

# ACC for arresting

**FROM PAGE 1**  
the ACC Act includes a provision that would allow the commission to continue its operations based on decisions made during its meetings, until the necessary rules are formulated, sources said.

The current ACC Act clearly states that the commission itself would examine and decide whether someone would be asked for his or her wealth statement.

But between the first week of February and February 26, when the three top positions of the commission remained vacant following the resignation of its chairman and two commissioners, ACC Secretary Delwar Hossain issued a notice asking 50 corruption suspects to submit their wealth statements, ACC sources said.

The proposed amendment of the ACC Act includes a section that states that the commission can give an ex-post facto approval to the secretary's actions while the three top posts of the commission were vacant.

The amended ACC Act would be considered retrospectively effective from the day ACC Act, 2004 was implemented.

Currently the ACC has 90 investigation officers (IO), but questions

## Ponting leads

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Samad was first to fall as he tamely steered a long hop into the hands of Tikolo at point; the delivery should have disappeared to the boundary but there was a lack of intent in the shot. However, intent then oozed from Barnett's bat as he launched into the first set of optional Powerplay overs taking five fours off Nehemiah Odhiambo's second over, whose first two-over spell cost 26. Barnett played to all corners of the ground as he drove and pulled with power.

He couldn't build on his momentum, though, as the adrenalin coursing through his veins became too much. When Ongondo dropped short in the next over Barnett hooked high to long leg, but it required some outstanding judgment from Tanmay Mishra as he watched his footwork around the rope to perfection.

# Banks find low deposit

**FROM PAGE 1**  
in the banking sector, bankers said their clients are in panic following the ongoing anti-graft drives by the joint forces.

Besides, the National Board of Revenue (NBR) froze bank accounts of a number of people on suspicion of corruption, a top official of a private commercial bank said, adding that the move prompted many clients to withdraw their deposits.

A managing director of another private bank said if the trend continues, there might be a crisis in the banking sector in near future. "The government should address the reasons behind the reduction in deposit and credit and take proper measures," he said.

The BB sources said the government is also concerned about the panic in the banking sector and the law enforcers have been asked to carry out their anti-corruption drives in a more coordinated way to avoid giving rise to panic among honest clients.

According to the BB data, the total volume of credit was Tk 1,42,257 crore on December 31, 2006 in 43 commercial banks comprising four nationalised commercial banks (NCBs), 30 private commercial banks (PCBs) and nine foreign commercial banks (FCBs). The figure lowered to Tk 1,42,087 crore on February 22 this year.

The total volume of deposit in the banks during this period increased a bit from Tk 1,76,182 crore to Tk 1,77,759 crore.

Credit in three of the four NCBs decreased from 1.0 percent to 4.33 percent during the period while the other witnessed only 0.25 percent growth. The overall decrease in credit in the NCBs was 2.04 percent.

The deposit situation in the NCBs also portrayed a grim picture with an average decrease of 0.69 percent. Three NCBs witnessed a decrease in deposit from 0.30 percent to 1.85 percent while the other saw a slight growth of 1.80 percent.

Credit in the PCBs increased slightly by 1.07 percent, but 15 of the 30 PCBs showed decrease in credit ranging from 0.66 percent to 6.64 percent during the period between December 31, 2006 to February 22, 2007.

Although overall deposit in the PCBs saw 1.87 percent growth, nine of the 30 banks witnessed deposit reduction.

The central bank data shows that the FCBs showed both credit and deposit growth during the period, albeit very slim ones. Overall credit growth in the FCBs was 0.38 percent and six of the nine banks experienced reduction

have raised on the efficiency of a many of the IOs and it adds to the effect of manpower shortage in the commission, sources said.

The ACC is also likely to get a boost by increasing the number of IOs to 300 and the total number of ACC staff to 1,200 from around 700, sources said.

The government might empower the commission to confiscate and auction the properties of the 15 listed corruption suspects who missed the deadline to submit their wealth statements, ACC sources said.

