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PHOTO STAR

Gulshan police yesterday brought some of the movable properties from the confiscated houses of nine high-profile political leaders, businessmen and government officials.

Middleman chain stands in way of compensating migrant workers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An investigation revealed yesterday a three-to-four-layer middleman chain and undocumented financial transactions in manpower business that remain as a bar to compensating workers in case of their immature returns.

Such facts came to light when an investigation officer of Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET) of 13 returnees. The 13 workers returned from Malaysia on September 25 and afterwards following unemployment and abuses by a Malaysian outsourcing company.

Acting Secretary Abdul Matin Chowdhury of the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment directed an arrangement of such a hearing of both the middlemen and the returnees on September 27.

The move came as recruiting agency Golden Arrow handed over 11 cheques of Tk 84,000 each to 11 workers, claiming it was paid exactly that amount by the returnees.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

## NBR for negotiations with tax dodgers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) yesterday said it will prefer negotiated settlements with people who have undisclosed money or untaxed income in exchange for taxes and fines paid, rather than taking legal actions against them.

While Anti-corruption Commission (ACC) Secretary Mukhles Ur Rahman told the Daily Star yesterday that the commission has plans of taking steps including sending its officials to the United Kingdom (UK) for training in recovering siphoned off money from offshore.

The NBR announcement came against a backdrop of the High Court (HC) staying the proceedings of nine NBR filed cases following appeals from the defendants who had been convicted by a special court. The HC stay order is premised on alleged procedural misconduct in filing of the cases.

The special court sentenced different high profile corruption suspects including former BNP

lawmaker Shahjahan Siraj and his family members to different terms of imprisonment in connection with 26 NBR cases, most of whom were tried in absentia.

The convicted in the nine cases filed petitions to the HC against the lower court judgment and got the verdict stayed.

NBR Chairman Badiur Rahman yesterday told journalists, "We will try to settle as many cases as possible out of the court."

"It does not mean that we are giving up our drive against tax dodgers. The drive against tax dodgers will go on simultaneously," the NBR chairman added.

The NBR chairman, however, did not specify any fixed rate of the fine to be levied. He said the fines and the due tax for an individual's undisclosed and untaxed income will be fixed through negotiations.

The NBR chairman talked to the journalists as he was coming out of the ACC head office yesterday afternoon.

"We talked about the cases filed

by both the NBR and the ACC and discussed how to coordinate them," said the NBR chairman.

Replying to a question over the propriety of filing of the cases by both the regulatory agencies, the NBR chairman said both agencies are empowered to file cases under respective laws.

"NBR may file cases without issuing any notice," said its chairman in reply to a question regarding filing of cases in connection with individuals' filed tax returns without issuing notices.

The NBR so far filed 37 tax evasion cases till September 23. A total of 73,493 people were identified as taxable individuals during the ongoing income tax survey of NBR, 42,837 of whom are new taxpayers.

According to sources a total of 18,895 individuals paid Tk 492 crore in income tax against their disclosed income of about Tk 2,882 crore till September 24.

Replying to a question regarding expiry of the September 30 deadline for declaring undisclosed

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3



PHOTO ANISUR RAHMAN

Woman vegetable sellers on a road at Karwan Bazar in the capital holding baskets on their heads to ward off scorching heat yesterday.

## Soldiers hunt dissidents in Myanmar

EU set to toughen sanctions

AP, AFP, Yangon/ Brussels

## Sehri, Iftar timings

Ramadan

Oct

Sehri

Iftar

21

4

5-46

22

5

4-32

5-45

23

6

4-33

5-44

Prayer Timing

October 4

Azan

Jamaat

Fajr

4-32

4-42

Zohr

12-45

1-15

Asr

4-15

4-30

Magrib

5-46

6-01

Esha

7-30

8-00

Soldiers announced that they were hunting pro-democracy protesters in Myanmar's largest city Wednesday and the top US diplomat in the country said military police were pulling people out of their homes during the night.

Military vehicles patrolled the streets before dawn with loudspeakers blaring that: "We have photographs. We are going to make arrests!"

Meanwhile, the European Union agreed in principle Wednesday to toughen sanctions against the regime in Myanmar, the EU's Portuguese presidency said.

EU ambassadors "agreed to toughen EU sanctions against the

regime in Myanmar, and requested that all preparatory steps be undertaken with a view to the necessary decisions to be taken (by EU foreign ministers) on 15 October," a statement said.

The UN's special envoy, Ibrahim Gambari, declined to comment on his four-day mission to Myanmar, where the military junta last month crushed mass pro-democracy demonstrations led by the nation's revered Buddhist monks.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

ambassador in Myanmar, said in a telephone interview that people in Yangon were terrified.

"From what we understand, military police ... are travelling around the city in the middle of the night, going into homes and picking up people," she said.

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