

Budget should be more investment-friendly

Says economist

UNB, Dhaka

The upcoming national budget should focus on creating more investment-friendly environment in a bid to achieving the GDP growth target of over 6.5, said an economist.

"The investment would have to be increased to a great extent. Otherwise, it would be difficult to achieve the targeted growth of GDP," said Dr Mustafa Kamal Mujeri, the director general of Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS).

In an exclusive interview with the news agency, the BIDS chief said investment in the country has remained stagnant at around 23-24 percent over the last few years, citing energy and power crisis as the main barrier.

The nagging energy and power crisis is affecting the country's economic activities, he observed, stressing the need for utmost priority in this sector in the upcoming budget.

Dr Mujeri said the government should take practical steps to overcome the barriers that create stagnation in investment.

The present situation in the energy and power sector was not created over a short period, he said adding due attention was not given to this sector in the past.

"It won't be easy to overcome the situation... The government will have to go for short-, mid- and long-term solu-

tions."

Asked about the estimated government subsidy in the next budget for the rental power plants, the BIDS head said the government would have to buy per unit electricity at a higher rate. So, they will have to subsidise.

"If the power tariff increases, the mid and low income people will be under pressure while the cost of production goes up," he said adding that steps would have to be taken to supply power to the national grid to meet the demand.

On the upcoming budget size of over Tk 130,000 crore and the Annual Development Programme (ADP) of over Tk 38,000 crore already announced by the finance minister, he said these are ambitious, but there is a need for such increases.

"If we want to achieve GDP growth of 7-8 percent in future, the role of public sector should be more on education, health and agriculture... The size of the ADP should be bigger," Dr Mujeri said.

He stressed increasing budget implementation capacity, which is now on the declining trend. "The planning cells of different ministries should be made functional."

On the Public Private Partnership (PPP) initiative - a special feature of the current budget, which is yet to see the light, he said the PPP cells and guidelines should be finalised immediately.

"We must start the PPP with small

projects taken on experimental basis where amendments could be made on the results of the projects."

On the provision for whitening black money, the BIDS DG was of the view that there is no such need to maintain the facility as it is giving a wrong signal. "The government should be strict on the issue and will also have to address the increase of black money."

He believed there is an ample scope for widening income tax net and VAT net to increase the revenue collection.

Dr Mujeri also stressed making the habit of tax submission, creating friendly atmosphere and simplifying the submission system.

On inflation, he said it is likely to continue in the ensuing fiscal and the government would have to make utmost efforts so it rises slowly.

The BIDS chief also emphasised strengthening the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) and the Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED).

"The evaluation system of IMED is limited and it should be widened. The IMED should give more emphasis on impact evaluation or the output instead of just focusing on implementation of fund," he said.

On the BBS, he said the government has already taken some steps to reorganise the bureau so that it could fulfill the demands of time.



PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

Nirvik, an environmental organisation, forms a human chain in Narayanganj yesterday demanding steps to remove illegal structures on the banks of Shitalakha river and protect the river from pollution.

Show zero tolerance to BCL wrongdoings

Nasim urges govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former home minister and Awami League leader Mohammad Nasim yesterday urged the government to show zero tolerance to the wrongdoings of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) as its violent activities are tarnishing the image of the ruling party.

"The recent activities of some BCL activists are undermining the achievements of the government. The ruling party has failed to take tough action against them," he said at a roundtable.

Bangabandhu Sangskritik Jote, Dhaka district unit, organised the roundtable

styled 'Rise of war criminals, communal politics and present perspective' at the Dhaka Reporters' Unity auditorium yesterday.

About the trial of war criminals, Nasim said that if the government takes more time to hold the trial, the conspirators would be more active in their bid to foil the trial.

Referring to the issue of war crimes investigation agency chief, he urged the government to be more alert regarding the trial process. "Otherwise the war criminals will exploit loopholes in the law to avoid prosecution," he added.