## Single list

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Department, Dhaka Water and Sewerage Authority (Wasa), Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (Desa), Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company Ltd and Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTTB).

## JMB cadre held in Gaibandha

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha**

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and police in a joint drive yesterday arrested a listed cadre of outlawed Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) at Barokona village under Shaghata upazila.

Acting on a tip-off, the forces raided a house at the village at around 5:00am and arrested Alauddin. He remained absconding since August 17 serial blasts across the country.

Police said Alauddin was the in-charge of a JMB recruitment and training centre at Akonderpara village under the upazila. Prior to the August 17 blasts, many JMB cadres, who received training from this centre, were deployed in different areas of Bogra, Joypurhat and Dinajpur districts, they added.

They further said the JMB also used a qwami madrasa at Barokona village as their training centre and meeting place.

## Khoka meets Khaleda

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Dhaka city Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka yesterday met BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia at her cantonment residence.

During the meeting that lasted for more than an hour, Khoka, also president of Dhaka city unit BNP, discussed with Khaleda the arrest of Tarique Rahman, sources said.

When contacted, Khoka said: "I just went there to meet her and it was a courtesy call...nothing else."

## Six cases filed against ex-BNP MP Hafiz

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal**

Six cases were lodged on Tuesday against Hafiz Ibrahim, a former BNP lawmaker (Bhola 2) and brother of

Giasuddin Al Mamun, on various charges including murder, rape, arson, extortion, toll collection, money laundering and other criminal activities

The cases were filed with Daulatkhān and Borhanuddin police stations. One case was lodged by anti-corruption task force while the other five cases were lodged by different individuals.

Manager of Rupali Bank Borhanuddin branch, Sarwar Khan, lodged a money laundering case against Hafiz on behalf of the task force with Borhanuddin Police Station. Hafiz used to be a director of Rupali Bank.

Two separate cases of extortion, arson and looting were filed against Hafiz with the same police station by Abu Taher and Mozammel Huq Bhuiyan -- both local Awami League (AL) leaders.

M Zakir Hussein lodged a murder case with Daulatkhān Police Station accusing Hafiz for the killing of his (Zakir's) father local AL leader M Shahjahan.

Rahima Begum, wife of local AL leader Nurul Islam, lodged a looting, arson and extortion case against Hafiz with the same police station.

A rape case was lodged by Anjoli Rani with Daulatkhān Police Station.

Around 100 local BNP leaders and associates of Hafiz were also accused in the criminal cases.

## Total to take over 2 gas blocks from Tullow

**UNB, Dhaka**

French oil giant Total SA will take over the country's two gas blocks from Irish company Tullow under an agreement signed between Tullow and the government yesterday.

The blocks are 17 and 18 located at Cox's Bazar and its adjoining offshore areas.

Through the agreement, the government also approved a time extension on the existing production sharing contract (PSC) until 2009.

Tullow Representative Gert-Jan Smulders, Energy Division Deputy Secretary Mahbubun Nahar and Petrobangla Secretary Golam Mostafa signed the accord on behalf of their respective sides at a function at the energy ministry.

Energy Adviser Tapan Chowdhury and Energy Secretary AMM Nasiruddin were present.

After the signing of the agreement, the energy adviser told reporters that the French company's entry into the energy sector would encourage other giants to come to Bangladesh.

"We hope, this will play a significant role in the development of the country's energy sector," he said.

Petrobangla sources said Total, the fourth largest oil company in the world, already acquired a 60 per cent stake in the offshore gas blocks under an agreement with Tullow last year.

The agreement officially recognised the TOTAL-Tullow deal, they said.

## Meghnaghat-3

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Previously the Orion group bagged the Meghnaghat-2 deal using their Hawa Bhaban connection.

The present caretaker government decided to cancel the Meghnaghat-3 proposal last month and asked the Power Cell to prepare for an open tender.

