also been isolated.

And after closing down all public entertainment venues in Beijing over the weekend, the authorities in the northern province of inner Mongolia also shut libraries, museums, Internet cafes and cinemas.

The WHO has warned against travel to SARS blackspots Beijing, Guangdong, the northern province of Shanxi, Hong Kong and the Canadian city of Toronto in a bid to prevent further spread of the disease.

But in a positive development, the WHO and the Vietnamese authorities Monday formally declared an outbreak of SARS which killed five people and infected 63 under control after no new cases emerged for 20 days.

"The SARS outbreak has been successfully contained in Vietnam," Health Minister Tran Thi Trung Chien told reporters, while warning of the risk of infected people entering the country from other countries.

But in Indonesia, which has remained largely free of SARS despite a severe outbreak in its northern neighbour Singapore, the health

ministry said a 56-year-old Taiwanese businessman suspected of suffering from the respiratory illness had died.

"He was categorised as a probable case of SARS. The cause of his death will be determined when we get the results of a post-mortem examination on Wednesday," said ministry spokesman Syafei Ahmad.

Taiwan suffered its first SARS death on Sunday and promptly barred visitors from affected countries. In Singapore, where another two fatalities brought the toll to 21, visitors were banned from public hospitals.

Hong Kong reported 12 more deaths on Sunday, equalling its highest one-day toll, and taking the total death toll in the territory to 133.

In a bid to draw up unified plans to control the crisis, leaders from across East and Southeast Asia will hold a summit on Tuesday in Bangkok.

There is still no diagnostic test for SARS, which begins with common flu-like symptoms. Scientists are working towards a cure and vaccine, but the director of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Julie Gerberding warned it could take time.

## Inflation inches up

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released highlights of its flagship economic report, Asian Development Outlook 2003 (ADO2003).

The ADB noted that the war on Iraq is unlikely to have a significant impact on Bangladesh. There has been no sharp increase in oil prices, nor has there been a discernible impact on export orders and migrant worker remittances.

Any major adverse impact of the war in Iraq on Bangladesh is not yet evident. A pick-up in exports, depressed imports and continued strong growth in workers' remittances led to a balance of payments surplus during the first half of FY2003, it said.

The SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) is yet to affect the country, but could yet have some adverse impact on the external trade if it disrupts the travel plans of buyers of Bangladeshi garments based in Hong Kong and Singapore, the report added.

GDP growth for financial year (FY) 2003 is estimated at 5.2 per cent, relative to the 4.4 per cent growth rate achieved in FY2002, the ADB said. Higher growth will be underpinned by an expected rebound in agriculture and a moderate recovery in export-oriented manufac-

turing.

The outlook for food grain production in FY2003 is better than the preceding year. Notwithstanding a shortfall in the Aman crop relative to its production target for the year, both the Aus and Aman harvests have increased in comparison to a year ago.

ADB mentioned higher prices for rice have also led to an increase in the area under Boro cultivation. As a result, agriculture output for the year is likely to exceed three per cent, compared with negative growth last year.

The foodgrain import surge is ascribed to rising domestic foodgrain prices, low domestic food procurement and declining inflows of food aid.

"Rice import has increased sharply as it is a profitable trade now. Import from India costs Tk10.6 per kg, from Myanmar Tk10.2 and Vietnam Tk12.5 per kg whereas local price is Tk 14 per kg," ADB economist Rezaul Karim Khan told reporters at the briefing.

During the first half of FY03, year-on-year manufacturing output increased by 4.9 per cent relative to 3.4 per cent for the entire FY02. The output of chemical products, food processing, non-metallic products, and wood

products including furniture recorded notable increases.

During this period, the output of small-scale industry increased at a relatively more rapid 5.7 per cent.

Foreign exchange reserves increased to US\$1.8 billion till mid-April 2003. Notwithstanding a further payment to the Asian Clearing Union (ACU) in May, and a likely pick-up in imports in the coming months, pressure on reserves are likely to be relieved in the near term by an expected disbursement under the World Bank's Development Support Credit before the end of this fiscal year, it added.

## SARS

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instructed late last week to fill up a yellow card describing health condition of the passengers landing at ZIA.

Earlier, passengers coming from Hong Kong, Singapore and Thailand were being checked.

"We have taken this decision in view of the reported spread of SARS in some more countries," said a ZIA official yesterday.

## Hussain paints today's 'Thief of Baghdad'

**PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi**

Contemporary major events across the world have seldom failed to stir painter Magbool Fida Hussain. And the US-led war against Iraq is no exception.

The hotel Ashoka, in the heart of the Indian capital, is currently showcasing an exhibition of 43 posters by Hussain. It reflects how deeply the man with the magic brush has been touched by the destruction caused by the war.

The theme of the exhibition titled "Thief of Baghdad" is not, as one would normally expect, the human casualties caused by the US-led military operation. Instead, it mirrors the painter's anguish over the plunder of history and culture that had occurred in the looting of Iraq's national museum a museum that had treasured priceless artefacts of thousands of years of the country's history, including the Sumerian and Mesopotamian civilisations.

And nothing brings out Hussain's theme better than a poster of the 1924 Hollywood silent film "Thief of Baghdad" starring Douglas Fairbanks. The poster shows an American marine soldier abducting Marjina on a flying carpet. Marjina has in her

hand an Arabian vase and a lamp lit in it. All embedded with high symbolism.