He also blamed Ziaur Rahman for rehabilitating the

war criminals. "The BNP along with Jamaat has been engaged in conspiracy to foil the trial of war criminals," he said.

Addressing the roundtable, State Minister for Law Qamrul Islam said the investigation would be completed within the stipulated time despite the resignation of war crimes probe chief Abdul Matin.

"Resignation of Matin has removed all the confusions over investigation," he said.

Sammilito Sangskritik Jote vice president Golam Quddus, film actor Faruk, Krishok League organising secretary MA Karim also spoke at the roundtable presided over by Jote Dhaka city unit convener Khorshed Alam.

Kuet reopens May 10

BSS, Khulna

Classes and academic activities of Khulna University of Engineering and Technology (Kuet) will resume on May 10 while the dormitories will reopen on May 9.

The decision was taken at a meeting of teachers and officials held at the academic building yesterday, with Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Nowsher Ali Morol in the chair.

The authorities also imposed a ban on all political activities, meetings, processions as well as pasting posters on the campus.

Deans of various disciplines, directors, heads of different departments, provosts and assistant provosts attended the meeting.

The university has remained closed for an indefinite period since April 12 following a clash between two rival student groups.



PHOTO: STAR

Dhakabasi, an organisation of city residents, takes out a colourful procession in the city yesterday to mark its kite exhibition.

768 more bullets recovered in Comilla

UNB, Comilla

The police again recovered 768 rounds of bullet of SLR from a pond at Shilmuri village in Barura upazila yesterday.

Local people found a carton buried in the dried-up pond belonging to Mortuz Ali of the village at around 1:30pm.

On receiving information, the police rushed to the spot and recovered the bullets, which were kept in the carton.

However, none was arrested.

Local sources said a total of 8,099 bullets were recovered at the village in the last one week.

World Red Crescent Day today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day will be observed in the country as elsewhere across the globe today with an aim to raise awareness about unplanned urbanisation, which is responsible for many diseases and social crimes.

This year's theme of the day is 'Urbanisation'.

The Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) has drawn up elaborate programmes to mark the day.

Speaking at a press conference at the National Press Club yesterday, BDRCS Chairman Prof MS Akbar MP said that with the population increasing in urban areas, the city dwellers are facing many challenges such as acute water crisis, insufficient health care and accommodation problem. Overcrowding in the cities is also responsible for the rise in social crimes.

The day's programmes will start with hoisting of the national and Red Crescent flags at the headquarters of the Red Crescent Society at Maghbazar at 7:00am.

It will be followed by a colourful procession at 7:30am from Holy Family Medical College to the National Press Club. Food and Disaster Management Minister Abdur Razzak will lead the procession.

The Society will also arrange voluntary blood donation programmes on the premises of Holy Family Medical College and at Battala of Dhaka University at 10:00am. The Society will also distribute gifts among the destitute patients of the hospital.

A discussion and the Red Crescent Award 2010 giving ceremony will also be held at the medical college auditorium at 4:00pm, with Health Minister AFM Ruhul Haque the chief guest.

The BDRCS chairman also urged all to assist the Society in continuing its humanitarian activities.

The Daily Star Coming out tomorrow - Star Campus

Linking Young Minds Together

The Daily Star offers campus based weekly magazine 'Star Campus' - the ultimate magazine for the young generation - a common platform for the college and university students and academicians - to share their ideas, thoughts, dreams, opinions and views. Star Campus is an endeavour to bring into the center stage the visionary aspects of our college and university students, alongside their lifestyle, cultural trends and their multidimensional talents. Star Campus is a magazine broadly based on campus life! It contains articles, academic news, achievements, travelogues, interviews, book reviews, quiz, milestones, academic tips, profiles of educational institutes, cultural and extra-curricular activities in campus, jokes, cartoons, photographs and much more. This is a magazine Of the Students, By the Students and For the Students. Star Campus helps link young minds together.



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