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People's Right to Know

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42 MPs never paid income tax

REIAUL KARIM BYRON

Forty-two out of 345 lawmakers, including three state ministers, have never paid any income tax, claiming they do not have taxable income.

Sources at the Election Commission and the National Board of Revenue said most of these lawmakers have Tax their TINs.

The 42 in question are from both the treasury and the opposition benches.

An NBR official said each of these 42 MPs spent Tk 15 to 20 lakh in the parliamentary election and the limit for tax-free

income is Tk 1,65,000 per year; so, it is hard to believe that they do not have taxable income.

After scrutinising their wealth statements, the EC sent the list of the 42 lawmakers to the NBR.

An adviser to the last caretaker government and a former high official of the central bank said the NBR should enquire Identification Numbers (TINs) but they whether they have taxable income and if do not pay any tax. A few do not even have necessary, action should be taken against discussion with the government.

> discussion at the highest level of the on how they could be brought under the

Curb graft to get rid of

Another NBR official said many lawincome. The NBR is preparing to file cases : A purchase against some lawmaker, both from the ruling party and the opposition, the official said.

A high-ranking NBR official, however, told The Daily Star that the subject is very : ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi sensitive and action would be taken after

NBR sources said they would hold caretaker government Mirza Azizul Islam: was stated to be around Tk 1 told The Daily Star, "The limit of tax free : lakh before the election, has government in this regard. They will also income is Tk 1,65,000. If anybody's : bought a luxury minivan for Tk talk to the parliament speaker and whips income is below this amount, he naturally : 22 lakh.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5 :



shrouded in question

: A ruling Awami League law-Former finance adviser to the last: maker, whose annual income

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

St Martin's Island seen vulnerable

Govt advised to strengthen its defence

M ABUL KALAM AZAD

Bangladesh Rifles authorities have identified the St Martin's Island as the probable main target of Myanmar and asked the government to immediately strengthen its defence by constructing aircraft landing zones and concrete bunkers.

In a strategic proposal that came in the wake of constant military build-up and intimidation by Myanmar, the BDR has also urged the government to increase defence capability of land and sea borders to repulse any possible aggression by the neighbouring country.

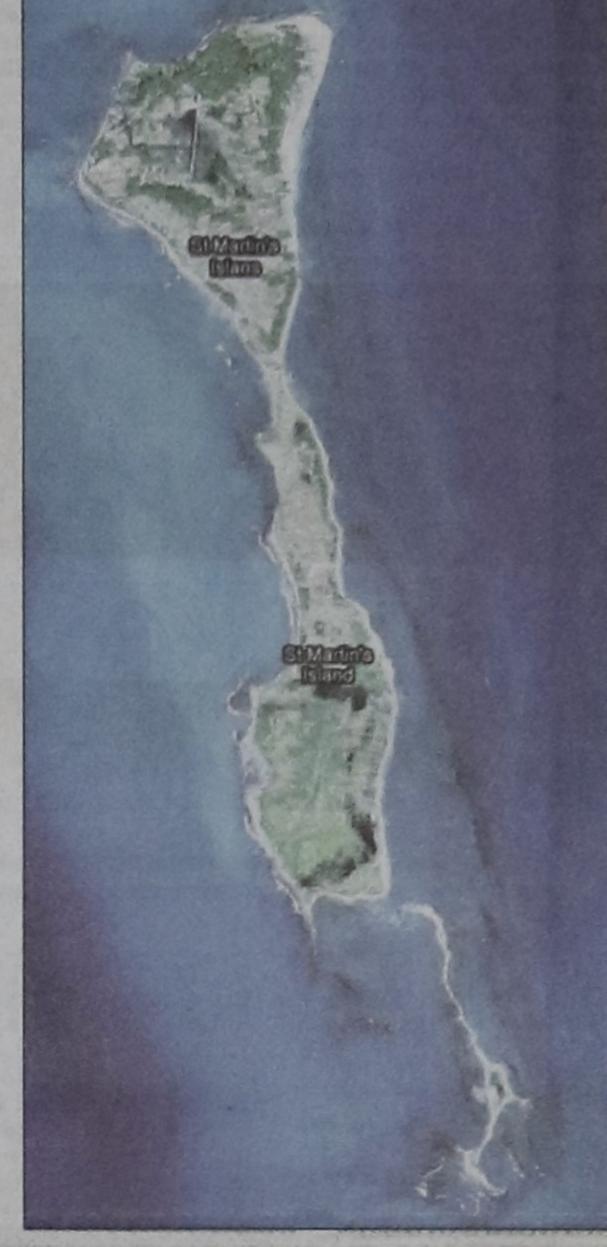
Marking 148km stretch of border with Myanmar and India as unguarded, the border force has suggested setting up temporary frontier camps until a new battalion is set up in Ali Kadam area as per the BDR restructuring proposal.

To safeguard the country's territorial sovereignty, the BDR has sorted out short-, mid- and long-term mea-

It has requested the government to arm the paramilitary force with more manpower and modern military equipment.

The St Martin's Island, the only coral island of the country and the main attraction for local and foreign tourists for its panoramic beauty and pristine marine life, is under the jurisdiction of the Coastguards. The island, which is located in a mineral rich region in the Bay of Bengal, is just about 8km west of the northwest coast of Myanmar.

The BDR has submitted its SEE PAGE 15 COL 4



Khaleda's absence saddens speaker

STAR REPORT

Speaker Md Abdul Hamid yesterday said the absence of Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia in the : 'historic' anti-poverty rally : graft practices and has really hurt him.

Awami League (AL) Syed Ashraful Islam also said Khaleda Zia's stance for not joining the anti-poverty rally organised by all-party parliamentary group (APPG) has : poverty rally at the Bangabandhu SEE PAGE 15 COL 1 : International Convention Centre amid over the rally, said the process of poverty

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said none would be spared for wrongdoings regardless General Secretary of: of his or her party affiliation to have a poverty free Bangladesh by 2020.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

"Poverty cannot be eradicated without curbing corruption," Hasina told an anti-

poverty, urges PM

opposition BNP and its and corruption. alliance partners.

wealth through corruption and siphon off speakersaid. money abroad will not be let off," said the premier. The Anti-Corruption

Commission would work independently to curb Poverty. corruption, said Hasina while addressing the rally as the chief guest. Speaker Abdul Hamid, who presided

boycott by the main alleviation is linked to good governance "Curbing corruption and ensuring

"Those who make good governance are the preconditions for having a poverty free society," the The national committee on poverty

organised the rally in the capital and other parts of the country marking the International Day for the Eradication of The premier, ministers, lawmakers

and others at the rally took oath, administered by the speaker, to remain united to SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



A cracked underground Wasa pipe leaks water on Rokeya Sarani near Agargaon for the last two months. The photo was taken yesterday.

ASSISTANT JUDGE RECRUITMENT

30pc posts to go to war heroes' children

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The government has taken initiatives to introduce 30 percent quota for the children of freedom fighters in the recruitment rules for assistantjudges.

The initiative was taken, as a number of candidates from the families of freedom fighters could not qualify in the examinations for the offices of assistant judges.

When the matter was brought to the notice

of the law ministry that there is a rule of 30 percent quota for the children of freedom fighters in the government service the ministry took the decision, sources said.

The government has recently withheld its decision to recruit 101 assistant judges to the lower court through the Bangladesh Judicial Service Commission (BJSC), sources said.

The decision came following widespread criticisms from different quarters that children SEE PAGE 15 COL 3



Fake mineral water business booming

MUKHLESUR RAHMAN

Sale of fake mineral water in containers in different areas of the capital has turned a booming business with ruling party men or others using their names allegedly getting involved in it and controlling the market.

Small hotels, tea stalls and confectionaries sell such fake mineral water to their customers for Tk 1 a glass, causing serious health hazards.

The illegal trade is spreading since the authorities conduct drives only to unearth fake mineral water plants, and not against sale of such water.

Contacted, Director of Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI) Mohammad Lutfur Rahman Khan admitted this, and said from now on they will also launch drives against the sellers of fake mineral water so that they can track down its producers and suppliers.

On the sale of mineral water at Tk 1 a glass, he said it is 'impossible if the water is pure'.

BSTI sources said they sealed off more than seven fake mineral water plants in the capital and seized their equipment and jars in the last three months.

The BSTI authorities could not give any information about the number of fake mineral water plants. But an official seeking anonymity said such plants are mushrooming in different parts of the city, and there are already several hundred.

Traders of such impure water fill their jars with WASA water and use fake BSTI seals on the jars, the official said.

During a visit to different areas of the capital, it was found that ruling party men or those backed by them have driven away agents of mineral water firms and replaced their (firms) jars and cooling machines in the small food shops and hotels.

These people usually use English alphabets as marks on the jars to identify their ones and distribute those in different areas, giving no scope to others.

A number of traders said these people operate their fake mineral water plants at night and keep the houses concerned locked from outside to evade BSTI drives in daytime.

Sources said the elements distribute the jars with KFC-MR marks at Garden road in West Karwan Bazar, jars with OM marks in Kazipara SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

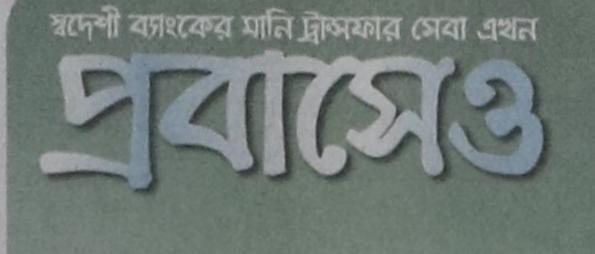


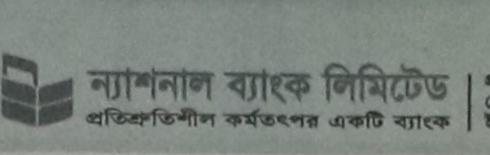
PHOTO: SHAFIQUL ALAM

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