

# Ershad now denies filing

**FROM PAGE 1**  
.were waiting to receive her.  
Her lawyers, however, pointed out that a complainant has to appear in person before the court to file such a case, which Ershad did not do.

Dhaka Central Jail Authorities informed Bidisha's lawyers and relatives of the cheating case Monday evening although the case was filed on June 5.

Ershad, also chairman of Jatiya Party, filed a case on June 4 charging Bidisha with theft, ransacking, and making threats to his life. Gulshan police arrested Bidisha, who acted as a presidium member of Jatiya Party until her expulsion, at Ershad's Baridhara residence the same day.

She was shown arrested later in a passport forgery case. The Court of Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka refused her bail in both cases, but the Court of Metropolitan Sessions Judge granted her bail in the theft and passport forgery cases on Sunday and Monday.

**BIDISHA YET TO GET BAIL**  
Bidisha's counsels yesterday moved a petition before the Court of First Class Magistrate, Dhaka for her bail in the cheating case. They argued that the case aims to harass her. "She did not hide any information and did not cheat on Ershad," Advocate Zahurul Islam, one of her lawyers, told the court.

The defence lawyers sought Bidisha's bail on the grounds that the charges brought against her are bailable. Besides, it needs to be taken into account that she is seriously ill.

Ershad's counsel Advocate Syed Amzad Hossain opposed the bail prayer.

First Class Magistrate Mofidur Rahman heard both sides and said he would further hear the arguments on June 18.

**CONFUSION**  
"I do not know of the case in which Bidisha is in jail now," Ershad said

yesterday, completely contradicting the records of the cheating case that bears his signature and was filed on June 5.

He mentioned in the complaint that Bidisha had been the wife of Wilson, keeping him (Ershad) in the dark despite having relations with him (Ershad) in marriage.

Bidisha continued the relation with Wilson and stayed with him in London as husband and wife even after her marriage with Ershad, the complaint said, adding that Bidisha mentioned Wilson as her husband while applying to Bangladesh High Commission in London for passport.

Asked about the charge of adultery, Ershad told reporters yesterday: "I have no knowledge about the other case or who filed it. I am sure the government knows about it."

Asked how many cases he filed against Bidisha, Ershad said, "I lodged two cases on June 3 and 4 against my former wife -- one for stealing property and making threat to my life and the other for fraudulence."

Referring to his marriage with Bidisha, Ershad said, "I trusted Bidisha and married her in the belief that she was a divorcee. I divorced her when I found that she lied to me about her previous married life."

"After learning that Bidisha obtained a passport mentioning Peter Wilson as her husband, what can [I] do? How can one tolerate this? I did not commit any sin. In fact, Bidisha committed sin."  
**NO GOVT PRESSURE, LINK**  
Ershad denied having "any covert link" with the coalition government that forced him to expel and divorce his second wife. "I have not signed agreement with anyone."

"Election is still far off. We will first consolidate the party and then take decision keeping in view the national and party interest," he said.

On allegations about kidnapping his son Eric, the former dictator said, "Why should I kidnap my own son? ... Eric is very much with me as you

are seeing now. In fact, it has long been my intention to take my son with me to perform Umrah Hajj."

About speculations that he would not return home because of the Bidisha episode, Ershad said, "When I die, I will die on the soil of Bangladesh."

Jatiya Party senior leaders including Kazi Jafar Ahmed, Ruhul Amin Hawlader, Golam Habib Dulal, Mujibur Rahman, Mohammad Ali Sarker were present at the airport to receive Ershad.

He also briefly addressed the waiting party workers on Airport Road. He told the crowd through loudspeaker that he married and divorced Bidisha in accordance with "Sharia".

"Can I not divorce my wife?" he quipped.

## WHEAT SCAM

## Supplier lodges writ petition accusing 48

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The Indian supplier robbed of Tk 12 crore of wheat has filed a writ petition to the High Court accusing 48 persons, including the concerned importer and shipping agent, to get his money for the goods supplied.

The scam involves 26,500 metric tonnes (MT) of wheat supplied by Priyanka Overseas Limited of Delhi, India to importer Didarul Alam. The wheat, shipped by shipping agent Humayun Kabir Chowdhury of M/S Hamara Shipping Agency, arrived to the outer anchorage on February 27.

