

Revenue rise

FROM PAGE 1
Estate and Housing Association of Bangladesh.

The scope for whitening money did not however get good response from investment sector.

VAT collection in power sector this FY fell by 8.81 percent from 31.11 percent during the corresponding period of last FY.

In gas sector, VAT collection however increased by seven percent this FY from that last year.

About 30 percent of the total amount of VAT comes from this sector. Collection from this sector shot up by 23.11 this FY.

Due to expansion of cell phone companies, VAT collection from them increased by 22 percent in the first three months of this FY.

NBR sources said Aktel offered a special package that contributed to the increase in VAT collection but the trend might not continue.

Though VAT collection in edible oil sector increased by 23 percent this FY, collection from hotels and restaurants sector fell.

About 70 percent of income tax comes from tax-cut at sources. Income tax collection at sources from contractors and suppliers increased by only three percent this FY, which shot up by 50 percent in the first three months of last FY.

Implementation of ADP

was slow both in this FY and last FY.

A major portion of tax at import level comes from supplementary duty on cars. A major feature of this year's fiscal policy is to discourage import of luxury items by increasing tax on it.

The policy appears to have worked well. Growth of import duty on motor vehicles shot up by 10 percent during the first three months of this FY whereas during the corresponding period of last FY, growth was 23 percent.

Growth of overall revenue collection in the first three months of this FY was nine percent while the government's target for the whole year is 16.13 percent.

Bangladeshi Hajj pilgrim dies in Saudi Arabia

DU CORRESPONDENT

A female Bangladeshi Hajj pilgrim was killed while 11 others were injured as a bus fell into a roadside ditch at Arafat in Saudi Arabia.

The deceased was identified as Pakiza Khatun of Chittagong, satellite television Channel-1 reported yesterday.

Of the injured, the condition of six pilgrims was stated to be critical.

The injured were admitted to the local Al-Noor hospital.

Govt focuses

FROM PAGE 1
Fahmida Khatun made a presentation on "Policy Agenda for Addressing Climate Change in Bangladesh: Copenhagen and Beyond".

In her concluding remarks she said the country should develop adequate human and organisational capacity in terms of adequate technical, business, management and regulatory skills.

She also emphasised establishing effective mechanism for improving transparency of project approvals and public procurement procedures to reduce corruption.

M Asaduzzaman, research director of Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) and Ainun Nishat, senior adviser on climate change, IUCN Asia spoke there as designated speakers.

Ainun Nishat said Bangladesh has a strong voice at the climate change negotiations as it leads the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) forum. It has already prepared a climate change strategy, which is now a model to other countries, he added.

Sohrab Ali Sana, MP of Koiria in Satkhira, said a total of seven unions in his constituency are still under saline water.

It is important to deal with the climate change impact locally rather than waiting for what developed countries would do for us, he said.

Mirza Azizul Islam, former adviser to the last caretaker government, Parvin Talukder MP, Atik Rahman, executive director of Bangladesh Centre of Advanced Studies (BCAS), Mizan Rahman of North South University, Z Karim and Taufik Ali, former ambassador to Geneva also spoke at the dialogue.

M Syeduzzaman, member of CPD Board of Trustees, chaired the session.

Tifa deal

FROM PAGE 1
conversation, Hira and Kabir with three others opened fire on Nazim around 12:30pm that left him dead on the spot.

As Ujjal screamed while the criminals were about to escape from the scene, they fired at him leaving him injured.

Ujjal was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital with injuries to his hips. The body was sent to the hospital's morgue for autopsy.

Police suspected that the incident was a consequence of a feud between the attackers and the victims over sharing the money collected from cable TV business and construction materials supply in the area.

Officer-in-Charge of Badra Police Station Kazi Wazed Ali said Nazim and the attackers were involved in criminal activities.

Earlier, Nazim was sent to jail in Cox's Bazar while he was caught with arms, the OC added.

Locals said Nazim and his gang have taken control of mineral water business, cable TV business, and supplying construction materials in the area that might have caused the attack.

Tifa became a topic of debate after Assistant US Trade Representative (USTR) for Central and South Asia Michael J Delaney visited Bangladesh last month.

The USA has been saying for long that Tifa is a non-binding agreement, which only commits both the parties to hold regular annual meetings although many Bangladeshi stakeholders are still unaware of the matter.

The US government originally proposed the Tifa to Bangladesh in 2002. An inter-ministerial meeting in January 2003 assigned the commerce ministry to begin negotiations with the USA on it. Since then, the two sides have held several rounds of talks and also worked to prepare a draft of the agreement.

According to the draft prepared by the USA, the areas Tifa is to cover include removal of non-tariff barriers, implementation of intellectual property rights, promotion of trade and private investment, improvement of workers' rights and pursuing WTO talks on the basis of Doha Development Agenda.

In the draft, the USA side proposed that the two governments establish 'US-Bangladesh Council on Trade and Investment' under the Tifa. The council is envisaged to meet at least once a year to discuss bilateral trade issues.

The committee chief Lutful Hai at a briefing at the Jatiya Sangsads Media Centre told reporters that they had asked the commerce ministry to take all steps to bring the prices of essentials within people's purchase capability.

He expected that prices of essentials will not go up before Eid-Ul-Azha as stocks of sugar, oil and other essentials are at a satisfactory level.

The committee, however, asked the ministry concerned to import those food items stock of which is less in the warehouses.

Amir Khasru said they got indication that some outsiders were involved with the incident. He said there is no scope to hold the council again and now the central leadership will take necessary steps to form

Justice order

FROM PAGE 1

His wife, three sons, two daughters in law, his brother, his brother in law Abdur Rab Serniabat, his nephew Sheikh Fazlul Haq Moni and Moni's wife Arzoo were all murdered in what would be a macabre demonstration of ferocity.

The assassins would not be prosecuted for a long period of twenty-one years. An infamous indemnity ordinance, put in place by the usurper president Khondokar Moshtaque Ahmed and subsequently incorporated in the nation's sacred constitution by General Ziaur Rahman, Bangladesh's first military ruler, ensured that Bangabandhu's killers (who had also murdered the four national leaders in prison in November 1975) would remain beyond the pale of the law. The killers were indeed rewarded, through being appointed to the nation's diplomatic missions abroad.

After Zia's assassination in an abortive coup in May 1981, successive governments until 1996 made no effort to overturn the indemnity ordinance and bring Bangabandhu's killers to justice.

During the Ershad period between 1982 and 1990, the assassins were permitted to form political parties and take part in elections. When a popular uprising forced General Ershad from power in December 1990 and democracy was restored through the general elections of February 1991, the nation looked forward to a time of healing of the old gaping wound. Regrettably, the government led by Khaleda Zia, widow of Ziaur Rahman, pursued the old policy of keeping the killers safe from prosecution.

Twenty-one years after August 1975, the Awami League was voted back to power in June 1996. The government formed moved briskly to annul the indemnity ordinance and bring Bangabandhu's killers to justice.

Those among the assassins who were inside the country were arrested; the others were on the run, outside Bangladesh. That in no way obviated the requirements of justice.

Parliament annulled the indemnity ordinance, clearing the way for the perpetrators of the August 1975 tragedy to be brought before the law. In what it considered to be the need for transparency and for justice to be done and to be seen to be done, the government of Sheikh Hasina initiated proceedings against the killers of 1975. In November 1998, the men

were found guilty and sentenced to death.

And then everything stalled with the return to power of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party in 2001. The new government of Begum Zia appeared reluctant to pursue the case. In more than one instance, judges felt embarrassed about presiding over the appeals hearings in the case.

Conditions came to a pass where soon an inadequacy of judges on the bench led to a stultification of the proceedings of the case. It was a situation that would permeate the entire period of the BNP-Jamaat alliance government between 2001 and 2006.

The return of the Awami League to office through its victory at the general elections of December 2008 marked the beginning of a new phase in the Bangabandhu murder trial.

Over the last many months, review petitions filed by the convicts have been heard and both prosecution and defence have argued the case in detail.

This morning is, in light of all the twists and turns of the last three and a half decades, or nearly, a moment of reckoning.

On a bigger scale, it ought to be a new dawn where a restoration of values should come to underpin Bengali collective life and once more. It should be a day where the people of Bangladesh can rise in unison and proclaim to the world that crime does not pay, that rule of law eventually is triumphant, that through a legal condemnation of murder and mayhem as a nation are finally ready

to expiate our collective sin of witnessing Bangabandhu die and staying quiet about the grievous tragedy for years on end.

The judicial judgement today, we believe in the core of our beings, will give us back our self-esteem as a nation -- the dignity we caused to flower in ourselves under the inspiring leadership of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in our armed struggle for liberty back in 1971.

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