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WHITENING BLACK MONEY

Don't give the scope next fiscal year

Experts urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A number of renowned economists and industrialists have urged the government not to give the scope for whitening black money in the next fiscal year.

Only a handful of individuals are reaping the benefits of Bangladesh's astounding GDP growth due to the discriminatory provision of whitening black money. This is escalating economic disparity in the country, they said at a webinar yesterday.

Eminent economist Rehman Sobhan, chairman of the Centre for Policy Dialogue, said, "Corrupt individuals who have amassed astronomical amounts of money are getting amnesty just by paying a nominal amount of money as tax."

"This money whitening process will sharply increase economic discrimination in the country," he pointed out at the webinar titled "Black money being whitened: Beneficial or harmful for the economy?" organised by Citizen's Platform for SDGs.

Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya, distinguished fellow at the CPD, said, "Money earned by committing crimes and corruption is being termed undisclosed income and being whitened by paying tax."

This contradicts the constitution because it has been clearly stated in the charter that the state will create such conditions that none will be able to possess and benefit from unaccounted income, he noted.

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The waste of a dyeing factory accumulated on a street in the capital's Kadomtoli, Shyamoli area. Such mismanaged waste makes locals suffer immensely on Road-12 and nearby Gazi Tank areas. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Have EC probed by judicial council

101 SC lawyers ask president

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

One hundred and one Supreme Court lawyers yesterday sent a letter to President Abdul Hamid, requesting him to constitute the Supreme Judicial Council to probe allegations of "financial corruption and gross misconduct" against the CEC and other election commissioners.

They also requested the president to remove the CEC and other commissioners from their posts.

In the letter, the SC lawyers urged the president to take away the post of chief election commissioner from KM Nurul Huda and hand his responsibilities to an election commissioner while an inquiry takes place into the allegations.

The 101 lawyers, who signed the letter, include AM Mahub Uddin Khokon, a joint secretary general of the BNP and also a former

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2 govt officials held for stealing Tk 2.20cr

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Police arrested two government officials in Dinajpur on Monday for transferring around Tk 2.2 crore digitally from the state treasury over the last two years by forging documents, user IDs and passwords.

The arrestees are Amirul Islam, 34, cash officer of Dinajpur M Abdur Rahim Medical College Hospital, and Mahfuzur Rahman, 42, audit officer of the district accounts and finance department.

Officials of Detective Branch of police in Dinajpur interrogated the duo and produced them before a court, seeking seven days' remand each, said Imam Zafar, officer-in-charge of Dinajpur DB.

The remand hearing will take place today, he added.

Saiful Islam, the district accounts and finance officer who first detected their scheme on January 31, filed the case with Kotwali Police Station on Monday night.

In the first information report (FIR), Saiful mentioned that Amirul used to handle payments of more than 700 employees, including doctors, nurses, officials and staffers of the hospital.

As part of his job, he was connected

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PAROLE VIOLATIONS

Russian court jails Navalny

West demands his release; Kremlin critic calls allegations absurd, politically-motivated

REUTERS, Moscow

A Russian court jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny yesterday in a ruling which the opposition politician blamed on what he called President Vladimir Putin's hatred and fear of him.

The Moscow court handed Navalny a three-and-a-half-year sentence but his lawyer said the anti-corruption blogger would serve only two years and eight months in jail because of time he has already spent under house arrest.

The widely anticipated ruling, which followed nationwide protests calling for Navalny's release, is likely to further strain relations with the West, which is likely to consider imposing sanctions on Russia over its handling of the case.

The United States, Britain and Germany urged Moscow to immediately free Navalny, with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken saying Washington would coordinate closely with allies to hold Russia accountable.

A Navalny ally had urged the West before the hearing to hit Putin's inner circle with personal sanctions.

Navalny's supporters urged people to gather in central Moscow though riot police had already taken up position. His lawyers said they would appeal the ruling.

Navalny, one of Putin's most prominent critics, was arrested on January 17 for alleged parole violations after returning from Germany where he

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Buet says no to uniform admission test

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology has decided not to join a cluster to hold a uniform admission test; rather it would enrol students through its own admission tests like previous years.

The decision comes at a time when Buet and three other public engineering universities, who had earlier agreed on a cluster admission test system, were divided on the question of where the exams would be held.

Opinion was also divided on which university the chairman of the admission committee will come from.

University Grants Commission member Muhammed Alamgir told The Daily Star yesterday that they came to know that the Buet authorities opted not to join the cluster admission test

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Big stride made for creating 'quantum brain'



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Scientists say they have made major steps towards the creation of a "quantum brain" - a computer that could function and change like a human's.

Researchers have long been looking to create an intelligent material that is able to learn by changing itself physically, in the same way our brain does. Such a discovery could open up an entirely new generation of computers.

Now researchers have been able to assemble a network of individual atoms that are able to pattern and connect in a way similar to the behaviour of

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COVID PROBE

WHO slams critics

Russia's Sputnik V vaccine 91.6pc effective in trial

AGENCIES

The World Health Organization blasted critics of its investigation into the origins of the Covid-19 pandemic and challenged those claiming to know better to come forward with the smoking gun.

A WHO investigative team is in Wuhan, China -- where the first cases were discovered in December 2019 -- trying to piece together how the virus jumped from animals to humans before going on to kill more than two million people.

The UN agency's emergencies director Michael Ryan hit out at those sniping at the mission, and said people claiming they have information on how the pandemic broke out should emerge from the shadows.

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12 more die, 525 get Covid

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh's Covid-19 fatalities rose to 8,149 as the health authorities recorded 12 more coronavirus-related deaths in 24 hours till yesterday morning.

The mortality rate is now 1.52 percent, the Directorate General of Health Services said in a handout.

Meanwhile, 525 new cases were detected during the same 24-hour period, pushing the national tally to 536,107.

The daily detection rate has dropped to 3.63 percent. The current overall detection rate is 14.57 percent.

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PRAYER TIMING FEBRUARY 3

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5:30 12:45 4:15 5:52 7:15
JAMAT 6:05 1:15 4:30 5:56 7:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



In the month of language, members of Chhatra Union organised a human chain and a rally in front of the Jatiya Press Club demanding proper uses of the Bangla language. They also advocated for publication of books in languages spoken by people from Chattogram hill tracts. The photo was captured yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

EMPLOYMENT IN MALAYSIA

Dhaka urges KL to finalise protocol

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh has urged Malaysia to finalise the protocol amending the MoU between the government of Malaysia and the government of Bangladesh (G-to-G plus) on the employment of workers.

Bangladesh also requested Malaysia to take back the stranded Bangladeshi workers who could not return to Malaysia due to Covid-19 lockdown.

Bangladesh appreciated the government of Malaysia for allowing the workers to change employers and also for introducing the recalibration program under which illegal workers would have an opportunity to legalise.

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen raised the issues when newly appointed High Commissioner of Malaysia in Bangladesh Hazanah Md Hashim met him at the State Guest House, Padma on Monday.

The Malaysian High Commissioner acknowledged the immense contributions of Bangladeshi workers and professionals in Malaysian economy and society.

She assured Dhaka of taking up the issue of worker's return with her government.

The Malaysian envoy was appreciative of the policy initiatives and social safety net programmes of Bangladesh in the face of the prolonged pandemic.

To expand trade, the High Commissioner hoped that the negotiations for Free Trade Agreement (FTA) will start soon.

Momen lauded the strong moral and political support

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