An official customs inquiry in its investigation recently found both the importer and the shipper, along with three customs officials, guilty of secretly unloading over 10,000 MT of the wheat - worth around Tk 12 crore - and selling it to local market without paying any customs duty.

The shipping agent on June 9 filed a case at the metropolitan magistrate court against the importer for gobbling up Tk 12-crore by selling the wheat. Two days later, the importer filed another case at Bandar Police Station against the shipping agent.

Ashish Majumder, the representative of the supplier firm Priyanka, accused 48 persons, including importer Didarul Alam, shipping agent Humayun Kabir, the carrier and barge owners in his writ petition, lodged on Sunday.

"I have been in Bangladesh for more than three months, but still haven't collected a single penny out of over Tk 29 crore bills against the wheat supplied," Majumder told The Daily Star.

The High Court has reportedly asked all of those named in the case filed by Majumder to show cause soon, sources said yesterday.

## Some Rab men

**FROM PAGE 16**

personal interests."  
"We have already cancelled their deputation order and sent them back to their respective organisations and ensured punitive action against them according to the existing laws," he added.  
The minister informed the parliament that the government is formulating a policy for Rab to stop such criminal activities and take punitive action against those found involved in such activities.

Responding to another question from Mohsin Rahman Ranga (Rangpur-1), the minister said the government has a plan to install close-circuit cameras at 18 points in the capital to detect and curb crimes. He said the plan will be implemented as early as possible.

## Supplementary

**FROM PAGE 1**  
additional Tk 825 crore in the current fiscal for the new pay scale, Tk 615 crore for subsidy in agriculture, and Tk 287 crore for relief works for the flood affected people," Saifur told the House, adding that Tk 285 crore has been spent for post-flood infrastructure development.

The government has to spend an additional Tk 293 crore due to the fluctuation of the exchange rate of local money against the dollar, he said.

"Tk 1,662 crore has been increased as a development expenditure of 16 ministries," Saifur said.

Of Tk 4,895 crore, 46 ministries and departments have spent extra with the local government division under the ministry of LGRD and Co-operative having spent highest Tk 785 crore. Among others are the agriculture ministry spending Tk 684 crore extra, food and disaster management Tk 499 crore, post and telecommunications ministry Tk 480 crore, communications ministry Tk 351 crore, home ministry Tk 416 crore, education ministry Tk 305 crore and the defence ministry spending Tk 206 crore.

On revenue income in the current fiscal he said, "I hope we will be able to collect more than the target."

## Correction

The Daily Star yesterday ran a story headlined "Export support facilities under one roof planned" in which EPB vice chairman's name was mentioned instead of Commerce Minister Altaf Hossain Choudhury who chaired the EPB board meeting. We regret the inadvertent error.

# BB board rejects

**FROM PAGE 16**

branches in the capital.  
"The ill practice of the new system in applying for shares through BO accounts has created confusion and uncertainty among the investors about fairness of new capital issuance activities of other bank and institutions," it observed.

Mazid in the appeal said, "I was not involved in the irregularities. The removal decision was taken against me without any evidence." He termed his removal "unfair and autocratic".

Sources said the BB governor and other senior officials, who had earlier taken punitive action against Mazid, were not present at Sunday's meeting that turned down the appeal. Prof Mantazuddin Ahmed presided over the meeting also attended by Dr Wahiuddin Mahmud, Prof M Alauddin, Finance Secretary Zakir Ahmed Khan, National Board of Revenue Chairman Khairuzzaman Chowdhury and Dr Amena Ahmed.

On April 28, the central bank removed Mazid after its probe into the private bank's IPO (initial public offering) scam detected his involvement in the opening of fake bank accounts.

The central bank launched the probe on February 14 after the Securities and Exchange Commission on February 12 froze Premier Bank's Tk 55 crore IPO. The capital market watchdog's move followed the unearthing of huge fake beneficiary owners' (BOs) accounts in its preliminary investigation.

**ALLEGATIONS**  
The Bangladesh Bank enquiry found that all the 14 branches of

Premier Bank in Dhaka opened a total of 17,867 savings accounts through irregularities. Of the accounts, 8,703 were opened with partial documents necessary for opening any account, while the remaining 9,166 accounts have no documents at all. Even the account opening forms were not supplied.

