

Up to 10pc

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the share market and infrastructure bonds.

In the next fiscal year, the government may allow people to whiten black money from any fiscal year, provided that the sources of undisclosed money are mentioned. The official said the government is under pressure from some influential quarters to give scope for legalising black money -- income obtained illegally or not declared for tax purposes.

As the Asia Pacific Group on Money Laundering, a global anti-money laundering body, strongly opposes giving scope for whitening illegal money, the government is now weighing how to give amnesty for black money without disregarding its international obligations, said the ministry official.

Seeking anonymity, an official of the National Board of Revenue, told The Daily Star last week that none had taken the opportunity in the current fiscal year to legalise undisclosed money by investing in the stockmarket or infrastructure bonds.

Civil society members, economists and even the business community oppose giving such scope. But time and again successive governments have given the opportunity under pressure from some vested quarters.

During the BNP-led government's tenure between 2001 and 2006, the then finance minister Saifur Rahman in a TV interview on the night before a budget day said no scope for whitening black money would be given under any circumstances. But the next day he placed the budget keeping provision for legalising undisclosed money.

Despite the fact that governments have given amnesty for black money almost every fiscal year since 1975, not a big amount of undisclosed money has been legalised each year and the state has not earned much revenue from it.

According to NBR statistics, Tk 12,996 crore has been whitened and Tk 1,368 crore has been collected as taxes since 1975.

The present government has been giving amnesty for black money from its first year in office. In fiscal year 2009-10, it allowed whitening undisclosed money in four sectors, where 1,923 people legalised Tk 923 crore.

Namira

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got a decent enough score to qualify for the second round," she said.

A student of Sunbeams International School, Dhaka, Namira admitted that the competition turned tougher as it progressed.

According to her, luck also played a major role in the competition. "Many spellers in the previous rounds could spell words, which I couldn't, but they got eliminated. I consider myself to be very lucky to have made it this far," Namira said.

When comparing the contest to spelling bees held elsewhere in the world, Namira stood firmly by her belief that Bangladeshi spellers could be very competitive. "You will realise it if you see how many of the contestants are spelling some very difficult words effortlessly."

Namira spends most of her spare time reading books and listening to music. "When it comes to books, I love fantasy and one of my favourite writers is JK Rowling."

Although, she has become quite a celebrity because of her success in the Spelling Bee, Namira remains very humble. "It seems like everything changed overnight. I get phone calls and texts from family and friends encouraging me on to do well in the Spelling Bee."

Youngest daughter of two bankers, Namira has a sister who is an undergraduate business student. Even though the competition is not yet over, Namira plans to participate in the Spelling Bee, again next year, if she fails to win it this time.

"I think I'll owe it to myself. I'm only in class VII and still have more chances ahead to win this. So I won't miss it for my life," she said. It is exactly the kind of dogged determination that makes her someone to watch out for in the finals.

SQ Chy

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facing 23 specific charges of crimes against humanity committed during the Liberation War, had sought bail so that he could join the parliament session.

On May 27, Salaududdin's counsel Ahsanul Haq Hena submitted the bail petition along with another petition seeking arrangements for the lawmaker to be at the Jatiya Sangsad if he was not awarded bail.

The three-member tribunal led by Justice Md Nizamul Huq rejected this petition too and asked Salaududdin to contact the authorities concerned for this special arrangement.

"The law does not allow issuing bail to the accused," Justice Nizamul said, adding that the tribunal could grant bail if an accused suffered from serious health and physical problems.

Interestingly, Salaududdin's party, the BNP, continues to boycott parliament proceedings.

On May 27, defence counsel Hena told the court that Salaududdin was served "presidential summon" to join the current parliament session.

The tribunal observed that the "presidential summon" was actually a notice signed by the acting secretary of the parliament secretariat.

DEFENCE COUNSEL EXONERATED

The Tribunal-1 yesterday exonerated Salaududdin's defence counsel Fakhru Islam from contempt of court charges.