The symbolism also comes out when one realises that the "Thief of Baghdad" was in love with the princess of Basra, the southern Iraqi port city that was the first to be targeted by the US-led campaign.

Significantly, most of the posters are in black and white.

"When I learnt that Basra and Baghdad were bombed, the images of the film came rushing back to my mind vividly," said the painter.

The only difference, as the painter points out, is that the "Thief of Baghdad" was benevolent unlike the looters of today.

Some of the posters in the exhibition date back to Hussain's days in Baghdad in 1965. Why did he choose posters for his exhibition? The painter would tell you that it is because he had started his career as an artist in Bombay in 1930s drawing posters of Hindi films.

All the posters are made with the help of digitography technique, said Hussain who had completed the 43 posters in four days.

After putting up the exhibition in Bombay, Kolkata and Delhi, the artist plans to do so in Dubai.

## Law and order

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Three youths abducted the class IX student, took her to a remote place and violated her. She returned home and took poison to end dishonour.

A mother was violated by youths in Comilla on April 16. The rapists threw acid on her face when she filed a case against them. They went on to violate her little daughter when she refused to withdraw the case.

Looting of firearms from cops, killings, robbery and mugging are also taking place in Dhaka on a regular basis.

Robbers looted Tk 12 lakh from a staff of business house in Hathkhola in Sunday morning. Five armed robbers waylaid a private car of Abdur Razzak, manager of Miami International, at gunpoint. They pulled the driver out of the car and drove away with the car and the money.

On Saturday night, criminals drugged three cops and took away two Chinese rifles and a shotgun at the city's Alwal Avenue.

Two Rupali Bank staffers were killed in a 22-storied under construction building in Motijheel on Tuesday night. Miscreants beat them to death and left the bodies on the 18th floor of the building.

A former advisor to the caretaker government of 1991 was stabbed to death by his addicted son on Thursday when he refused to give him money.

Criminals slaughtered a BNP leader

## Gujral

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governmental organisation.

He said the invasion of Iraq without the approval of the United Nations has weakened the position of the world body.

He said nations could help each other by liberalising their economic and neighbourhood policies formulated on the basis of compassion and principle of togetherness.

Speaking on the Indo-Bangladesh relations, the former Indian

premier said the two countries are maintaining good relations but "the main point is that the relations between the two neighbours should be better than what it is today".

About the menace of religious fundamentalism and communalism in the subcontinent, Gujral expressed his concern and said it is a threat to democracy and civil society.

Gujral also expressed his anxiety about the rising incidents of terrorist activities in all countries of the region, saying that each and every country in South Asia is haunted by terrorism. "We must cooperate with each other to eradicate this curse," he said.

## Rivers of discord

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chair of the seminar, observed that the entire framework of international law is rather fragile, ineffectual and tenuous. He said the notion "Might is right" continues to dominate the operational aspects of international law.

"The recent directive by the Supreme Court of India to inter-link the major rivers of India within the next 10 years poses a direct threat to the economic security of Bangladesh," he said.

Some participants observed that the US invasion of Iraq paved the way to redefine the international laws that have failed to uphold sovereignty of some countries.

the following day and took away his head. The beheaded body of Safruddin Safu, an enlisted contractor of DCC, was found at his family graveyard in Mirpur. His head was later recovered from Mohammadpur.

The list of crimes appears to be endless.

Armed men gunned down a JCD leader in Pallabi on Tuesday. Another young man was beaten to death in Mirpur on Sunday. In Chittagong, young computer engineer Srikanta Rakshit was killed after abduction on April 20. His beheaded body was found in Tandrabli area of Shikarpur union, Hathazari the following day.

## Yakub made

### Envoy to

### Sri Lanka

**BSS, Dhaka**

The government has decided to appoint AM Yakub Ali, at present Director General and Chief of Protocol, of the foreign ministry, as High Commissioner of Bangladesh to the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

Ali was born in Manikganj in 1953. After obtaining Master's degree from the University of Dhaka, he joined Bangladesh Civil Service (foreign affairs) in 1981.

He served in Bangladesh missions in Paris, Rabat and Washington.

## US pressure

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afternoon, but she cancelled the meeting on personal grounds.

Contradicting the newspaper reports, a Foreign Ministry press release yesterday said, "The fact of the matter is that a request was made for a call on the prime minister by Mr. Muselier subject to the prime minister's programme for the day."

"However, because of the very tight schedule of the prime minister on 27 April 2003, the call-on could not be arranged and this was duly conveyed to the French side," the release said.

It said the reports that a scheduled meeting of Muselier with the prime minister was cancelled were "absolutely unfounded", because a meeting, which was not fixed nor confirmed, could not be cancelled.

The press release said Muselier had a very successful visit to Bangladesh. His discussions covered all aspects related to bilateral relations with France as well as regional and international issues of common interest and concern.

However, a French Ministry press release, received here Sunday, incorporated the state minister's courtesy call on Prime Minister Khaleda Zia on April 27.

## BDR-BSF

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A ministerial level meeting was needed to bring the situation under control.

The Director General of the BDR, Major General Mohammad Jahangir