The investigation body in its report said a total of 26,004 beneficiary owners' (BO) accounts were opened against the "so-called" savings accounts with the bank. The BO accounts were opened in absence of the account holders and the bank did not take Tk 300 as account opening charge against each account.

It found that the fake savings accounts were opened in only one and a half months' time and the BO accounts in just 17 days between January and February this year.

Except for one, all the managers of the 14 branches of the bank told the enquiry team that they opened the accounts on the verbal instructions over telephone of the managing director.

**BB OBSERVATION**  
From the statements of bank managers, except for the manager of Banani branch, it is clear that the top officials of the bank including its managing director had pressured the branch managers into opening fake savings and BO accounts.

The top brass of the bank, not the branch managers, made futile attempts to halt the investigations of the SEC and the BB by obtaining court orders, it said.

The central bank said Mazid had been cautioned several times for his involvement in irregularities during his stint with other banks.

# Rotten fish, dirty

**FROM PAGE 1**

As a result, the hygiene in most open-door restaurants is generally substandard, since restaurant owners often do not clean plates, glasses, and spoons properly, while the water is obviously dirty, as the supply from Wasa is not free of Coliform, a harmful bacteria. Rotten fish, meat from sick cattle, and spoiled vegetables are likely to be among the foods dished out each day in the city's restaurants. And it is not uncommon for buffalo meat to be served as 'beef' in many restaurants.

Recent studies have also revealed that other dangers - these invisible to the eye - are also lurking in the city's restaurants. Professor Golam Mowlah, the director of the Food and Nutrition Institute, University of Dhaka, said his students found in a recent survey *Escherichia coli* (E-coli), *Salmonella*, and *Shigella* bacteria in restaurant food and street foods in the city. Eating such dirty food may cause diarrhoea, dysentery and other diseases, the director added.

"Finding bacteria is very common in the restaurant foods. But the more alarming thing is that the restaurant owners do not throw out the oil left in their everyday cooking, using the same oil the next day. After using the oil day after day, the peroxide value of the oil increases and it becomes toxic ultimately," said Professor Mowlah, director of the Institute.

As most people eat adulterated and oily food from restaurants, suffering as a result from gastric problems, Rentitidine has become the second highest selling medicine item in the country.

It is difficult to document first-hand the conditions inside restaurants, since owners of both open and closed-door establishments do not allow anybody to visit their kitchen. But interviews with waiters from different restaurants revealed that many restaurant owners frequently mix rotten curry with food the next day.

"We do not throw out anything. But even in homes, nobody throws out the excess curry. Most people preserve it and eat it the next day," said one of the waiters working in a restaurant in Chankharpul.

Public concern over restaurant food has risen considerably in recent times, after the police caught traders selling dead hens a couple of times in last month alone. The

apprehended youths admitted to police that they were supplying the dead fowl to different restaurants. Despite public awareness and a police crackdown, however, people continuing buying and selling dead hens in the city, witnesses said.

The problem, as with many aspects of government-regulated food inspection, stems from a lack of manpower and the absence of a sound regulatory system.

"According to the law, we do not have any benchmark of standard about the restaurant food," said Foyez Ahmed Khan, the chief sanitary officer of the DCC. Inspectors are authorized to inspect the kitchen of a restaurant, but there is no specific law stating how restaurant food should be prepared. The food, however, is merely inspected with the senses, not examined through scientific diagnosis because such equipment does not exist. "If someone cooks dead chickens, we do not have any technology to detect it. We just see the environment of the kitchen of the restaurants and the hygienic status of the waiters," he added.

Restaurants fall under Section 6(1) of the Pure Food Ordinance of 1968, which sets minimum penalties for adulterated food set at Tk 300 and rigorous imprisonment for three months, and maximum penalties at Tk 1,000 with six months imprisonment. Experts say such low penalties render the law ineffectual. The government meanwhile is planning to formulate a new set of laws.

Proper monitoring is, meanwhile, pragmatically impossible since there are 18 inspectors to cover all 5,000 restaurants in city. The national picture is much the same, as the Health directorate has only 421 inspectors to monitor the thousands of restaurants throughout the country.

