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Safety net spending to be higher

Budgetary allocation for programmes will see Tk 50,633cr uptick in next fiscal year

REJAUJ KARIM BYRON and MD FAZLUR RAHMAN

The budgetary allocation for safety net programmes would see a major uptick in the next fiscal year as the government looks to widen the number of beneficiaries struggling to make ends meet because of the coronavirus outbreak.

Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal may set aside Tk 125,000 crore -- up more than 68 percent from Tk 74,367 crore in the current fiscal year -- for various safety net programmes while unveiling the budget for fiscal year 2020-21 on June 11, said a finance ministry official.

The allocation would be three percent of the gross domestic product (GDP), up from 2.58 percent in FY 2019-20.

Millions of people have lost their jobs owing to the countrywide shutdown enforced from March 26 to flatten the curve on the deadly virus.

Due to the income shock caused by the pandemic, 77.2 percent of the vulnerable non-poor fell below the poverty line, according to a joint survey of the Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC) and the Brac Institute for Governance and Development.

This would imply that beyond the 20.5 percent of the population officially recognised as poor, there is a group

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Exhausted and sick, Nilufar Yeasmin sits on a pavement in front of Anwar Khan Modern Medical College Hospital in Dhanmondi around 9:00am yesterday while her daughter holds her spot in queue for ticket. The woman from Sanir Akhra has been suffering fever and cold since Eid day but could not get tested at government hospitals for Covid-19 despite repeated attempts. She is scheduled for the test at the hospital today.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Zafarullah stable at home

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gonoshasthaya Kendra Founder and Trustee Dr Zafarullah Chowdhury, who tested positive for coronavirus on May 24, is currently doing well in home isolation and has sought the blessings of countrymen.

"Dr Zafarullah is doing fine and is stable. He is being treated at home and working as usual," said a post on Gonoshasthaya Kendra's verified Facebook page yesterday.

Dr Zafarullah expressed his gratitude to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for enquiring about his health and wishing him a rapid recovery.

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia too enquired about his wellbeing, the post said.

"He has a bit of a cough. Otherwise, he is doing fine. He received the second dose of plasma therapy today [yesterday] at Gonoshasthaya Nagar Hospital," said an official of the hospital yesterday.

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Pandemic rages in S America

EU governments ban hydroxychloroquine; US death toll crosses 100k

AGENCIES

The US coronavirus death toll passed 100,000 as the pandemic tightened its grip on South America, which is outpacing Europe and the United States in daily infections.

Global cases have surged to nearly 5.7 million, with more than 355,000 deaths, and in a grim signal to other countries hoping to exit lockdown, South Korea re-imposed social distancing rules after a spike in new cases.

Deaths in Brazil topped 25,000 on Wednesday, and its caseload is second only to the United States, where authorities have moved to ease lockdowns and help the battered economy, despite experts recommending they remain on guard for a resurgence of the disease.

"Don't start leapfrogging over the recommendations of some of the guidelines because that's really tempting fate and asking for trouble," Anthony Fauci, one of the top US health advisers, told CNN.

Nearly 1.7 million Americans are known to have been infected with the disease, according to a Johns Hopkins

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FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

Australia-Bangladesh friendship strengthened



Australian Foreign Minister Nigel Hubert Bowen calls on Bangabandhu at Bangabhaban on 29 May, 1972.

May 29, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

AUSTRALIA-BANGLADESH JOINT COMMUNIQUE

Australia and Bangladesh agree to expand economic cooperation to strengthen bilateral relations between the two friendly countries, says a joint communique issued today in Dhaka. The Communique is signed by the foreign ministers of the respective countries. They also discuss Australian assistance in developing agricultural productivity in Bangladesh. Bangladeshi Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad expresses gratitude on behalf of the government and the people

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

Another cop dies from Covid-19

Infection among cops crosses 4,200

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Another police officer, who tested Covid-19 positive days after suffering a stroke, died at Impulse Hospital in the capital yesterday afternoon.

Rasel Biswas, 35, a sub-inspector of Special Branch of police, was admitted to the hospital after he was diagnosed with coronavirus on May 24.

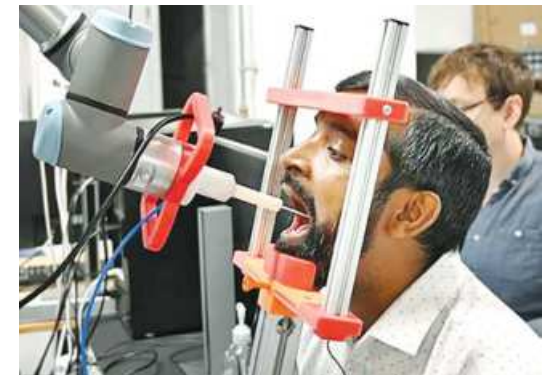
He breathed his last yesterday afternoon, said Sohel Rana, assistant inspector general (media) of Police Headquarters.

With Rasel, 15 police personnel have died so far after being infected with Covid-19 while discharging their duties across the country.

Rasel had a brain stroke a week ago and he was first admitted to National Institute of Neurosciences and Hospital. He was shifted to Impulse Hospital

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

Danish robot swabs throats for tests



MAIL ONLINE

A robot that is able to take throat swabs from coronavirus patients using a 3D printed arm was developed by a team of researchers from Denmark in just four weeks.

The University of Southern Denmark says the world's first fully automated throat swab robot will be able to test the first Covid-19 patients by late June.

Using disposable 3D printed parts, the robot holds a swab and hits the exact spot in the throat where a sample needs to be collected every time.

It puts the swab in a glass and screws the lid on to seal the sample without human input - reducing the risk of exposing healthcare workers to the deadly virus.

A team of ten researchers for the Industry 4.0

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Boat capsizes toll now 10

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPUI, from Pabna

Bodies of five more people who drowned in a boat accident in the Jamuna on Tuesday were recovered yesterday, taking the death toll to 10.

Nine people are still missing, according to police and the fire service.

The rescue operation was called off on Wednesday evening considering that the missing bodies might have been washed away due to the strong current, said Monjurul Alam, officer at Shahzadpur fire station in Sirajganj.

The boat was yet to be

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PRAYER TIMING MAY 29

Fazr Juma Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-05 12-30 5-00 6-43 8-05
JAMAAT 4-40 1-15 5-15 6-47 8-35

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

China backs legislation

Tensions rise after US puts HK's special status in doubt

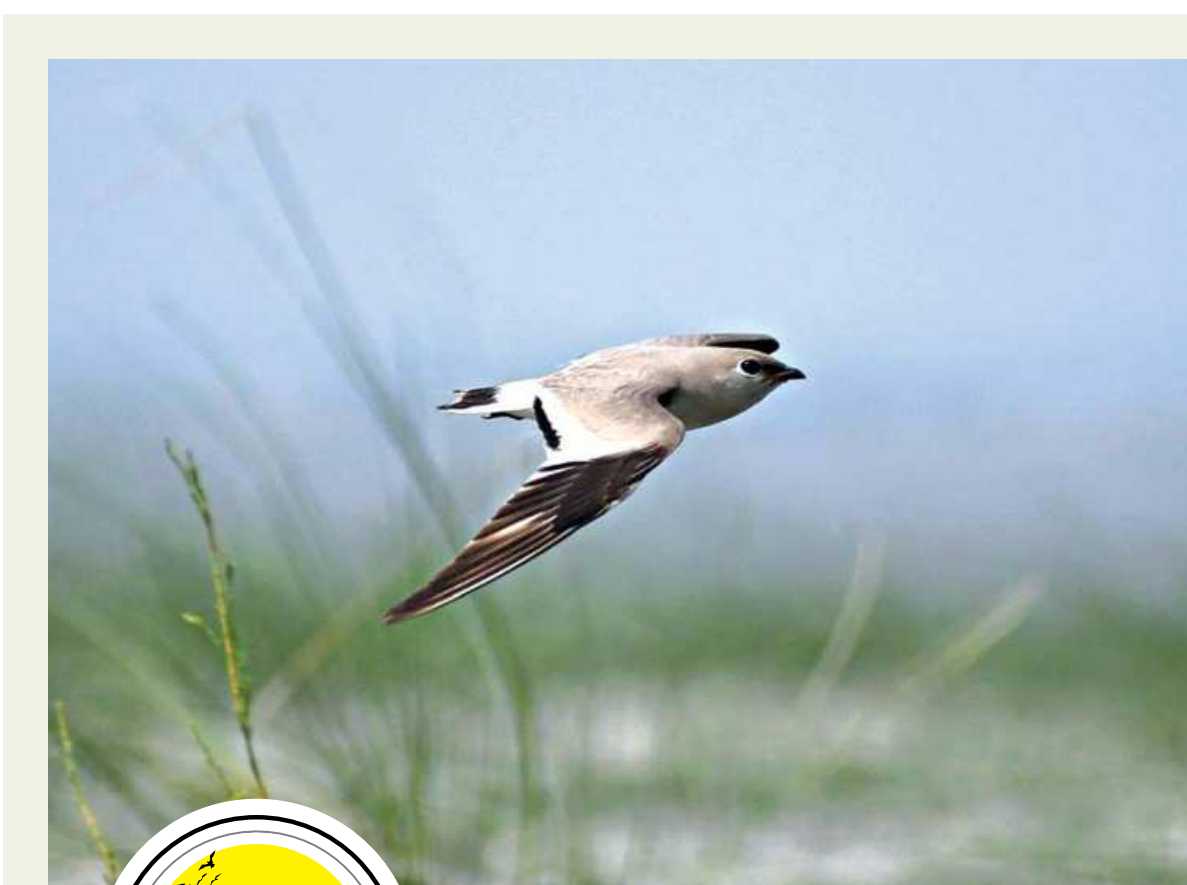
REUTERS, Hong Kong

China's parliament yesterday approved a decision to go forward with national security legislation for Hong Kong that democracy activists in the city and Western countries fear could erode its freedoms and jeopardise its role as a global financial hub.

China says the legislation will aim to tackle secession, subversion, terrorism and foreign interference in the city but the plan, unveiled in Beijing last week, triggered the first big protests in Hong Kong for months.

Riot police were out in force in Hong Kong as its lawmakers debated another piece of legislation, a bill to criminalise disrespect of China's national anthem, while the United States piled on pressure aimed at preserving the city's autonomy.

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A Little Pratincole spotted in Jamunar Char area of Bogura's Sariakandi upazila. The bird with short legs, long pointed wings and a short tail catches its prey, mainly insects, while in flight. The photo was taken last week.

PHOTO: MOSTAFA SHABUJ

Condolence Message

The SMC and its Board of Directors deeply mourn the sad demise of **Ms. Niloufer Manzur**, a Company member of SMC and a former director of its Board. Inna Lillahi Wa Inna ilaihi Raji'oun. Ms. Niloufer Manzur was associated with SMC for a long period, providing valuable contribution for the growth and development of the company.

May Allah (SWT) grant her jannat and give strength and fortitude to the bereaved family to bear the loss.

Company Secretary
Social Marketing Company (SMC)

On behalf of The Company Members, Board Members and the employees of SMC