The tribunal on May 15 issued a show-cause notice up on Fakhru to explain as to why action should not be taken against him for deliberately violating a court order to be respectful towards witness Prof Anisuzzaman.

On May 14, during cross-examination of Prof Anisuzzaman, Fakhru called him a liar and the court had warned the counsel about using this word against the professor.

However, Fakhru, after the court proceedings, called Prof Anisuzzaman a liar before the media.

The tribunal issued the notice up on him the next day.

In response to the notice, Fakhru submitted a prayer in which he apologised unconditionally and sought mercy.

Before passing the order yesterday, the tribunal chairman said Fakhru had insulted the tribunal and the professor; therefore there should be at least one line in his application apologising to the professor.

"We want that you put one line in your application. It will help you and us to pass order," said Justice Nizamul.

The defence counsel later wrote in his application that it was unintentional and he regretted calling Prof Anisuzzaman a liar.

In the order, the tribunal said Fakhru was a highly educated and skilled lawyer and if action against him were taken, it could cause him considerable amount of problems.

"Considering all these the tribunal exonerates him," said Justice Nizamul.

Salaududdin's defence yesterday asked for adjournment of proceedings an hour ahead of lunch saying that they needed time to consult with the accused.

The tribunal rejected their plea but allowed them to consult in the court without adjourning the proceedings.

Later, counsel Hena cross-examined prosecution witness Sirajul Islam.

The proceedings of the case were adjourned until June 4.

WITNESS CALL-BACK

Jamaat-e-Islami leader and war crimes accused Delwar Hossain Sayedee's defence counsel Mizanul Islam yesterday told Tribunal-1 that the defence would bear the expenses of accommodation, meals and transport of three prosecution witnesses it wants to cross-examine again.

The defence on May 29 appealed to Tribunal-1 to call back witnesses Mahbulul Alam Hawlader, Ruhul Amin Nobin and Manik Posari so that it could ask them more questions.

The three were among 28 prosecution witnesses who had testified against the Jamaat nayeb-e-ameer and had been cross-examined by the defence.

The tribunal would decide on the matter on Sunday.

Sayedee, who is facing 20 counts of crimes against humanity charges, was present at the court yesterday.

The proceedings of the

Bedouins abduct 2 US tourists in Egypt

AFP, Cairo

Two US tourists have been kidnapped in Egypt's Sinai peninsula by Bedouins protesting the arrest of one of their tribesmen on a drugs charge, a security official said yesterday.

The tourists were abducted late on Wednesday near the resort of Dahab on the Red Sea, the official said, adding that talks were under way in a bid to secure their release.

The two men were driving near the Dahab resort when they were stopped by a group of Bedouins at a makeshift roadblock and taken to an unknown location, she said.

JS

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parliament. It is public knowledge that her party has been boycotting the session.

Proceedings in the Zia charitable trust case, in which she is an accused, began on February 14 this year. Since then, not a single hearing has been held, as Khaleda's counsel requested time extension thrice.

Khaleda's counsel prayed for time extension on March 18 because "she was busy with organisational matters."

On April 29, she sought time extension for the second time for security reasons as her party had called a hartal on that day.

In an inquiry, The Daily Star found that Khaleda, in fact, was not busy with any activities related to the budget session in the House yesterday.

The former prime minister was actually busy with food distribution programmes at 19 spots in the capital.

The programmes were organised by the party's local units on the occasion of the 31st death anniversary of the BNP's founder, Ziaur Rahman.

According to a source at the chairperson's office, Khaleda Zia left her Gulshan residence at about noon and attended a food distribution programme at Amir Complex premises at Azampur shortly after 12:30pm.

Later, she distributed food at Uttara House Building, Molla Para of Modhdo Badda, Al Amin Market premises at Rampura, Siddheswari, Holy Family Hospital and New Eskaton area.

Khaleda went to the Jatiya Press Club from New Eskaton to attend a prize-giving ceremony in an art competition organised by Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal.