## 40 spotted

**FROM PAGE 1**  
female deer from Dhaka in 1986. The number of deer gradually increased to 40 in the last 21 years.

The seized deer are now under custody of the forest department.

Rab said the caretaker produced relevant papers for rearing three deer. The other deer were being reared in an unauthorised way.

# E-immigration

**FROM PAGE 16**

Under the new immigration procedure, the arriving or departing passengers or airlines or travel agencies on the passengers' behalf, have to fill up ED cards in immigration website (www.immi.gov.bd) and in return, will obtain an Immigration Service Code (IS Code).

"A printed ED card from website with IS code reference will ease and quicken the immigration process, as the immigration official at ZIA can crosscheck the information of the passenger swiftly," Shah Alam said.

A lot of time will also be saved through this system, comparing to the traditional one, where the ED cards are filled up manually.

According to the website of Immigration Police, same IS Code will stand valid if basic information like name, passport number, address in Bangladesh etc remains unchanged. A new IS code is not obligatory for change of flight or travel date, it noted.

The Immigration website will also facilitate keeping friends' or relatives' message for any incoming or outgoing passenger and installation of an SMS service is under process to provide arrival or departure information of any individual to his/her friends or relatives (with the consent of the respective passenger), the website noted.

As E-Immigration is capable to store advanced or lost/cancelled/invalid visa or travel

## Rejoinder

**FROM PAGE 1**  
period from 2002 to 2006. Therefore, there is no question of his getting an allotment in the "Hotel Motel Zone" in Cox's Bazar, he said.

**Our reply**  
On May 20, 1999, the then government declared 10,465 hectares of land in Cox's Bazar and adjacent areas as 'ecologically critical area' to preserve the bio-diversity and prohibited erecting structures, felling trees and capturing animals in the area.

The plots owned by Hyperion Builders are situated in Zilongia demarcation and trace map shows that all the plots in Zilongia are situated inside the 'ecologically critical area'.

Our reply to former MP Shahiduzzaman's rejoinder is -- although he did not take allotment of any plot in "Hotel Motel Zone" in Cox's Bazar under his own name, he took the allotment of plot no 42 in the name of his younger sister Zakia's husband Mahbubul Alam.

# Titas gas field

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Natural gas with water and petroleum known as hydrocarbon are automatically streaming out through five tube well pumps including a new one with such a great force that it is making a roaring noise. Similar substances are also gushing out through thousands of holes and cracks in and around the villages and Loiska Beel, a vast swamp. The soil of the area is also becoming hard and crusty.

The water that is gushing out through the leaks is hot and tainted with gas and petroleum. The villagers finding no other alternative source of drinking water are being forced to drink this contaminated water and also cooking and washing with it.

Since all the tubewells of the villages are automatically emitting a huge quantity of natural gas, the air of the village is being polluted creating a severe health crisis in the area.

Sometimes when the volume of gas in the air sharply increases, it starts burning if comes in contact with flames of oil-lamps or earthen stoves.

Boat rides on the Titas river have also become very risky. Some time ago, when a person threw a burning cigarette off his fishing boat in the middle of the river, a fire broke out as gas was bubbling out from that spot. Boat men and local villagers extinguished the blaze.

In another incident a huge ball of fire ignited over a paddy field at Loiska Beel.

At some places the gas emitted through some of the holes and cracks are burning with flames leaping high.

Local residents fear possible devastating incidents of fire there in the coming summer as the environmental heat might ignite balls of fire in the air tainted with flammable gas.

Sayed Hossain of Sampur village had to stop using his tubewell a year ago because gas was gushing out through it. He sealed of the spot with earth where the tubewell had been, now the soil of the spot always remains hot.

Residents of the village are now living with a fear of an explosion at any time at the spot.

A plethora of holes are seen in all parts of the banks of the Titas river near gas field location No 3, through which gas is continuously gushing out. Similar holes are also seen in different crop fields.

