

EXPENSES SCANDAL

Cameron condemns Brit ministers

GUARDIAN ONLINE, London

David Cameron has condemned British government ministers for using parliamentary allowances to pay accountants to help them fill in their tax returns.

The Conservative leader said the practice "beggars belief" and that if any Tory MPs claimed for accountancy advice, they would be ordered to repay the money.

According to the Daily Telegraph, more than 40 government ministers, including nine members of the cabinet, have charged for accountancy services on their parliamentary allowances.

HM Revenue and Customs said last night that any MP who claimed for accountancy should have to pay tax on the amount of money they charged the parliamentary

authorities because accountancy fees in relation to a personal tax return are not tax deductible.

But the Labour party issued a statement on behalf of its ministers saying they had, as far as they were aware, honoured their tax liabilities.

Cameron said the money should never have been claimed from parliamentary expenses in the first place.

"If you have a small business, yes you have an accountant who helps out with the books. But when it comes to your personal tax return that is something everyone else in life has to either fill in themselves or pay an accountant to do it for them," Cameron said.

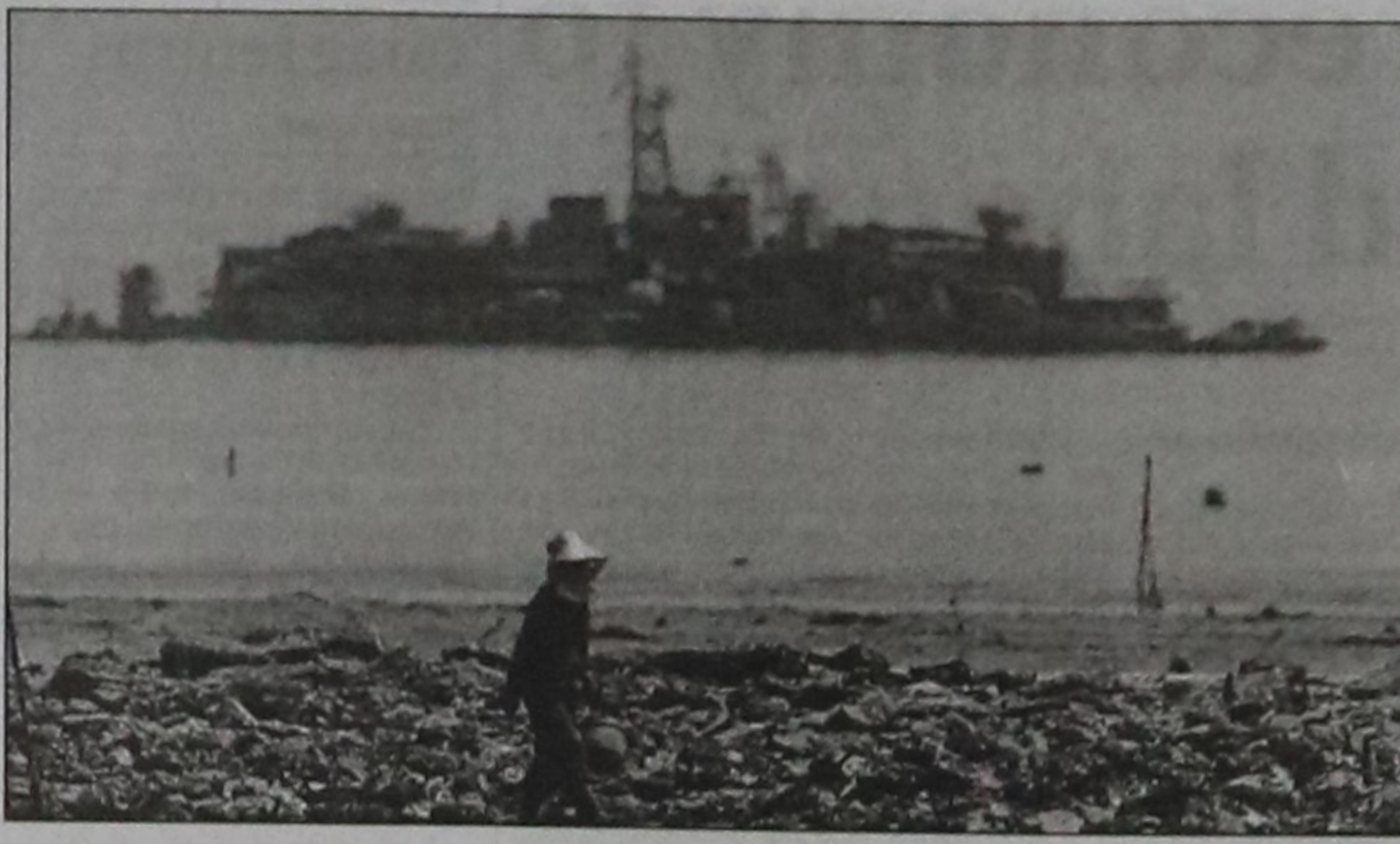
"It beggars belief. If any Conservative MP has used an accountant to do their personal tax return and has claimed that off the taxpayer I