Sources add that many inspectors are simply negligent in performing their duties, allowing foul and rotten food to proliferate throughout the city. "Health officers hardly inspect the restaurants other than going for 'another aim'. Mainly the restaurant owners are operating without any monitoring as the government is not hard on this matter," said one official from the department of health, requesting anonymity.

# PM reaches Doha

**FROM PAGE 16**

market access to the developed nations.

She will be among more than 50 heads of state or government to attend the two-day Doha Summit.

The prime minister will lead a 31-member delegation to the summit, aimed at promoting the G77 collective interests and enhancing its negotiating capacity on major internal economic issues.

On the sidelines of the summit, Khaleda will have bilateral meetings with the Emir of Qatar, the prime minister of Malaysia and the king of Nepal.

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan and Foreign Secretary Hemayetuddin are now in Doha attending the pre-summit meetings.

Foreign ministry officials here said the Doha Summit, a follow-up of Havana Summit held in 2000, is expected to forge a strong coalition on inter-related issues of aid and trade, which are important for the developing and the least developed nations.

The summit bears special significance as it takes place ahead of a five-year review of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in September in New York and also the WTO ministerial meeting in Hong Kong in December.

It will seek international support to meet the Millennium Development Goals.

# US under secy due this month

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Ambassador R Nicholas Burns, under-secretary for political affairs of the US State Department, will visit Bangladesh later this month.

Burns is the third-ranking official in the State Department.

## Arman

**FROM PAGE 1**

Locals said 15 henchmen of Arman, including his brother-in-law Khorshed, as well as Kabir, Sayed, Galkata Monir, Kashaal Ripon, Selim, Kalu, Shamim, Shaheen, Johny, Jahangir and Syed attacked the Baramaghbazar kitchen market at about 9:30pm on Monday.

The criminals beat up several people and vandalised seven shops, witnesses said.

Shibly Kamal, Tapu and Rokan, seriously injured by the criminals, were admitted to local clinics.

The criminals again raided the area at about 11:00am yesterday and forced traders to give them illegal tolls.

Arman's gangsters might have unleashed the attack to scare those who distributed sweetsmeats after the ringleader's arrest on June 3, said a shop owner.

The duty officer of Ramna Police Station, however, said no complaint was lodged with the police station as of the filing of this report at 6:00pm yesterday.

**INTERROGATION ON**  
Arman, being quizzed in a remand by the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) in a murder case, did not admit his involvement in the killing, Rab sources said.

One of the top 23 listed criminals, Arman was taken on a seven-day fresh remand on Sunday on charges of killing an unidentified youth in April this year in Motijheel. Earlier, he was put on Rab's remand for seven days in an arms case.

"Arman is still giving us misleading information on his associates and illegal firearms," said a top Rab official seeking anonymity.

## Law secy tells

**FROM PAGE 1**  
function of a computer training programme for the staff of Dhaka judgeship, the law secretary alerted all concerned in this regard.

Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Moudud Ahmed inaugurated the training programme at the judges' court conference room. State Minister for Law Shahjahan Omar also spoke at the function chaired by Dhaka District and Sessions Judge Mohammad Rafiqul Islam.

Asking all to work to bring back people's confidence in the judiciary, Moudud Ahmed said the government has amended different laws to ease the way of justice to litigants.

Moudud termed the amendments a landmark step which has already quickened trial and justice to the litigants.

Lauding Dhaka District and Sessions Judge Mohammad Rafiqul Islam for arranging such a timely training programme taking no fund from the government, the law minister said such computer training programmes will also be introduced in all judgeships across the country.

Judge Rafiqul Islam declared the Dhaka District and Sessions Judge's Court area a non-smoking zone from yesterday. The guests, audience and the trainees applauded the decision.

Additional District Judge Kamruzzaman Mollah conducted the programme.

## AL MP

**FROM PAGE 1**  
register and took his seat at about 7:30pm amid huge table thumping by the treasury bench members. Law Minister Moudud Ahmed talked to the AL lawmaker and shook hands. During his three-minute stay in the House, Zahed too went over to the treasury bench and exchanged greetings with LGRD and Co-operatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan.

The main opposition deputies have been boycotting parliament since the 15th session for a number of reasons. The government's reluctance to hold discussion on the killing of former finance minister Shah ASM Kibria by adjoining day's business during the 15th session was one.

"I joined the House with permission from the Leader of the Opposition [Sheikh Hasina]," Zahed told reporters. He said he could not join parliament earlier due to a long stay abroad.

Queried about the length of his absence, Zahed said he has been absent from the House for 58 or 62 days.

If so another 32 or 28 more days are still required for cancellation of his membership.

## Thomas

**FROM PAGE 1**  
support for the secretary of state's travels.

Prior to his appointment as US Ambassador in Dhaka, Thomas had served as Director for South Asia, the National Security Council at the White House from 2001-02.

Ambassador Thomas had joined the foreign service in 1984 and served in the US embassies in India, Zimbabwe, Nigeria and Peru.

# Niko gifts minister

**FROM PAGE 16**

blue book of the car, fitness certificate, original insurance certificate, toolbox, a spare wheel, an alternative key, and an operator's manual.

SR Osmani, chairman of Petrobangla, has sent a letter to the state minister requesting him to use the vehicle (Gha-11-6213). An official order issued by the Petrobangla on May 12 said Abdul Bari, an employee of Titas Gas Transmission Company, would work as the driver of the vehicle.

Since the gasfield disaster in Tengratila, three separate committees have been formed to assess the damage to the environment, gas reserves, and properties of the locals. But the complete assessment of the losses caused by the blowout has yet to be completed.

AKM Mosharraf Hossain had left Dhaka on June 5 to attend a three-day gas and oil exposition in Alberta of Canada at the invitation of the economic minister of the state. He may have talks with the higher authorities of Niko and energy ministry of the state on Tengratila gasfield disaster, said sources.

Meanwhile, in a clarification of the car issue, the energy and mineral resources ministry on Monday denied that the state minister has received any gift from the Canadian oil company.

As the minister was not provided any car by the Government Transport Pool, he has been using a Nissan Patrol Jeep (Dhaka Metro-Gha-11-0409) belonging to Gas Transmission Company Ltd (GTCL), said the statement signed by the senior information officer of the ministry.

"Recently, the vehicle was repaired for mechanical faults and was sent back to GTCL. The state minister now is using a Toyota

Cruiser Jeep (Gha-11-6213) that belongs to Bapex. Therefore, the Bapex-car is simply a replacement of the GTCL-car used by the state minister earlier. It has nothing to do with the evasion of the payment for Tengratila explosion damage," the clarification read.

It also said that in accordance with the government rule, the transport pool had requested the minister to use a vehicle from any organisation/corporation under his ministry.

## Some action

**FROM PAGE 1**  
raided several spots at Wiseghat Fruit market in old Dhaka and arrested the five with chemically poisoned mangos.

"They were spraying carbide and other artificial chemicals on the mangos, seriously health hazardous materials," Magistrate Mamun-Al-Rashid told The Daily Star last evening. Experts say that traders use carbide to artificially ripen the fruit.

The arrested were immediately sent to jail under section No. 272 of CrPC (Criminal Procedure Code), the magistrate said. "Mixing hazardous chemicals is a punishable act for which the offender could be awarded a maximum of six months imprisonment," he said, adding, "The five were awarded the maximum."

The home ministry, following a news item run in The Daily Star with the title, "Food tainted with toxic colours, risky mixings," ordered a raid in the capital to nab people involved with the crime.

# 30 killed in Iraq

**FROM PAGE 16**

event that seals their long fought-for autonomy but does not resolve the disputed status of Kirkuk.

Meanwhile, 10 Iraqis, including two children, were killed and seven wounded by a car bomb north of Baghdad, according to security and hospital sources.

"Ten people were killed in all and seven wounded," an Iraqi army officer said, adding four deaths among his own soldiers to an earlier report of six dead and four wounded.

The troops had been called in to reinforce a police station in the town of Kana'an that was under mortar attack, and were targeted by a car bomb parked nearby, a police officer said.

In the northern city of Arbil, Barzani, son of the Kurdish nationalist hero Mullah Mustafa Barzani, was to take the oath of office after being formally selected Sunday as president of Iraqi Kurdistan.

"The choice of Barzani as regional president crowns hundreds of years of struggle, strewn with the bodies of martyrs," parliament speaker Adnan al-Mufti had said following the vote.

