

Saifur tells IMF team Next budget to have deficit cut measures

UNB, Dhaka

The national budget for 2002-2003 is likely to be placed in parliament on the last Thursday of May or first Thursday of June, proposing measures to substantially cut down fiscal deficits.

Finance and Planning Minister Saifur Rahman said this yesterday while apprising a visiting delegation from International Monetary Fund (IMF) of his plans to bring down the fiscal deficit to 5 per cent of GDP in the next budget from previous fiscal year's 5.5 per cent.

"We are now in a process to reduce the deficit as part of our effort to give the economy a sound footing through increasing revenue and remittance and curtailing unnecessary expenditure," he said in a meeting with the delegation at his Planning Ministry office.

The delegation, led by Asia Pacific regional chief Luis Valdivieso, came here to review the progress on

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Law to ensure people's rights to information soon: Moudud

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has planned to enact a new law aimed at ensuring people's rights to information, Law Minister Moudud Ahmed has said.

A bill on the planned legislation would be placed in the parliament in next two months, Moudud told a seminar in the city yesterday.

"We'll consult with the media representatives before drafting the proposed bill," the minister told the seminar on "Media and National Security of Bangladesh".

The Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIIS), The Independent, daily Jugantor, and Channel-I jointly organised the seminar at the BIIS auditorium.

Speaking as the chief guest, the law minister termed the age-old Official Secrecy Act outdated and hoped that the planned law would enable the media people to know more about administrative matters relating to national security.

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Detention will come under HC microscope

STAR REPORT

A five-member bench of the High Court will now decide whether extension of detention under the Special Powers Act (SPA) is legal or not.

A three-member bench yesterday sent a note to the chief justice, recommending that a larger bench should scrutinise the issue.

The bench referred to the verdict of Justice Shah Abu Nayeem Mominur Rahman, Justice Bijon Kumar Das and Justice Khademul Islam on a similar case.

On Monday, the three judges ruled that extension of ex-Awami League lawmaker Mockbul Hossain's detention was illegal and that the government has no authority to extend any detention without the permission of an advisory council.

But the necessity to form an extended bench arose when fresh petitions were filed against the extension of detention of four persons recently.

Justice Hamidul Haq, Justice MA Matin and Justice Mohammad Marzi-ul-Huq were scheduled to hear the petition yesterday.

However, the judges said that they did not want to hear the case because if they did and made a ruling, it would lead to a 'procedural complication'.

They observed that in case their ruling contradicted the one given on Monday by a bench of similar status, the matter would eventually be referred to a full bench, comprising five judges.

Therefore, to save time, they felt that the matter should be forwarded to a full bench right away.

The judges also sought opinion from Attorney General AF Hasan Arif and his immediate predecessor Mahmudul Islam on their recommendation for a larger bench. Both agreed.

The chief justice is expected to form a full bench to hear the case soon.

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Danish envoy handed note of protest

No compromise, say Morshed, Saifur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The foreign ministry yesterday summoned Danish Ambassador Niel Severin Munk and handed over a note of protest against Danish Under-secretary Peter Lysholt Hansen's corruption slapped on Shipping Minister Akbar Hossain.

The Bangladesh envoy in Copenhagen will also hand over a protest letter to the Danish government.

"We summoned the Danish envoy and expressed our serious concern at the way they acted to bring corruption charges against a minister based on assumptions," Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan told The Daily Star last night.

"The way they did it is humiliating for the government. And we will see an end to this," he added.

On the other hand, Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman has said the government will not settle for any sort of compromise even if foreign aid and grants are stopped.

"This is a matter of prestige for the country. We will not compromise on the issue. If they had any complaints, they could have informed the prime minister," Saifur told newsmen yesterday.

At the same time, Morshed Khan views that Hansen and the Danish ambassador went out of diplomatic norms to slap the corruption charges and thus embarrassed not only Bangladesh but also Denmark.

Hansen brought corruption charges against Akbar in the tender process for rehabilitation of four ferries with Danish grant.

Meantime, the shipping ministry has decided to rehabilitate the four ferries in phases in next two years with funds from the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC).

The ferries to be rehabilitated are Hazrat Shahjalal, Amanat Shah, Shah Makhdum and Shah Ali.

The decision was taken yesterday at a meeting with the shipping minister in the chair. Shipping Secretary Golam Rahman, BIWTC Chairman Abdul Matin and other officials were also present.

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Charges pressed against 6 for Shihab murder

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detectives have pressed charges against six persons for the abduction and murder of schoolboy Khondakar Shihab Ahmed.

Detective Branch Inspector Nazrul Islam, investigation officer of the sensational abduction and murder case, submitted the chargesheet to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka yesterday afternoon after about one month of probe.

In the chargesheet, a total of 33 persons were made witnesses to the murder.

Those who have been named in the chargesheet are Monir Hossain Liton, Abu Syed, Faisal Sharif Razu, Mahbubul Haq Rubel, Imran Hossain Sabuj and Nasim Sheikh. Of them, Monir and Syed have given confessional statements before a

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Court orders judicial probe into Simi suicide case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka yesterday ordered a judicial inquiry into the Simi Suicide Case.

Magistrate Mohammad Abul Kashem passed the order upon a petition, submitted by the victim's father, seeking judicial inquiry into the matter.

Mohammad Ali Imdad submitted the petition to the CMM's court, Dhaka on Monday.

He stated that sub-Inspector Abdur Razzak, the Investigation Officer (IO) of the case, submitted a charge sheet before the CMM's Court against six people including SI Abul Bashar on February 11. But the IO did not interrogate the witnesses and record their statements.

Moreover, the IO did not go to the house of the victim's father to

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A patient from Manikganj leaves the National Institute of Cancer Research and Hospital yesterday, without availing himself of chemotherapy.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

HOSPITAL WATCH

Cancer hospital sans anti-cancer drugs

NAIMUL HAQ

The lone state-owned cancer hospital has suspended its regular chemotherapy services because of the government's lid on the supply of anticancer drugs.

The 50-bed National Institute of Cancer Research and Hospital that offers services to cancer patients free of cost ran out of expensive anticancer drugs, mostly intravenous. The government stopped supplying drugs in April last year, sources said.

About 60 patients, both new and old, seek chemotherapy a day at the outpatient department of the hospital, but all of them are asked to buy drugs on their own.

"We have reminded the Central Medical Store Depot (CMSD) twice so far of fresh drugs supplies, but we got no official reply," said a hospital official on Tuesday.

The hospital wrote to the CMSD first on October 19 last year, sending a list of 60 anticancer drugs to be supplied on an urgent basis. "We got no response despite repeated verbal reminders," complained the official.

Again on March 12 this year, the hospital wrote to the CMSD for an urgent supply of the drugs. This time, the demand for drugs has doubled.

"Since we have no drug in stock, we ask the poor patients to purchase the drugs from the local drug stores," reasoned another official.

Most patients are poor and come from as far as Panchagarh, Dinajpur, Satkhira, Cox's Bazar, Sylhet and

Lalmanirhat.

Fifty-five-year-old Ezaz Mia, from Rangpur, has been suffering from lung cancer for one year. Last week, he came to the outpatient department only to know that the hospital has no drug required for his treatment.

An ovarian cancer patient Rina Roy, wife of a farmer, had to leave the hospital without any treatment. The doctor prescribed carboplatin chemotherapy for her.

Every month, like Ejaj Mia and Rina, hundreds of patients seeking chemotherapy at the hospital return home untreated.

"Some will die due to delayed action against the malignant growth of cells. Anticancer drugs work best when such growth is detected early on," said a medical oncologist.

"Normal cells grow and die in a controlled way. When cancer occurs, cells in the body that are not normal keep dividing and forming more cells without control. Anticancer drugs destroy cancer cells by stopping their growth or multiplication," he explained.

"Healthy cells can also be harmed, especially those dividing quickly. The harm to healthy cells is what causes side effects. These cells usually repair themselves after chemotherapy. Since some drugs work better together than alone, two or more drugs are given at the same time often -- which is called combination chemotherapy."

Most of the common anticancer imported drugs

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Trucks and container carriers stuck in a traffic at Chittagong port during a four-hour strike yesterday. Thousands of workers at the port staged the strike protesting an American company's plan to set up a 550 million dollar dock.

PHOTO: AFP

Dock workers at Ctg port enforce strike

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The Chittagong Dock Bondor Sramik Karmochary Parishad enforced a four-hour work abstention, disrupting port activities yesterday.

The Parishad, a forum of 22 trade unions working at the Chittagong port, enforced the work abstention from 7:30am to protest 'resumption' of the process to install a private port at the Karnaphuli estuary. It also demanded immediate cancellation of the process.

The Parishad also held demonstrations and a rally on Bandor Bhaban premises.

The Parishad leaders said the previous government stopped the installation process of the private port through a government order in the face of protest from different organisations. But the new government has restarted the same process, ignoring the previous government's order, they said.

The leaders also threatened to paralyse port activities for an indefinite period if any accord was signed for construction of the private container terminal.

Faulty surveillance software Chief Executive Officer of Dhaka bourse fired

M SHAMSUR RAHMAN

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE), Rezaur Rahman, was fired yesterday on charges of trying to mislead the capital market regulators by providing them faulty surveillance software.

The DSE Council at an emergency meeting took this decision as the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) asked it to immediately remove him. The SEC board met earlier on the day and gave the order.

The council also appointed DSE Finance Controller Mofizuddin Ahmed as acting CEO. He will take charge today.

The axe came on the CEO after the SEC unearthed that the key surveillance software was faulty and had been generating wrong information for long.

The SEC later served a show cause notice on Rahman and called him for a hearing on April 13. But he failed to satisfy the regulators.

The SEC board at its meeting yesterday observed that the CEO was in charge of the Surveillance Department and was fully aware of the fault in the software.

"But despite being well aware, the CEO tried to mislead the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) by supplying the faulty software to it for surveillance purpose. Such a move was aimed at diverting the SEC in a wrong direction which cannot be pardoned," the SEC

order to the DSE said.

The SEC also charged the CEO with damaging investors' confidence, suppressing facts, giving misleading information and failure to ensure a transparent market.

The board meeting of the SEC was scheduled to be held at 11:30 am, but it was delayed as the CEO tendered his resignation to the DSE chairman, sensing the action against him.

But the DSE chairman rejected his resignation, saying there is an ongoing investigation by the SEC and that there are a number of allegations against the CEO which needs to be disposed of before his resignation could be accepted.

Being informed of this, the SEC board ordered removal of the CEO under the Securities and Exchange Ordinance for failure to discharge his duties.

An investigation by the capital market watchdog on March 20 found the fault in the surveillance system and informed the SEC.

The investigators said that from the very beginning, the DSE system engineers detected the fault and informed the management, but the CEO continued to mislead the SEC when it made queries about performance of the system.

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Chairman of Ctg Labour Court feels embarrassed

UNB, Ctg

Chairman of the First Labour Court Rishikesh Shaha yesterday referred two cases to the Appeal Tribunal saying he felt embarrassed to hold the trial.

The cases relate to dispute over election of Coaster Haj Contractors-Sramik union held in 1992 and corruption charge against president of the union Jebel Haq and his 17 accomplices.

Shaha who is enjoying the rank and status of District and Sessions Judge in his order yesterday said one of the parties to the cases attacked the court with lethal weapons during the hearing on March 9. They damaged furniture, ransacked documents and injured some employees in the court.

The chairman further said, "In the face of the attack I had to leave the court and hide inside the toilet of the adjacent office of the Registrar. Later police rescued me."

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Announcement



See the rules and conditions of the Star Rangs Toshiba World Cup Quiz, Round 1 on Page 15.

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Apr 18		6-21 pm
Apr 19	5-34 am	

Prayer Timings

Apr 18		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-45	5-15
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-25	6-30
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation