

Taxmen asked not to harass taxpayers over amnesty

UNB, Dhaka

Officials of the National Board of Revenue (NBR) have been warned against any attempt to harass taxpayers taking advantage of the amnesty offered to the tax dodgers.

"The officials who'll harass the taxpayers will face severe punishment. No one will be spared in this regard," NBR Chairman Badiur Rahman told tax commissioners at a meeting at his office yesterday.

"Members of the intelligence agencies will be used as decoys. They'll approach the tax officers in the guise of taxpayers," he said, adding that any attempt to harass the taxpayers will be detected.

The meeting was dubbed as a strategy-setting session to make the amnesty programme that began yesterday, aiming to legalise the undisclosed money a success.

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Biman offers its staff voluntary retirement

Plan to cut manpower by 1,500

RASHIDUL HASAN

Biman Bangladesh Airlines yesterday offered its employees Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) as part of the government plan to turn the national flag carrier into a public limited company (PLC).

Biman's workforce will be reduced to 3,400 by axing about 1,500 current employees through the VRS.

Under the scheme, Biman has offered special packages to its employees whose service age exceeded at least five years.

As part of the VRS, the Biman employees who are in service for at least 25 years or more will get 15 percent more on their total gratuity as monetary benefits while who are

in service for 20 to 25 years will get 20 percent on their total gratuity. The scheme also says the employees, who are in service for 15 to 20 years and 5 to 15 years will get 25 percent and 30 percent more respectively on their gratuity at a time.

The Biman employees interested in taking the benefits under the VRS will have to apply in a prescribed form by June 20, the circular said.

Meanwhile, the preparations for turning Biman Bangladesh Airlines into a PLC are almost complete.

Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism has finalised Memorandum of Association (rules and regulations of Biman), Articles of Association (terms and conditions) and ordinance, under which

Bangladesh Biman Corporation would turn into Bangladesh Airlines Limited, sources said.

At the Biman head office yesterday, it was found that the Biman employees are in a dilemma over the VRS. Many Biman officials and employees were seen calculating the profit and loss of the scheme while many others were a bit worried sensing possible forced retirement if they do not respond to the current scheme.

"I don't know what will happen to me if I refuse the VRS notice," a Biman official, who has served Biman for 10 years, said.

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PATRONISING MILITANTS Charges pressed against Dulu, 32 others

UNB, Natore

Police yesterday pressed charges against former deputy minister for land Ruhul Kuddus Talukder Dulu and 32 others in a case of extortion and patronising militants.

Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Natore Sadar Police Station Zahidur Rahman Chowdhury, who is also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, submitted the charge sheet to the cognizance court here.

Selim Raja of Ramshar Kazipur village in Naldanga upazila filed the case against Dulu, his two nephews and 22 BNP activists with Sadar Police Station on April 8.

In the case statement, Raja alleged that followers of Bangla Bhai and BNP activists kidnapped him and extorted Tk 32,000 from his family members at the behest of Dulu.

But the investigation officer found involvement of 11 others in the incident and included their names in the charge sheet.

Dulu has so far been charge-sheeted in eight cases.



BENDING THE RULES... a hawker sets up his makeshift stall on the foot-over bridge near Kakoli bus stop on Airport Road in the capital yesterday as the vendors were evicted from pavements.



A young boy tries to make a living out of selling flowers. The photo was taken at Shahbagh intersection in the capital yesterday.

12 'militants' held in Kushtia, Barisal

STAR REPORT

Nine militants of Islamist outfit Allahr Dal were captured by Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) from different parts of Kushtia city yesterday.

Meanwhile in Barisal, three activists including a leader of Islamist militant group Hijbut Tawhid were apprehended by Sharikal police on Monday night.

Our Kushtia correspondent reports, one of the captured militants, Tasnim-ul-Islam, 23, is a son of Wahedul Islam, Jamaat-e-Islami Amir of Kushtia district unit.

The other arrestees are Rawnak Hossain, 23, Nazmul Haq Jewel, 22, Tipu Sultan, 36, Zahir Uddin, 25, Bappi Sahrier, 30, Saqul Islam, 28, Murad Sarif, 23, and Lokman Hossain, 21.