Meanwhile, the holes are gradually becoming larger while some have automatically got sealed by streaming sludge of toxic liquid. New holes with gushing gas and sludge are popping up every day. Gas is also leaking through the

document information issued by various embassies or offices, it will play a strong role to check travelling with forged visa or travel documents, the Immigration website said.

"Such information will be displayed automatically when the passenger is in Immigration queue," it added.

The authorities appreciate any observations, suggestions or comments on immigration in general or on E-Immigration in particular, the Immigration police said.

## UGC to probe

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Certificate scam, a UGC press release said.

The committee is to submit its report within 15 days from the date of its formation. It will investigate complaints relating to irregular Appointments and other irregularities at the university, the Syndicate resolution relating to the LLB exam scam and the related probe committee reports, documents, papers, exam result-sheets, exam scripts and other relevant papers, the release added.

Meanwhile, the CU authorities yesterday started sending letters to the cancelled LLB certificate holders at their personal addresses.

Other members of the committee are UGC members Prof M Tareque Shamsur Rahman, Prof Ehsanul Haque and Dhaka University Controller of Examination M Bahalul Haque Chowdhury, the release said.

Prof M Muzaffar Hossain, acting examination controller of the CU, said other actions against the certificate scam such as sending related documents of the persons concerned to Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) would start soon.

Process of publishing a gazette notification of the cancelled certificates of Degree (pass), Subsidiary and B-Ed is also going on, he added.

Sources said the university authorities earlier sent the list of 50 cancelled LLB certificate holders to Chancellor of the university, Bar Council chairman in Dhaka and the law colleges concerned all over the country.

On Saturday, the authorities published a gazette notification cancelling LLB certificates of 50 examinees including that of controversial judge Faisal Mahmud Faizee on charge of tampering with their tabulation sheets and other irregularities.

## 6 killed in Indian cop firing

**AFP, Kolkata**

Police opened fire yesterday on a mob protesting the planned building of a Special Economic Zone in eastern India, killing six and injuring around 50, police said.

"The death toll has gone up to six," Raj Kanojia, police chief of eastern West Bengal state, told the news agency, adding that around 50 people were injured of whom six were in critical condition.

"We are keeping a watch on developments, the situation is under control," he said.

The violence was the latest in a series of nationwide protests, mainly by poor villagers, against the government buying up farmland for private industrial parks. The parks are seen as central to India's drive to boost economic growth and lure foreign investment.

Kanojia said the clashes erupted when residents of Nandigram village -- about 120 kilometers (75 miles) south of the state capital Kolkata -- attacked police with sickles and sharp objects.

"The police had to resort to firing," he said.

Police said they had gone to the village to provide protection to workers who were seeking to repair roads and bridges destroyed by the villagers in an effort to block access to the village.

Nandigram had been cut off from outsiders since January when 11 people were killed in clashes with the police over the government's proposed Special Economic Zones (SEZs). The SEZs are privately-run enclaves with world-class infrastructure and tax breaks.

State opposition parties, including the Congress Party -- which leads the ruling coalition at the national level -- have called for a statewide strike on Friday to protest the police action.

Congress chief Sonia Gandhi has expressed concern over the killings, her party said. West Bengal's Marxist administration has announced plans to buy 14,500 acres (5,867 hectares) of land for Indonesia's Salim group to set up a chemical hub in Nandigram under an agreement clinched last July.

The purchase is part of the state government's plans to take some 36,000 acres of land to set up SEZs.

In December, Indian President Abdul Kalam and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh intervened to persuade a state opposition leader to call off a 25-day hunger strike against a car factory being built on farmland by India's Tata group.

This week, a farmer whose land was expropriated for a car factory reportedly committed suicide, after work began on the plant this year following weeks of protests.

Police denied that the suicide was because of the land issue.

The protests have piled pressure on the federal government to review its policy on SEZs. The government has already suspended the majority of more than 200 SEZ proposals in the wake of clashes in West Bengal this year.