will make them pay that money back. They ought to pay that money back, it is completely wrong."

The Labour statement, which was issued on behalf of its ministers including the home secretary, Jacqui Smith, and the foreign secretary, David Miliband, insisted they had met all their tax liabilities.

Other cabinet members behind the statement included the international development secretary, Douglas Alexander, the environment secretary, Hilary Benn, the communities secretary, Hazel Blears, the transport secretary, Geoff Hoon, and the work and pensions secretary, James Purnell.

He said: "To the best of my knowledge I am satisfied that I have honoured all my tax liabilities and will continue to do so.



A South Korean woman walks along an oyster field, with a sea base (back) for naval ships seen off Yeonpyeong Island yesterday, in disputed waters in the Yellow Sea, the scene of previous inter-Korean clashes.

Sotomayor's SC bid in US Senate's hands

AP, Washington

A history-making selection behind him, President Barack Obama is pressing the Senate to quickly confirm federal appeals judge Sonia Sotomayor as the first Hispanic justice on the Supreme Court.

Not so fast, say Republicans.

The GOP faces an uphill battle in defeating the New York-born daughter of Puerto Rican parents, but Republicans are promising a thorough and perhaps lengthy hearing process that scrutinizes her record and judicial philosophy.

"I'd like it to be a hearing that people can be proud of," said



Sonia Sotomayor

Sen. Jeff Sessions of Alabama, the top Republican on the Judiciary Committee. "That means treating the nominee with respect but not minimizing the serious issues that are at stake."

Sessions also said it was "possible" he could back Sotomayor's nomination, although he was one of several Republicans who opposed her when she came before the Senate as a nominee for the US Court of Appeals in 1998. "We ought to look at her record fresh," Sessions said.

US Troops could be in Iraq after 2012

AP, Washington

The United States could have fighting forces in Iraq and Afghanistan for a decade, the top Army officer said, even though a signed agreement requires all US forces to be out of Iraq by 2012.

Gen George Casey, Army chief of staff, said Tuesday his planning envisions combat troops in Iraq and Afghanistan for a decade as part of a sustained US commitment to fighting extremism and terrorism in the Middle East.

"Global trends are pushing in the wrong direction," Casey said. "They fundamentally will change how the Army works."

He spoke at an invitation-only briefing to a dozen journalists and policy analysts from Washington-based think-tanks.

Voter list updating starts June 15

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According to the schedule, the commission will start the first phase of the task of updating the electoral roll on June 15 in 153 upazilas of six divisions. The enumerators will continue making door-to-door visits till June 24 to collect necessary information.

The second phase of the task will begin on July 15 in another 161 upazilas and 17 unions of Dhaka circle, the third phase on August 15 in 167 upazilas and the last phase on September 15 in six city corporations.

The enumerators will collect particulars of the people, who on January 1, 2009 turned 18, the eligible age for getting included in the electoral roll.

The supervisors will begin examining the authenticity of the prospective voters' particulars from the next day the enumerators start collecting information.

On completion of scrutiny, the voters will have to visit nearby registration centres within a deadline for having their photographs and fingerprints taken for revision of the electoral roll.

If anyone misses the deadline, he or she will have to go to upazila headquarters.

The eligible people, who were not registered on the voter list before the last parliamentary election, will have to produce valid reasons for not being included in the roll.

"For example, if an eligible individual, who could not get registered as voters, says he was abroad at that time, he will have to show passport in defence of his argument," Shahadat Hossain said.

He said the EC initiated the procedure to prevent duplication of voters' names.