Rab earlier launched raids at various parts of the city on Monday night in search of the militants. The operation ended before dawn yesterday.

A team of Rab 12 led by Major Hasib first arrested Rawnak Hossain on Monday evening. He arrived in Kushtia several days back and was regrouping the militants in the district, according to Rab 12.

The law enforcers then apprehended the eight other militants from different areas of the city with

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10,000 fear eviction

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Over 10,000 Hindus in one of the largest Hindu enclaves in the city at Chakuli, in Mirpur-12 are living in gnawing fear of losing their ancestral homesteads and an age-old temple as the Cantonment Board authorities put a claim on the land.

Officials with bulldozers yesterday reached the place to demolish the village but called off the operation due to rain, locals said.

Residents there said they could produce all documents to prove that they have inherited the land from their ancestors.

"We have lived here for generations, if there is a proper land acquisition by the government we shall definitely respect that decision, but what is happening here today [Tuesday] does not have any legal basis whatsoever," said Narayan Sarkar, a carpenter by profession, living on a small piece of land he said he inherited from his forefathers.

The crowd of worried men and women grew to over 150 as this correspondent talked to them.

"When our parents learnt about the first acquisition back in the sixties, they went to the court and won the

case against the government," said a visibly shaken Sudhir Chandra Sarkar, president of the Durga temple committee and a community leader, showing copies of relevant documents.

The entire process of acquiring the area for extending Dhaka Cantonment was started again in 1973 under "confidentiality", residents said. The community of Chakuli was kept completely in the dark as the Ministry of Land allocated twenty acres of land to the Ministry of Defence in 1992. The Deputy Commissioner's (DC) Office in Dhaka, based on the 1992 allocation, prepared a handover note and handed over the land to the cantonment board.

"There was no notice, no communication whatsoever from the DC office, we only learnt about the handover years later in 2000 when cantonment personnel put a claim on our homes," said Sarkar.

"At present, there is an injunction from the High Court and a status quo order on our village, but the army does not want to look at anything," said a local resident.

The Ministry of Land and the DC office's handling of the matter, they went to the court and won the

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UN team talks counter-terror measures with govt, lawmen

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The visiting UN counter-terrorism team yesterday discussed local counter-terror measures and implementation of UN counter-terror resolutions with top government and law enforcement officials.

The 11-member Counter-Terrorism Committee of the UN met, among others, chairman of

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EC happy with ACC handling of graft cases

UNB, Dhaka

The European Commission is satisfied with the way the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) is handling the cases against corruption suspects, saying that they will follow the process closely.

"It (ACC) follows correct process... The ACC is doing it in correct way. Filing (of cases) is done... Some are in the courts, some are convicted and some will come. I

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SMALL POWER PROJECTS 37 local firms submit bid in re-tender

UNB, Dhaka

A total of 37 local firms have submitted their tenders to set up ten small power plants (SPPs) across the country as the caretaker government arranged re-tender for quickly addressing the severe power crisis.

The government last month cancelled the first bidding process on charges of "corruption" and "irregularities".

The SPPs will be set up in three categories in the private sector from which the government will purchase electricity at competitive rates.

One each of 10MW plants will be set up at Ullapara, Sirajganj, Mohipal

and Habiganj while one each of four 20MW at Barabkunda, Feni, Tangail and Narsingdi, and one each of three 30MW will be installed at Jangalia, Rupganj and Maona.

Official sources said the implementing agency, Power Cell, received the offers from the local private sponsors on Monday, the last day for submission of tenders.

They said the Power Cell received the highest bids for 10MW Ullapara project. The aspirant firms are Quasem Drycells,

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US suffers setback in Guantanamo rulings

Judges throw out charges against al-Qaeda fighter, Laden's ex-driver

AFP, Guantanamo Bay Us Naval Base

The US government suffered a stunning reversal on the legal front of its "war on terror" Monday as military judges threw out charges against a Canadian-born al-Qaeda fighter and Osama bin Laden's ex-driver.

The surprise rulings on Toronto native Omar Ahmed Khadr, 20, and Salim Ahmed Hamdan threatened to torpedo the government's pursuit of Guantanamo Bay terror suspects through new-look military tribunals.

In both cases, the judges found that they had no jurisdiction to proceed with military commission trials, as neither Khadr nor Hamdan had been classified as an "unlawful enemy combatant" as required by a recent US law.

Khadr was just 15 when he was captured in Afghanistan, accused of killing a US army medic in a hand-grenade attack.

Sporting a straggly beard and dressed in olive-green prison garb

and flip-flops, he stared on impassively as Colonel Peter Brownback issued his potentially far-reaching ruling.

"It was very surprising," the defendant's sister, Zaynab Khadr, told AFP in Canada. "But we were very happy to hear the news. I hope he will be released soon."

However, lawyers said that both Khadr and Hamdan will remain in legal limbo at this base in southeast

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Dhaka-Kolkata train service likely from July

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka-Kolkata direct passenger train service is likely to begin in the third week of next month with preparations completed by the second week.

The non-stop train service would connect Dhaka Cantonment station and Sialdah station in Kolkata.

Fare for the 11-hour one-way journey would be \$8 for general class, \$12 for sleeping berth and \$20 for air-conditioned first class per person.

Exact date of formal commissioning of the service would be fixed after negotiations with the Indian government, a high official of the communications ministry said yesterday.

A delegation from India would visit Bangladesh in the first week of next month followed by a Bangladesh delegation's visit to that country. The date of inaugurating the service would be fixed during the

visits at the convenience of both the governments, the sources mentioned.

An inter-ministerial meeting at the communications ministry yesterday decided to complete preparations for the service by the second week of July.

Later, communications secretary Dr Mahbubur Rahman told journalists that Dhaka would prepare for introducing the service in the third week of July.

The meeting decided that customs and immigration services for the train journey would be provided at cantonment station and existing train lines would be upgraded to dual gauge from metre gauge. The service would start from Kamalapur station in December this year.

According to sources, the law ministry has okayed the draft agreement on train service to be

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Properties of ex-minister Zia attached

UNB, Laxmipur

The moveable properties of former state minister Ziaul Haq Zia and five others, who remained fugitive since an extortion case filed against them on April 4, were attached yesterday.

Police, led by a magistrate, raided the houses of Zia, his associates Kabir Hossain Patwary, Monwar Hossain, Sahed Ahmed, Taslim Hossain and Zafar Ahmed in Ramganj and attached electronic gadgets and furniture.

The court had earlier ordered attachment of the moveable properties of the accused for their failure to appear before it.

Abul Khair of Lamchar had filed the case, accusing Zia and his five associates of extorting Tk one lakh from him.

Lightning kills nine more

STAR REPORT

Lightning killed nine people in four districts across the country yesterday.

Our Chapainawabganj correspondent said five people including a woman were killed in the early hours of yesterday.

They are Yusuf Moral, 60, of Ramchandrapur College Para under sadar upazila, Enamul Haque, 40, of Shibnarayanpur under Kansat union, Sattar, 40, of Namotola, Aftab, 52, of Lahomari, and Saleha, 50, of Ranibari under Chalkkirti union of Shibganj upazila.

Shibganj Upazila Nirbahi Officer Dewan Abdus Samad and a member of Ranihati Union Parishad of sadar upazila confirmed the deaths.

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This water body near the city protection embankment in at Lalbagh in the capital is being filled up with mud dredged from the Buriganga. The photo was taken yesterday.

Five held with 7 firearms, ammunition

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police in a raid yesterday seized seven firearms, 263 bullets and arrested five people from an abandoned rubber factory at the city's Nasirabad Industrial Area.

Industrialist Engineer Afsaruddin Ahmad, a leader of Chittagong South District Awami League, owns the factory -- Bangladesh Chemical Complex (pvt) Ltd.

The cache of weaponry included four three-knot-three rifles, two shotguns, a 9 mm pistol, 122 rifle bullets, 141 shot gun bullets, two magazines and 28 empty bullet shells.

Among the arrestees, Fazlul Haq

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Prayer Timing		
June 6		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-05	4-40
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-45	6-50
Esha	8-15	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation