

Good luck to 2 good bills

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exempts the prime minister, ministers, state and deputy ministers from paying taxes on their remuneration.

Criticism has been raging against the provision, with the demand that such provisions be repealed. But lawmakers did not pay heed to it and instead have been enjoying the "discriminatory" benefits for around 38 years.

The original law, Members of Parliament (Remuneration and Allowances) Order of 1973, did not exempt MPs from taxes on their remuneration. But the then government in 1974 amended the law by introducing the "discriminatory" provision. The speaker, deputy speaker, prime minister, ministers, state ministers and deputy ministers were also exempted from paying taxes on their salaries and remuneration with the introduction of a similar legal provision.

Eventually, the AL-led government moved to scrap the provision, termed "discriminatory" by Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Shafiqe Ahmed, who placed the two bills in the House on Monday.

Usually any Bangladeshi's income above a certain limit is taxable. So there is discrimination between the common people and the MPs regarding

taxation," the law minister said in his brief statements tagged with copies of the bills.

The statement does not reflect the law minister's personal opinion; it rather reflects the position of the Sheikh Hasina-led cabinet which on November 28 last year approved the proposals for amending the laws, thereby making it mandatory for the speaker, deputy speaker and MPs to pay taxes on their remuneration.

Ten days earlier, on November 17, the cabinet also endorsed proposals regarding amendments to the Prime Minister's (Remuneration and Allowances) Act.

1975 and the Ministers, Ministers for State and Deputy Ministers (Remuneration and Privileges) Act, 1973 to make it mandatory for the prime minister, ministers, state ministers and deputy ministers to pay taxes on their remuneration.

The AL-led government however remains silent about the "discriminatory" provision that allows MPs to import duty free cars. The original law of 1973 did not contain such a provision. It was introduced on May 24, 1987, during HM Ershad's rule, to give MPs undue benefits as a way of making them happy and ensuring their loyalty to the then autocratic regime.

Since the restoration of democracy after the fall of Ershad in 1990, MPs in all parliaments since 1991 have been enjoying the benefit of importing one vehicle during his tenure without having to pay customs duty, sales tax, development surcharge and import permit fee.

This provision was abused by MPs in previous parliaments. For instance, in the last parliament, lawmakers imported over 275 luxury vehicles, thus depriving the state exchequer of Tk 280 crore in taxes. Taxes for most of the cars ranged between 73.91 and 196.10 percent, media reports said quoting NBR officials.

Many legislators of the eighth parliament sold their luxury cars--- BMWs, Cadillacs and Porsches--- though the laws did not permit so within three years of purchase. For personal use, they preferred inexpensive and cheap-to-run cars. The army-led joint forces seized a number of those luxury cars from businessmen during the past emergency regime. And in the wake of gross abuse, the provision was scrapped during the past caretaker government through an ordinance promulgated by the president in 2007.

But the current parliament, did not, however, ratify the ordinance. It

restored the provision in April 2010 to allow MPs to import vehicles free of duty. The matter did not end there. A new provision was inserted in the law to provide each MP with transport allowance of Tk 40 thousand per month. And, interestingly, the provision also allows the prime minister, speaker, deputy speaker, ministers, state ministers, deputy ministers, chief whips and whips to enjoy the benefit.

Since the restoration of the provision, a total of 310 MPs of the current Parliament applied for importing duty free vehicles and 273 of them imported vehicles until January 19 this year, according to information available in the parliament secretariat.

None of the country's citizens, excepting MPs, is entitled to enjoy the benefit of importing vehicles free of duty, although one of the fundamental rights guaranteed in the constitution ensures that all citizens are equal before the law.

In light of the law minister's statement, one may raise some questions. Isn't the provision that allows MPs to import vehicles free of duty "discriminatory" between MPs and other citizens? And doesn't the provision raise questions about the sense of decency of MPs?

Mayor hopefuls littering Dhaka

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there questions on whether the new Election Commission will be able to hold the polls within the extended time amid the changing situation in the political arena.

However, this uncertainty has been not able to deter political leaders and individuals from spending money and publicising their desire to contest in the mayoral polls. They printed large numbers of posters and pasted them on city walls and hung digital banners, seeking blessings and cooperation from city dwellers to build a modern and clean city.

Ironically, the people willing to become city fathers are not hesitating to litter the city by pasting posters on city walls, and putting up signboards and hoardings.

Election Commissioner Brig Gen (ret'd) M Sakhawat Hossain, however, yesterday said a level playing field for the polls is being destroyed due to this advance campaigning by some individuals.

After the Graffiti Writing and Poster Sticking Control Bill is passed, the Election

Commission will request the LGRD ministry to take measures against advance campaigning, sources said.

Although the election is non-partisan in nature, Jatiya Party and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal--two components of the ruling Awami League-led alliance--have already announced the names of leaders who will get party support in the polls to the DCC North and DCC South.

