

READERS
respond

Here are some comments that came in response to Monday's *The Daily Star* report headlined "Property tax on the cards".

Md Iqbal Hossain
Thanks National Board of Revenue and Bangladesh government. This will help reduce the rich-poor gap. It is a very good decision.

Shuvo
Really interesting! We are going to make the country digital and we should impose property tax, marriage tax and education tax so that corruption can rise and with no one to see to proper taxation.

Tumpa
Yes, property tax is required so that the government's expenditure can rise for unproductive uses and for these sorts of taxes, ultimately, present government will become very much unpopular. If they want to impose property tax, they should take referendum.

Can the finance minister avoid his incapability to check the share market? As ordinary people, we have to bear the property tax but those who are not willing may not do so at all.

Before imposition of the tax, did they carry out any survey? Or this is done without any sort of homework for the sake of the diversion of money from the country? We expect better from the government machinery but this is not the way. We hope that the government will take mature decisions.

The interest rate in Shanchaipatra (bonds) was reduced, then withdrawn and after 15 days was again reduced to 8.5%. As a result of this, a lot of aged people are facing dilemma. We must be very careful on imposing taxes and each taka must be carefully utilised. Otherwise people will be the worst victim of these decisions. And when any faulty decision is taken, people will get the wrong signal. People are already thinking that left leaning lawmakers are giving such decisions. This country is not the US and per capita income is not similar to US either. Be aware of incorrect decisions.

Salam
Good idea and interesting. I assume that property taxes will be waived for our bureaucrats?

Ajnobi
This is absolutely a right decision and should have been implemented 10 years ago. It should include more than one car or vehicle. More than one house, more than three apartments, more than 10 kathas of land within the metropolitan area and more than 30 kathas of land within Rajuk should be taxed. Price of land in Bangladesh is at least 75% more than the original price. If they do not find benefit on keeping property, ultimately they will be investing on production. Land price has to become stable in the country. I believe most of the corrupt people owning multiple properties will be brought under this tax net. This will give relief to honest people who own property.

Nanu, UK
The government should sort out their corruption first. Get a grip with what you have and make a difference if you can. Keep it real.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina spends some time with a child of one of the 58 army officers brutally killed in the BDR carnage of 2009 at Gono Bhaban on Sunday after handing over cheques to their families. PHOTO: PMO

Four burnt seriously in house fire

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
A garment worker, his two children, and a cousin suffered intense burns as a fire starting from a gas burner blew up their house in Ashulia, outskirts of the capital, early yesterday.

The injured are Fazle Ahmad, 40, of Envoy Group, his two sons Abdur Rahim, 7, and Abdullah, 12, and cousin Shahina Begum, 25, also a garment worker.

They were admitted to the Burn and Plastic Surgery Unit at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

The fire broke out when Shahina stroke a match stick around 5:30am to light the gas stove set up in the room where Fazle Ahmad and his two sons were sleeping.

Azad assures BT, Betar's autonomy
Policy on pvt TV programmes, advertisements soon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
The government is actively considering to give autonomy to state-run Bangladesh Betar and Bangladesh Television (BTV), said Information Minister Abul Kalam Azad yesterday.

In response to lawmakers' queries in the parliament, the minister also said the government formed a committee headed by a joint secretary in this regard.

Speaking on programmes that private satellite television channels broadcast, Azad said the government is formulating a policy to ensure decency in the programmes and advertisements.

He said the government plans to set up electronic information desk at each ministry and directorate so that people can access information easily.

Since restoration of democracy in 1990 through a mass upsurge against the autocratic ruler HM Ershad, every successive government pledged to give autonomy to the state run media but did not do so.

The past Awami League led government in 2001 however passed laws to give autonomy to radio and BTV but the laws were not enforced.

Veteran artist Shafiqul Ameen passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Veteran artist Shafiqul Ameen died at his residence in the city's Dhanmondi early yesterday. He had been suffering from old age related complications for a long. He was 99.

He left behind his family, many students and well-wishers.

His namaz-e-janaza was held at Dhaka University Mosque after Zohr prayers. His coffin was also kept on the premises of the Faculty of Fine Arts, Dhaka University, for students to pay their last respects. He was buried at Banani Graveyard in the city.

Senior painters Samarjit Roy Chowdhury; Rafiqun Nabi; Hashem Khan; Monirul Islam; Matlub Ali, dean of the Fine Arts; Abul Barq Alvi, Professor of the department of Printmaking; Subir Chowdhury, director of Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts; Ranjit Das; Mohammad Eunos; Mohammad Iqbal; Anisuzzaman and cultural activists, among others, paid their last tributes to the artist.

Samarjit Roy Chowdhury said, "Shafiqul Ameen didn't enjoy mass recognition, but he was an accomplished teacher."

Rafiqun Nabi said he was truly a liberal and secular person. Monirul Islam said, "We've lost a great artist."

Ameen was born in Shillong, India in 1912. He studied at Calcutta Government Art College. He joined Faridpur Zilla School as an art teacher in 1938. He also worked at David Hare Training College as drawing teacher in 1945. He later joined the Calcutta Govt Art College as a designer in 1946.

Ameen was an expert in drawing, caricature and watercolour.

After Partition (1947), he came back to Dhaka and helped Zainul Abedin set up the Art College. Then he joined Mymensingh Teachers Training College as a lecturer.

Amin attained higher education in Art Teaching in London. In 1961, he joined the Dhaka Art College and retired from the institute in 1968. He was the first director of the Bangladesh Folklore and Crafts Foundation in Sonargaon. He retired from the organisation in 1982. He won several prestigious awards during his illustrious career.

Ameen did some paintings at the onset of his career. The paintings are symbolic narratives. His work addresses his multifaceted sensitivities, urban and rural atmosphere and more. He was reserved and reflective by nature.

TAX EVASION CASE Partex chairman, 7 others get bail

COURT CORRESPONDENT
A Dhaka court yesterday granted a one-month bail to Partex Group chairman MA Hashem and seven others in a tax evasion case.

Judge Mohammad Zohurul Hoque of Dhaka Senior Special Judges' Court passed the order after MA Hashem and seven others appeared before the court.

Other accused are Hashem's wife Sultana Hashem, his five sons, and two officials of Partex Group's beverage company.

Of Hashem's five sons Aziz al Kaiser, Aziz al Masud, and Shawkat Aziz are directors of the company and Rubel Aziz is its incumbent managing director.

The accused officials are the company's accounts officer Mozammel Haque and general manager (finance and accounts) Peyar Ahmed.

Hashem's another son Aziz al Mahmud did not appear before the court, as he is abroad at present.

During the hearing, Anisul Huq told the court that the charges brought against his clients are compoundable and they would pay the income tax mentioned in the complaint if the court grants bail and gives the accused time.

Opposing the bail petition, Metropolitan Public Prosecutor Abdullah Abu told the court that the charges of evading Tk 232.91 crore in income tax brought against the accused are heinous offences and they should be sent to jail being denied the bails.

After hearing both sides, the judge ordered that if the accused failed to compound the matter of giving income tax to the National Board of Revenue (NBR) within the one-month period, the bail will be cancelled.

The same court also granted bail to Hashem in another tax evasion case as his bail was cancelled and issued an arrest warrant against him on February 20 for his failure to appear before it.

The NBR on Sunday filed the tax evasion case against MA Hashem and eight others.

21 AUG ATTACK PROBE IO asked to place progress today

COURT CORRESPONDENT
A Dhaka court yesterday directed Abdul Kahar Akhand, senior special superintendent of CID, to appear before it today to place before it the latest progress of further investigation of one of the two cases filed for August 21 grenade attack in 2004.

Judge Mohammad Zohurul Haque of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court passed the order after hearing a petition submitted by the CID on Sunday seeking two months more time to complete the probe.

The court also asked Kahar, also the Investigation Officer (IO) of the case, to take the case diary (CD) of the case with him today.

In the order, the court said it is a sensational case as the president's family and the prime minister were the victims of the incident but the probe and the trial can not be completed.

The IO has asked to appear before it to explain why he is seeking time repeatedly, the court said.

Earlier on November 30 last year, the same court gave three months to CID to complete the probe and the time expired on Sunday. The court has so far given 19 months in seven phases for the investigation.

At least 23 people were killed and scores injured in attack on an Awami League rally.

Cut illiteracy from own village

Nahid urges BCL men
STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid yesterday urged the leaders and activists of Chhatra League (BCL) to take responsibility of one village for removing illiteracy.

"Go to your own village or neighbourhood and spread the light of education in every area with your knowledge, efficiency and organising capacity," he said.

The minister made the call at the inauguration of a countrywide programme taken up by BCL to build a country free from illiteracy at Teacher Student Centre auditorium of Dhaka University.

Primary and Mass Education Minister Afsarul Ameen said the government has announced to literate four crore people within next 44 months which is another challenge.

BCL President Mahmud Hasan Ripon presided over the programme while former DU Vice Chancellor Prof AK Azad Chowdhury and Daily Samakal Editor Golam Sarwar also spoke.



The 80th birthday of veteran journalist ABM Musa, second from left, was celebrated on the Jatiya Press Club premises in the city yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

23 jawans

FROM PAGE 3
Islam Uddin, Yusuf Ali, and Rafiqul Islam, nayek Shah Akhter, sepoy Mohammad Salauddin, Mamun Miah, Khalilur Rahman, Jasim Uddin, and cooks Rafiqul Islam and Mojibur Rahman.

In the forwarding report, Abdul Kahar Akand, also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, said the accused were involved in killing, looting and other heinous offences. So, they need to be remanded to find out vital

clues about the carnage and gather more information about several others responsible for the heinous offences, the IO added.

Apart from the carnage case, CID also indicted 807 BGB persons and a civilian for blasting grenades and explosives during the carnage.

Former BNP lawmaker Nasiruddin Ahmed Pintu and Awami League Ward unit leader Torab Ali are also accused in the carnage case.

DGFP to fill vacancies by May

Says new DG
STAFF CORRESPONDENT
The family planning directorate is making an effort to complete the recruitment process for its vacant posts by next three months, said its newly appointed Director General (DG) MM Neaz Uddin yesterday.

At a meeting with the journalists at the Directorate General of Family Planning (DGFP) office, the DG admitted that activities under the family planning and population control programme have become slow due to shortage of more than 8,000 manpower for a few years.

DISCUSSION TODAY

Discussion
Organiser: Aysha Memorial Specialised Hospital, Time: 10:00am, Venue: Dhanmondi Mohila Krira Complex.

Workshop
Organiser: International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Time: 9:00am, Venue: Bangabandhu International Conference Centre.

Discussion
Organiser: Bangladesh Workers' Party, Time: 11:00am, Venue: Dhaka Reporters' Unity (DRU).

Exhibition
Organiser: Bangladesh Computer Samity, Time: 11:30am, Venue: The samity office.

Open Discussion
Organiser: Deshpremik Jonogoner Mancha, Time: 3:00pm, Venue: Gono Sangskriti Kendra.

Procession and Rally
Organiser: Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal (JSD), Time: 4:30pm, Venue: Jatiya Press Club.

Discussion

Cabinet okays
FROM PAGE 3
Finance Minister Abul Maal Abdul Muhith, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid, prime minister's Economic Affairs Adviser Dr Mashiur Rahman and Dhaka University Vice Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique were present at the meeting, among others.

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