She entered the press club at 2:10pm and stayed there for around half-an-hour.

Khaleda later attended food distribution programmes at Karwan Bazar, FDC gate, Satrasta and Nabisco intersections, Taltola bus stand, Mirpur-11, National Bangla School, Martyred Intellectuals' Memorial premises at Mirpur, Khaleque enterprise premises at Gabtoli, and two community centres at Adabor and Banani.

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ICE crime

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Jainal Abdin, who led the drive.

The Daily Star took photos for its feature from this factory.

The court was assisted by Rapid Action Battalion (Rab-7) and KM Hanif, assistant director of Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institute (BSTI), Chittagong.

KM Hanif said the owner of the factory had been using unsafe water, toxic sodium cyclamate for sweetening the ice creams, textile dye for colour and banned ingredients for flavours.

These ice creams can cause diseases like diarrhoea, cholera and dysentery, he added.

Contacted, owner of the factory Md Aminul Islam, 28, confessed to using harmful chemicals to make ice creams. He has given an undertaking to the mobile court on not using such ingredients in future, said the executive magistrate.

THE 29 POLITICIANS	THE 25 LAWYERS
Mirza Fakhru	Mohammad Borhanuddin
Ruhul Kabir Rizvi	Sanaullah Miah
Amanullah Aman	Mohsin Miah
Brig Gen (retd) ASM Hannan Shah	Golam Mostafa Khan
Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain	Khorshed Alam
Goyeshwar Chandra Roy	Iqbal Ahmed
Ruhul Quddus Talukder Dulu	Masud Ahmed Talukder
Shahid Uddin Chowdhury Annie	Helal Uddin
Syeda Asifa Ashrafi Papia	Omar Faruque
Shammi Akhtar Shifa	Abdul Nur Bhuiyan
Rehana Akhtar Ranu	Abdul Khaleque Milon
Nilufar Chowdhury Moni	Jamal Ahmed Dulon
Sadeque Hossain Khoka	Mohammad Nuruzzaman
Oli Ahmed	Masud Rana
Andalib Rahman Partha	Monir
Sultan Salahuddin Tuku	Jibon
Anisur Rahman Khokon	Jakob
Moazzem Hossain Alal	Didar (1)
Saiful Islam Nirob	Didar (2)
Habib-un-Nabi Khan Sohel	Ershadul Haque
Mir Sharafat Ali Safu	Fardin
Abdul Salam	Mahmudur Rahman Romel
Abdul Matin	Kamal Hossain
SM Jahangir Hossain Sardar	Simki Imam
Kamruzzaman Dulal	Shamima Akhter Shammi
Kamruzzaman Ratan	
Mertazul Karim Badru	
Rehana Akhter Dolly	
Tofazzal Hossain Bhuiyan	

29 opposition leaders

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pro-opposition lawyers yesterday in a case filed for vandalism at the metropolitan sessions and district judges' courts on May 22.

Only 20 days ago, charges were pressed against 45 opposition leaders and activists, including Mirza Fakhru, over the torching of a vehicle near the Prime Minister's Office during the hartal.

A case was filed with Shahbagh Police Station against 19 leaders of the BNP-led 18-party alliance in connection with the explosions.

The arson case was filed the same day with Tejgaon Police Station. Many thus stand accused in both the cases.

All the arson accused are in jail. Of the 29 charge sheeted accused in the blast case, four failed to secure bail after their arrest, while the High Court granted anticipatory bail to Fakhru and 24 others in the blast case until the submission of the charge sheet.

At least 50 opposition leaders and activists are now in prison in connection with the two cases.

Yesterday around 11:00am, DB Inspector Tapan Chandra Saha, investigation officer of the blast case, submitted the

charge sheet to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court in the capital.

According to the charge sheet, two unidentified youths riding a motorcycle hurled bombs inside the secretariat to create panic, damage the important government infrastructure and thwart the democratic system.

The attack was carried out on the direct and indirect orders and provocation of the accused and with their financial assistance. They also helped the youths collect the explosives, it added.