The Awami League did not announce the names of any leaders to be blessed by the party.

However, Haji Selim, joint secretary of Dhaka City unit of Awami League, and Sayeed Khokon, organising secretary of Dhaka city unit of Awami League, are campaigning for their candidacies in DCC South. Both of them expect that the party will extend its support to them.

Talking to The Daily Star recently, Selim and Khokon said they were relentlessly conducting public relations.

"I am visiting people from door to door and meeting local dignitaries seeking their support and blessings in the polls," Khokon said.

Asked about printing and publishing posters, he said he was not spending money for the campaign, which he said was being carried out by his supporters and well wishers.

Haji Selim said, "I don't have a single penny in my pocket. So the question of expenditure for the campaign does not arise. My relatives, friends and well wishers are spending for me."

Ekhlasuddin Mollah, brother of local Awami League MP Iliasuddin Mollah of Mirpur, has declared himself a contender in the polls to DCC North. "I have been campaigning for the polls," he said.

Awami League leader and MP of Mirpur area Kamal Ahmed Majumder, and Awami League leader Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya are too campaigning for the polls to DCC North.

Jatiya Party leader Kazi Firoz Rashid, who already has his party support for the DCC South polls, said, "We have launched the campaign in an organised way. We are visiting every ward and also declaring the names of candidates for

councillor posts." He said he did not need to spend money as the party had asked local leaders who will get its support to contest for the councillor posts to print posters and banners incorporating the names of the party's mayoral candidates.

Leaders of the Awami League and Jatiya Party claimed that they did not know anything about the number of posters and banners printed for the campaign.

Jatiya Party leader Bahauddin Ahmed Babul, backed by the party for the DCC North polls, has launched his campaign as well.

Nazmul Haque Proddhan, joint general secretary of JSD, however, said around one lakh posters were printed for party leader Mir Hossain Akhter, who will contest the DCC North polls and 50,000 posters for the party's other leader Shirin Akhter, who will contest the DCC South polls.

"The party has met the expenditure for the printing of posters," Proddhan told The Daily Star.

VACANCY NOTICE



United Nations Development Programme in Bangladesh announces a vacancy for the position of **National Consultant- BRESL** (Short term National Consultant) for "**Barrier Removal to the Cost-effective Development and Implementation of Energy Efficiency Standards & Labeling (BRESL)**" project.

The duration of the Individual Contract is 40 working days over 03 months.

For details of the Job Description and instructions to apply for the above position, please visit our website: <http://www.undp.org.bd/jobs>. Applications should be submitted no later than 4.30 pm, Wednesday, 15 February 2012.

Only short-listed candidates will be contacted. Female candidates are encouraged to apply.

VACANCY NOTICE



United Nations Development Programme in Bangladesh announces a vacancy for the post of **Assistant Country Director - Poverty Reduction (ICS-10/ equivalent to NOC)** in the Country Office.

The duration of the fixed term appointment contract is one year initially, subject to renewal on an annual basis upon satisfactory performance.

For details of the Job Description and instructions to apply, please visit our website: <http://www.undp.org.bd/jobs>. Applications should be submitted no later than **Tuesday, 21st February 2012**.

Female candidates are particularly encouraged to apply.

Vacancy Announcement



UNDP in partnership with the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) of the Local Government Division, Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development & Cooperatives and UN-Habitat is implementing the Urban Partnerships for Poverty Reduction Project (UPPRP) in Bangladesh. The project duration is until March 31, 2015.

The project aims to improve the livelihoods and living conditions of three million urban poor and extremely poor people, especially women and girls, living in 30 towns and cities in Bangladesh. It will achieve this aim through providing support for participatory community upgrading through community contracting, supporting viable and sustainable livelihoods and social and economic development activities, addressing issues of security of tenure and the needs of the extreme poor, and working with others to create a more pro-poor urban policy environment. The project supports the development of town-wide poverty reduction and economic development strategies through partnerships with urban poor communities, civil society and local government.

UNDP is looking for potential candidates to fill the following posts for immediate posting of UPPRP and also to create roster of successful candidates for future requirements:

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| 1. Socio Economic Expert- (4 posts) | 7. Finance Expert- (6 Posts) |
| 2. Socio Economic Assistant- (1 post) | 8. Monitoring and Evaluation Officer- (Roster) |
| 3. Settlement Improvement Expert- (3 posts) | 9. Urban Planning Expert- (Roster) |
| 4. Settlement Improvement Assistant- (8 posts) | 10. Project Secretary- (2 posts) |
| 5. Urban Agriculture Expert- (3 Posts) | 11. ICT/Website Expert- (1 Post) |
| 6. Extreme Poverty Expert- (Roster) | 12. Administrative Associate- (1 Post) |