In Baghdad, the Iraqi court set up to try Saddam Hussein released a video on Monday that showed the ousted leader being interrogated, and in Washington the White House again rejected the idea of laying out a timetable for withdrawing US troops from Iraq.

"I have given the approval to release the tape," Judge Raed al-

## Saifur

**FROM PAGE 1**  
apprehension that the growth of mobile phone sector would slow down after imposition of the new tax.

"As many as 16 new companies are in the queue and we can earn Tk 1,000 crore to Tk 1,500 crore through auction [cellular phone licence]," he added.

Citing example of Pakistan and Tunisia, he said that they have earned \$400 million to \$500 million from the cellphone licence.

Saifur said people once could not even buy a connection for Tk 50,000 but the scenario has changed after the launch of Teletalk. "It has brought a competition in the sector."

# Pop superstar

**FROM PAGE 16**

Defence lawyer Susan Yu and Jackson's mother, Katherine, wiped away tears as he was hustled from the courtroom and returned to his sprawling Neverland Valley ranch -- where a teenage boy had claimed the singer molested him after nights of heavy drinking.

Jackson, who looked expressionless and gaunt as he left the court, refused comment but blew a kiss to waiting fans. He faced nearly two decades in prison if convicted on 10 counts of lewd acts with a child, giving a minor alcohol and conspiring to commit child abduction, extortion and false imprisonment.

Outside the courthouse, the verdict, which was broadcast around the world, triggered a frenzy among the hundreds of fans who camped there for more than a week awaiting word on Jackson's fate. Many were dressed in white. They hugged each other, cried, threw confetti and set free white doves.

Jackson's defence team left the court without speaking to hundreds of reporters gathered outside from the United States and more than 30 other countries.

The case against Jackson was sparked by a February 2003 television documentary in which the singer was shown holding hands with his accuser and defending his

Juhi, a member of the Iraqi Special Tribunal, said without elaborating.

CNN television showed brief footage of Juhi questioning a bearded Saddam who was wearing a white shirt and black jacket, reportedly over the 1982 killing of 143 residents of Dujaal, a Shia village northeast of Baghdad.

Saddam, who has been in US custody in Iraq since his capture in December 2003, is accused of ordering revenge murders after villagers allegedly tried to assassinate him, along with a litany of other alleged crimes against humanity.

If convicted, he faces the death penalty.

The video's release came after repeated calls from the Shia-dominated government of Prime Minister Ibrahim Jaafari to speed up the trial and could have been aimed at showing the court's progress in bringing charges against Saddam. (AFP, AP)

## Taks stuck

**FROM PAGE 16**  
aspects of the project and other terms and conditions predominated the meeting.

Kanthong Unakul, deputy director general of the South Asia Division of the Thai foreign ministry led the six-member Thai delegation that included Sataporn Jinachitra, president of Export Import Bank of Thailand.

Communications ministry's Joint Secretary Mushtaq Uddin Ahmed led the host.

The decision of constructing a 20-kilometre long elevated expressway in Dhaka was first taken during Thai Premier Thaksin Sinawatra's visit to Bangladesh in August 2002.

The matter was also discussed during Bangladesh Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's visit to Thailand last year.

Bangladesh formed a task force on August 23, 2004 following the visit.

The Thai government had earlier proposed to provide 60 per cent of the cost as a loan from the Thai commercial bank and 20 per cent as technical support from the Thai government. The remaining 20 per cent was supposed to be provided by the Bangladesh government.

The six-member Thai delegation is scheduled to leave Dhaka today.

practice of sharing a bed with young boys.

The jury of eight women and four men deliberated for seven days before acquitting Jackson, a former child star who reached his peak in the 1980s with "Thriller," among the best-selling albums of all time.

Jurors had to consider testimony by 140 witnesses and sift through some 600 items of evidence but they appeared to have had little difficulty reaching their unanimous decision.

## 5 killed

**FROM PAGE 16**

driver and one of his employees.

The injured wife and the other six family members of Salauddin were admitted to Comilla Medical College and Hospital (CMCH).

In Gazipur, a man was run over and killed by a speeding truck on the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway at Tongi yesterday, according to a correspondent.