CHARGE SHEETS AGAINST LAWYERS
Abdul Islam, a sub-inspector at Kotwali Police Station, also the investigation officer of the case, placed the charge sheet to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court in Dhaka yesterday afternoon.

The charge sheet was submitted under the Speedy Trial Act which allows the judge only 30 work days to complete the trial if the accused are on bail or in custody.

If some of the defendants are on the run, the trial may take up to 60 workdays, according to the law.

The court, meanwhile, fixed June 3 for hearing the

bail petitions filed earlier in the day by 22 of the lawyers.

First Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Shahidul Islam Faruque passed the order as the lawyers' bail term granted by the High Court will expire on June 3.

Dhaka Bar Association President Borhanuddin and 21 other accused secured bail for 10 days from the HC in the case on May 24.

The lawyers will be at liberty until June 3, the court said on Thursday.

Earlier in the morning, the lawyers surrendered to the court and sought bail in compliance with an HC order.

The vandalism took place on May 22 when members of Jatiyatabadi Ainjibi Forum boycotted all the judges' and magistrates' courts in the capital, protesting a court order sending BNP lawmaker Mahbul Uddin Khokon to jail in an arson case.

The same day, Kotwali police filed the case against the 29 pro-BNP lawyers.

Of them, Kamal Hossain, Simki Imam and Shamima Akhter Shammi have been absconding. The IO prayed for arrest warrants against them.

Huda

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the representatives of the ruling and opposition parties.

Former minister Huda recently became the talk of the town when he issued an ultimatum to his own party Chairperson Khaleda Zia to invite her archrival Awami League President Sheikh Hasina to the negotiation table. He had said on May 23 that he would resign from BNP if Khaleda failed to invite Hasina by June 5.

"The government is talking about an interim government [for holding the next elections]. It can be formed with the government and the opposition. But home and defence ministries must be under the leadership of the opposition," he said addressing a discussion titled "Spirit of Shaheed Zia and a credible election system" at the Jatiya Press Club.

Bangladesh Nationalist Front organised the meeting to mark the 31st death anniversary of president Ziaur Rahman, founder of the BNP.

Yesterday, Huda again urged Khaleda to take the initiative for holding talks with the ruling Awami League and ask for the release of all detained opposition leaders so that a congenial atmosphere could be created for dialogue through which the political impasse centring the interim government issue could be overcome.

Huda called on both Hasina and Khaleda to sit for dialogue. "It's possible. People are eagerly waiting for it," he said.

The country's apex court issued a ruling in which it declared that the system of an unelected government holding national elections was illegal. It, however, said, with the security of the people in mind, the next two elections could be held under such interim governments.

The parliament, however, abolished the system much to the dismay of the opposition. The opposition had called for several hartals demanding restoration of the caretaker government system.

UK minister

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of Grameen Bank in lifting the very poor out of poverty," he has said, adding the integrity and efficiency of Grameen Bank should be protected so it can continue its work.

Burt has admired the bank's former managing director Prof Muhammad Yunus for what he has been doing as a micro-credit pioneer and said his legacy should be protected and upheld, according to a statement issued by the British High Commission yesterday.

The British minister, prior to concluding his three-day visit to Bangladesh, met Yunus at the UK High Commissioner's residence in the capital on Wednesday.

Yunus, who along with Grameen Bank won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006, expressed deep concern over the future of the bank following the formation of a four-member commission to review the activities of the bank and its 54 associated organisations.

The government constituted the commission on May 16 to make recommendations on how to run the organisations in future.

"I can see clearly that the future of Grameen Bank will be at stake if the government increases its role in the bank's management by amending the legal structure," Yunus said in an open letter to the citizens of the nation on Wednesday.

In the letter, Yunus questioned the necessity of forming a probe commission to look into Grameen Bank's activities since its inception.

The Nobel laureate stressed the need for maintaining the existing law, management structure and work policy through which Grameen Bank had become one of the renowned organisations around the world.