13. **Community Organizer** - 136 Posts: The COs will provide support, facilitate and assist the project team on community mobilization, settlement improvement, socio-economic development, training and capacity building. The applicants should have minimum Bachelor's degree in social science or equivalent level education and minimum two years experience in urban community development or poverty reduction programmes in donor, NGO or the government sector. Applicants having urban poverty reduction experience will be given preference. Details of Terms of Reference is available online at <http://www.undp.org.bd/jobs>

14. **Messenger** - 2 posts: Messenger will be required to perform messenger support functions such as collecting, delivery and distributing mail, pouch and other documents and communication from and to the post office, government offices and other institutions; sort, deliver and pick up mail and other documents, etc. The applicants should have minimum SSC and minimum two years similar job experience. Details of Terms of Reference is available online at <http://www.undp.org.bd/jobs>

Submission of Application: Candidates interested to apply for positions 1 - 12 must apply online (hard copy applications will not be considered). For details of the Terms of Reference and applying online, please visit our website: <http://www.undp.org.bd/jobs>. Applications should be received no later than **22th February 2012**.

Interested candidates for the position of **Community Organizer** and **Messenger** are requested to send hard copy applications including curriculum vitae and a recent passport-size photograph in A4 size envelopes marking 'Confidential' and the position title on the envelope addressed to the **HR Specialist, UNDP-Dhaka, GPO Box: 224, Dhaka-1000**, or deposit at the Deposit Box at the **IDB Bhaban (Ground Floor), Begum Rokeya Sharani, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207**. Applications will be received until close of business hours on **22th February, 2012**.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Emergency 2007 Cyclone Recovery and Restoration Project, Bangladesh (Component A)

Invitation for Bids for Construction of Cow sheds

Credit No. 4507 - BD, Project ID No. UTF /BGD/ 040 /BGD, Bid Package No. 2W2.L

The People's Republic of Bangladesh has received financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the Emergency 2007 Cyclone Recovery and Restoration Project, and it intends to apply part of the proceeds toward payments under the contract for the Construction of Cow Sheds. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the Construction of 85 Nos. of Cow Sheds under Package 2W2.L. Bidders having a minimum of 3 (three) years of experience in Construction works and related services are only encouraged to participate. The construction period is 36 (thirty six) weeks from the date of the Notification of the Award.

Bidding will be conducted through the national competitive bidding procedures as specified in the World Bank's *Guidelines: Procurement under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits*, (current edition), and is open to all eligible bidders as defined in the guidelines.

Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from and inspect the bidding documents from the ECRPP (Component A) office of FAO (Hs. # 27, Rd.# 9A, Apt. # A1, Dhanmondi R/A, Dhaka- 1209, Tel. 813 07 58) during office hours (8:00 Hrs. to 16:30 Hrs.). A Pre-bid meeting will also be held on 19 February 2012 at the meeting room of ECRPP (Component A) office of FAO. A complete set of bidding documents in English may be purchased by interested bidders on the submission of a written application to the address below and upon payment of Tk.1500. The method of payment for the tender documents will be in cash against a written receipt. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security for an amount Tk. 100,000.

Bids shall be delivered to the address below by 14:00 Hrs. on 01 March 2012. They will be opened immediately thereafter, in the presence of bidders' representatives, who choose to attend, at the address below. Late bids will be rejected.

FAO Representation in Bangladesh
House # 37, Road # 8
Dhanmondi, Dhaka-1205
Tel: 880-2-8118015
Fax: 8802-2-811 3446

The publishing of this notice and the receipt of bids does not commit FAO in any way to any party.

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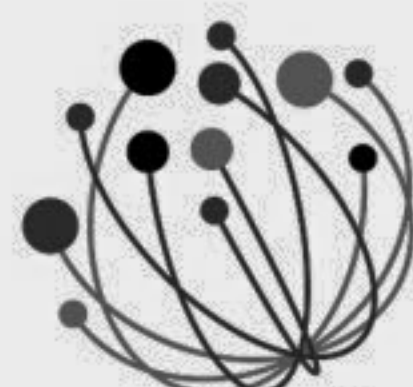
- How Oakridge can help fulfill your child's potential
- Q&A session

Spot Assessment & Admission:

Date : 7th and 8th February, 2012
Venue : GEE, 93, New Circular Road, Lily Plaza, 2nd Floor, Mouchak, Dhaka-1217
Tel : 9351 410, 9352 102
Mob : (0)171 2571 098/171 0959 723
E-mail : info@gee-edu.com.bd
Time : 10 am to 5 pm

Seminar & Spot Admission:

Date : 9th February, 2012
Venue : The City Bank Ltd, Banani Student Center, 2nd Floor, House #28, Road #11, Block #F, Banani, Dhaka-1213
Time : 10.30 am to 4.30 pm



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