## Detention of Janakantha editor declared illegal

**UNB, Dhaka**

The High Court (HC) yesterday issued a rule upon the government to explain in ten days why the detention of Atiqullah Khan Masud, editor of the daily Janakantha, should not be declared illegal.

After hearing on a habeas corpus petition filed by Masud's wife challenging the detention order, a division bench comprising Justice MA Wahhab Mian and Justice M Ermadul Huq passed the order.

The joint forces arrested Masud at his Janakantha office on March 8. He was later sent to jail on a 30-day detention under the Special Powers Act.

Barrister Rakanuddin Mahmud appeared for petitioner Shamima A Khan.

## Defamation Case

**FROM PAGE 16**  
reporter, was granted bail from the same court.

Moving the bail petition, the lawyers argued that the daily ran factual news and the complainant filed the case as part of a conspiracy to harass the editor and others. Moreover, the charges brought in the complaint were false, fabricated and concocted, the lawyers added.

In his complaint, Mahmudur, also former executive chairman of the Board of Investment, mentioned that the leading English daily ran a news item on February 5 headlined "Forces search for 41 political big-wigs, will disclose their names, ask them to surrender".

The report said the law enforcers would disclose the list of the 41 'big fish', who had been hiding since the crackdown began, and ask them to surrender if they were not captured in a couple of days.

Inclusion of his name in the list of 41 'big fish' vilified his name, fame and reputation in society, complainant Mahmudur said, adding that the news item was false, fabricated and concocted.

Advocates Sayeed Ahmed Gazi, Ashraf Ul Alam, Emdadul Haq Lal, Anwarul Kabir Babul, Mahbubul Haq, Rafiqul Islam Milon, Abul Kalam Azad, Shahidullah Miah, Prasanta Kumar Karmakar and Chaitanya Chandra Halder moved for the defendants.

# Iran defiant as more UN sanctions loom

**AFP, Tehran**

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad yesterday dismissed the growing threat of more UN sanctions over Iran's nuclear programme, saying it was Western powers that were isolated and not Tehran.

His latest verbal onslaught against the West came as six major world powers prepared to address the full Security Council about a draft resolution that would impose a second set of UN sanctions against Tehran.

"If you (the West) think that by using the institutions you created and by adopting measures you will oblige the Iranian people to yield, then you are wrong," Ahmadinejad told crowds of supporters in the central city of Yazd.

"They sit down in a circle and swap papers. They say that they want to isolate the Iranian people... But it is the Iranian people who with the help of God have isolated you," he added.

Sections of the Iranian press, the parliament and even former president Mohammad Khatami have urged the conservative government to act with caution to prevent the adoption of a new UN resolution against Iran.

But Ahmadinejad -- whose provocative rhetoric during these provincial speeches has also caused controversy -- vehemently denied that Iran was becoming dangerously isolated.

"It is you (world powers) who are isolated and if you continue with these methods not only will you not be capable of harming the Iranian people but you will be even more isolated yourself."

He once again vowed that Iran would never surrender to the West's key demand that it suspends uranium enrichment activities, a process that can be used both to make nuclear fuel and the explosive core of an atomic bomb.

"The Iranian people are standing up and will defend its rights as a single body. All you will do is to alienate the Iranian people."

"The Iranian people know the path that leads to greatness," he proclaimed to cries of "Death to America" and "Nuclear Energy is Our Natural Right" from the crowds.

Iran insists that its nuclear programme is solely aimed at generating energy, vehemently rejecting US allegations it is seeking

# 2007 watershed year

**FROM PAGE 16**  
talks and on general peace and security including nuclear weapons.

Kashmir is split between the two countries and claimed by both in full. The territory has caused two of the three Indo-Pakistani wars since independence in 1947.

India and Pakistan were "engaged in the most sustained and intensive dialogue that they ever had" over Kashmir, Menon said.

The officials said that while they recognised the need to make progress on a solution to the Kashmir problem, on Wednesday they focused on "confidence-building measures" such as transport links created since 2004.

