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Opposition leader and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina inaugurates the 11th annual convention of the International Association of Lions Clubs, District-315 A1, at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the city yesterday.

'Investigate sources of political parties' income'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Kar Ainjibi Samity, a platform for tax lawyers, yesterday demanded proper investigation into the sources of income of all political parties and former and present ministers and lawmakers.

At a press conference at the National Press Club in the city, the samity leaders said the political

parties are spending lots of money without any accountability and transparency.

They said if the government takes stern measures against corrupt lawmakers, businessmen and other professionals, it would increase revenue as well as transparency in governance.

The speakers demanded appointment of tax ombudsman and transfer

of the Tax Appellate Tribunal to law ministry from the finance ministry.

They also urged the government to cancel the GP rate system that tends to harass taxpayers.

"As there is no fixed procedure to enforce GP rate, the newspaper industries are also suffering from the system. Taxes worth lakhs of taka have been fixed against a few newspapers while some of them don't need

to pay any tax irrespective of their circulation," they added.

Criticising the provision of turning black money into white the speakers said if a person pays 7.5 percent tax against his black money, it would be considered as white money.

This amount of tax is so small that the regular taxpayers feel discouraged in paying their tax, they added.

The speakers suggested proper co-ordination between value added tax (Vat) and income tax, media publicity on income tax payment and providing incentives to those who pay minimum Tk 20,000 in income tax regularly.

Presided over by Samity President Zakir Hossain, the press conference was attended by its Vice-president MA Halim, Secretary General Abdul Aziz Sarkar, members Advocate Kanika Mahfuz Ara and Advocate Shahidullah.



PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh Aabritti Samannaya Parishad took out a colourful procession in Chittagong yesterday on the occasion of 7th National Recitation Festival 2006.

Australia announces new scholarship programme

UNB, Dhaka

Australia has announced a new scholarship programme titled 'Australian Leadership Awards', targeting current and future leaders from the Asia-Pacific region with a view to developing human resource capacities of 34 countries, including Bangladesh.

The programme is aimed at enhancing mutual understanding,

knowledge and innovation and building partnerships in the Asia-Pacific region.

It will offer exceptional educational opportunities in Australia to those who demonstrate the capacity to influence policy reforms and development outcomes in the region.

Australian High Commissioner Douglas Foskett said, "The Australian Leadership Awards will

provide opportunities for Asia-Pacific countries and Australia to build people-to-people linkages."

He said the programme opens an exciting new arena of development assistance with an aim to build human resource capacities of 34 countries from Asia-Pacific, including Bangladesh.

Over the next five years, the programme will bring approximately 3,200 students and fellows

to study in Australia. The Awards will build capacity in areas of shared interest such as economic management, trade policy, pandemics, security and clean energy.

The Australian Leadership Awards programme is part of a broader initiative to double the number of educational scholarships Australia offers in the Asia-Pacific region.