On completion of registering names on the electoral roll, the voters will be provided with national identity cards later.

Referring to transfer of a voter's name from one electoral area to another, the project director said the process would begin simultaneously with the task of updating the list.

"But one will have to file an application with upazila election officers showing valid grounds for transferring his or her name from one place to another," he said.

Commenting on correction of mistakes on national identity cards, the project director said they would begin the task across the country.

He said if anybody loses his or her national identity card, the person would have to file a general diary with the police station and apply to the district election office to get a new one.

The EC has made necessary preparations to complete the task of updating the voter list with photographs for the first time since it prepared the roll before the ninth parliamentary election. District election officers will act as registration officers while upazila and thana election officers will assist them as assistant registration officers.

The EC has formed a number of committees at central, division, district and upazila levels to coordinate and supervise the tasks. Besides, the commission will launch a campaign to create public awareness for ensuring people's participation.

153 UPAZILAS

The 153 upazilas, where the task of updating the electoral roll will begin on June 15, include Savar of Dhaka, Charbhadrashan, Bhangra and sadar upazila of Faridpur, Gazipur sadar, Kotailpara and Tungipara of Comilla, Jamalpur, Sadar, Kuliarchar, Hossainpur, Karinganj, Bhairab and sadar upazila of Kishoreganj, Madaripur sadar, Gheor, Hariampur and Doulatpur of

Manikganj, Gajaria and sadar upazila of Munsheganj, Muktagachha, Iswarganj, Dhubaura and sadar upazila of Mymensingh, Narayanganj sadar, Palash and sadar upazila of Narsingdi, Apara, Barhatta and sadar upazila of Netrakona, Goalandaghat and sadar upazila of Rajbari, Zanjira and sadar upazila of Shariatpur, Sherpur sadar, Dhanbari, Nagarpur, Delduar and sadar upazila of Tangail, Sitakunda, Hathajari, Patia and Lohagara of Chittagong, Banchharampur, Akhaura and sadar upazila of Brahmanbaria, Kachua and sadar upazila of Chandpur, Muradnagar, Nagarkote, Meghna, Brahmanpara and Aodhsa sadar upazila of Comilla, Ukha, Ramu and sadar upazila of Cox's Bazar, Fulgazi and sadar upazila of Feni, Laxmipur sadar, Subarnachar, Companiganj and sadar upazila of Noakhali, Rowangchhari and sadar upazila of Bandarban, Panchari, Dighinala and sadar upazila of Khagrachhari, Rajshahi, Kaptai, Kawkhai and sadar upazila of Rangamati, Madhabpur, Chunarughat and sadar upazila of Habiganj, Srimangal and sadar upazila of Moulvibazar, Chhatak, south Sunamganj and sadar upazila of Sunamganj, Fenchuganj, Dakshin

Shahjahanpur and sadar upazila of Bogra, Bholahat and sadar upazila of Chapainawabganj, Bocharganj, Chhribandar, Biral and sadar upazila of Dinajpur, Phulchhari, Polashbari and sadar upazila of Gaibandha, Joypurhat sadar, Rajibpur, Rowmari and sadar upazila of Kurigram, Lalmonirhat sadar, Badalgachhi, Atrai, Raniganj and sadar upazila of Naogaon, Bagatipara and sadar upazila of Natore, Domar and sadar upazila of Nilphamari, Bhangura, Ishwardi and sadar upazila of Pabna, Panchagarh sadar, Tanore, Godagari and Paba of Rajshahi, Gangachhara and sadar upazila of Rangpur, Kamarkhanda, Chowdhali and sadar upazila of Sirajganj, Thakurgaon sadar, Kachua, Monglupara and sadar upazila of Bagerhat, Chuadanga sadar, Sharsha and sadar upazila of Jessore, Kotchandpur and sadar upazila of Jhenidah, Terkhada, Rupsa and Phulata of Khulna, Khoksha and sadar upazila of Kushtia, Magura sadar, Meherpur sadar, Narail sadar, Debhata and sadar upazila of Satkhira, Gauranadi, Agailjhara and sadar upazila of Barisal, Daulatkhanda and sadar upazila of Bhoja, Jhalakathi sadar, Mirzaganj, Dumki and sadar upazila of Patuakhali, Barguna sadar, Nesrabad, Zianagar and sadar upazila of Pirojpur.

Alice Munro wins Man Booker Prize

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE, London

Celebrated Canadian short story writer Alice Munro has won the Man Booker International Prize for 2009, beating a field that included India's Mahasweta Devi, the judges announced yesterday.

Munro, 78, is the third writer to win the 60,000 pound (\$95,500) prize, which is awarded every two years, and the judges praised her ability to pack her short stories with the craft and wisdom of a novelist.

"Alice Munro is mostly known as a short story writer and yet she brings as much depth, wisdom and precision to every story as most novelists bring to a lifetime of novels," the panel of judges said.

"To read Alice Munro is to learn something every time that you never thought of before."

Munro, whose books include "Dance of the Happy Shades", "Lives of Girls and



Alice Munro

Women" and "The Beggar Maid", said: "I am totally amazed and delighted."

Munro beat a field that comprised Peter Carey (Australia), Evan S. Connell (US), Mahasweta Devi (India), E.L. Doctorow (US), James Kelman (Britain), Mario Vargas Llosa (Peru), Arno Lustig (Czech Republic), VS. Naipaul (Trinidad/India), Joyce Carol Oates (US), Antonio Tabucchi (Italy), Ngugi Wa Thiong'o (Kenya), Dubravka Ugresic (Croatia), and Ludmila Ulitskaya (Russia).

250,000 babies born each year through assisted reproduction

AFP, Paris

Around a quarter of a million babies are born each year through in-vitro and other assisted fertilisation techniques, according to a report released yesterday.

Between 219,000 and 246,000 babies were born through assisted reproductive technology (ART) in 2002, the latest year for which a global estimate can be made, the report said.

The number of ART operations around the world rose by a remarkable 25 percent from 2000, it added.

Success rates are rising, with on average a more than one-in-five chance of a live birth from the two main techniques -- in-vitro fertilisation and intracytoplasmic sperm injection.

Khaleda notice

FROM PAGE 1

order since some constitutional points regarding the matter have to be examined.

Khaleda's counsel TH Khan told newsmen that the third notice issued by the government on May 24, asking her to hand over the cantonment house to the Military Estate Officer by June 30, is the final notice.

Since the HC stayed the final notice, two other notices issued earlier by the government also became stayed, he said.

He said the HC observed in its order that the government by issuing the third notice has violated the fundamental rights guaranteed in the constitution.

Meanwhile, Attorney General Mahbub Alam, who represented the government in court, told reporters at his office that after consulting with the government they would decide whether to file an appeal with the Supreme Court (SC) against the HC order.

"The HC issued an order and we will respond and fight against the order at the HC and we will respond by replying to the points raised in the writ petition," he said.

The state's top law officer also said the two notices earlier served upon Khaleda Zia will also be

examined by the court when hearing on the rule is held.

During the hearing of the petition yesterday, the attorney general told the court that there is no precedence in the world where a civilian, like Khaleda Zia, occupied any property earmarked for army officials.

If the residence is not recovered from illegal possession, the property will go to estate developers in future, he said.

TH Khan told the court that the deed of the allotment was registered in accordance with the law and the government notices asking her to leave the house is illegal.

He gave some references supporting his argument before the court.

On May 3, Khaleda Zia filed the writ petition with the HC challenging the legality of the government's first notice, issued on April 20, asking her to leave the cantonment house within 15 days.

On May 7, the government issued a separate notice asking her to show cause within 15 days as to why she should not be directed to return the estate, including the house, in Dhaka Cantonment.

Khaleda in her writ petition challenged the legality of all the government notices regarding the house.

Advertisement for BAPEX Bangladesh Petrochemicals and Polymers Ltd. (পেট্রোলিয়াম এক্সপ্লোরেশন এন্ড প্রোডাকশন কোম্পানী লিমিটেড (বাপেক্স)). Includes details about the company, its products, and contact information.

Advertisement for Bakhraabad Gas Systems Limited (A Company of Petrobangla). Details a Time Extension Notice for a construction project in Bangladesh, including technical specifications and contact information.

Advertisement for the 2009 International Day of the Girl (আন্তর্জাতিক শান্তিরক্ষী দিবস ২০০৯). Organized by the Bangladesh Army, it details a program of activities and a competition for girls.

Advertisement for the Bangladesh Government (গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার). Details a recruitment process for various positions, including a notice for a recruitment exam for the Bangladesh Army.