Pakistan had also suggested new measures such as sports events, a helicopter service and a postal service in Kashmir, Khan said.

He said the two countries' defence secretaries would soon hold talks on ending a 20-year standoff on the Siachen glacier in Kashmir -- dubbed the world's highest battlefield.

Kashmir has been the sticking

a nuclear weapon.

The six world powers were set on Wednesday to resume efforts to agree new sanctions against Iran over its nuclear defiance amid signs they are nearing agreement on a Security Council resolution.

They were to brief the 10 non-permanent members of the council although it was unclear whether the powers would be able to finalize an acceptable draft resolution in time for their meeting.

The new punitive measures under discussion by the five permanent Security Council members plus Germany involve an arms embargo as well as some financial and trade restrictions that build on the first sanctions imposed in December.

"I hope we will be able to have an agreed text to present to the (other) members of the council," French Ambassador Jean-Marc de La Sabliere said.

However the envoys from Russia and China -- which both have substantial economic interests in Iran -- emphasised there were still outstanding issues that had to be resolved.

Iranian officials have been fuming that Russia has not fulfilled an agreement to deliver the nuclear fuel by the end of March for its first nuclear power station, hinting that US political pressure is to blame.

"It is deplorable that there has been a delay in launching the Bushehr plant," top nuclear negotiator Ali Larjani was quoted as saying by the ISNA news agency. "The Russians should keep their promises on time."

However Russia has said that the delays to the Bushehr power plant stem purely from financing problems on the Iranian side and there are no political considerations.

Iran's foreign ministry has also started the process for Ahmadinejad to obtain a visa for the United States to attend any crunch meeting of the Security Council in person.

But Iranian officials have insisted nothing has been confirmed and the president's attendance would depend on whether such a meeting takes place.

point throughout the peace process which was launched in January 2004, less than two years after India and Pakistan massed hundreds of thousands of troops along their border.

The countries also held tit-for-tat nuclear tests in 1998, alarming the world, and fought sporadic clashes in the Kargil region of Kashmir in 1999.

The talks in Islamabad follow the February firebombing of a "Friendship Express" train in India that killed 69 passengers, mostly Pakistanis returning to their homeland.

But the two countries did not allow the attack to disrupt the peace process, vowing to boost cooperation in the fight against terrorism and to share information.

Khan and Menon said that India had given Pakistan a list of passport numbers to help identify 19 of those who died in the blast.

# Detained tax official

**FROM PAGE 16**  
handed detained chief engineer of Sylhet City Corporation (SCC) over to Kotwali police yesterday afternoon.

Rab intelligence officials on Tuesday arrested taxation official Harun and three others from Harun's office at Bijoynagar in the capital on bribery charges.

However, detained bank official Hasanuzzaman was released later after primary investigation and made a witness of the case.

He told the investigators that Harun called him over telephone on that day to give some money for depositing with the bank.

Rab officials said they raided Harun's house on Tuesday night and seized many documents regarding his transaction with different banks.

"We suspect Harun to have a huge amount in different banks. We've seized many documents, but we are not authorised to verify these," said Captain Syed Mohammad As-sazid, who led a team to arrest them.

He said the Anti-Corruption Commission would now look into the case.

Commissioner of Taxation (Appellate Zone-1) Aminur Rahman told reporters that Harun might be suspended temporarily.

He also said punitive measures would be taken against him as per the service rules.

Meanwhile, our Sylhet correspondent reported that the police would produce SCC Chief Engineer Saiful Islam, arrested on Tuesday

## NGOs

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Enough time to complete the ongoing reforms," Director of Gonoshakhorota Oviyan Rasheda K Chowdhury told reporters after their pre-budget meeting with Finance Adviser Mirza Azizul Islam at the NEC conference room.

She said they also support the government's anti-corruption drive and suggested that the purge should be carried out up to union parishad level.

Earlier on Tuesday, Communications Adviser Maj Gen (retd) MA Matin told reporters that the time of emergency might be extended.