

BUDGET
Nothing new for education

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Although an allocation increase of 8 percent has been proposed for the education sector in the national budget, Finance Minister AMA Muhith did not unveil any new plan, only except repeating the old promises.

In his budget speech, the minister mostly focused on continuing his government's ongoing efforts like implementing education policy, distributing free textbooks and stipends, and giving training to teachers to enhance quality of education.

"Our government is attaching highest priority to education as the most important strategic tool for eradication of poverty and development," said Muhith as he set aside Tk 21,408 crore for education sector in fiscal year 2012-13, up by 8 percent from the outgoing year's Tk 19,806 crore.

An allocation of Tk 9,825 crore has been set for the primary and mass education ministry and another Tk 11,583 crore for education ministry.

Educationists, however, are not satisfied with the allocations.

"The budget for education rose in terms of allocation but slid in terms of percentage," Rasheda K Choudhury, a former caretaker government adviser on primary and mass education, told the Daily Star in an instant reaction.

"Although the budget touches the issue of national education policy we have not seen any allocation for implementation of the policy," she said, adding nothing has been said about allocation for nationalisation of jobs of non-government primary school teachers.



Journalists and students form a human chain in front of Jatiya Press Club in the capital yesterday protesting the disrespect shown towards noted litterateur Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed by a section of ruling alliance lawmakers in parliament on June 3.

PHOTO: STAR

Shibir men vandalise vehicles

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Islami Chhatra Shibir men vandalised at least 10 vehicles at Malibagh in the capital yesterday.

Some 10-15 Shibir activists brought out a procession from Noor Mosque at noon and chanted anti-government slogans blocking the Malibagh- Rampura road, said police.

They got scattered and started pelting brickbats at the vehicles while the on-duty police tried to stop them.

They ran towards Ramna chanting slogans after being chased by the police.

Iqbal Karim new army chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Lieutenant General Iqbal Karim Bhuiyan has been appointed new chief of army staff, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) release said yesterday.

Quoting defence ministry's notice, the ISPR release said Lt Gen Iqbal Karim has been promoted to the rank of general, effective from June 25.

He will take charge as the new army chief on that day replacing General Md Abdul Mubeen.

The release also mentioned that the tenure of the present army chief General Mubeen has been extended for 10 days from June 16 considering public interest.

Quoting another notice of the defence ministry, the ISPR release said General Mubeen will retire on June 25.

BUDGET

Healthcare in remote areas not addressed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Deeming healthcare insignificant in remote areas, the issue of service providers at public hospitals in hill tracts and other such areas remained unaddressed in the proposed budget, observed doctors' associations leaders.

Despite an allocation increase of around Tk 467 crore from last fiscal year, almost no new initiative was taken in the health sector, they said.

"Doctors are not willing to be posted at hospitals in hill tracts and remote char areas, so we have been demanding incentives for long for such postings," said Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) Secretary General Prof Sharfuddin Ahmed.

The issue of doctors' security in remote areas should have also been attended in the budget, he added.

Speakers said though budget allocation keeps increasing in health sector, so does the cost of imaging, lab tests and treatment.

Dr AZM Zahid, former secretary general of Doctors' Association of Bangladesh (DAB), said medicine prices are almost double and cost of medical tests is nearly beyond the means of low income group.

Taxpayers questioned service quality in public hospitals.

Mohammad Habib, a private firm employee in Dhaka said, "I borrowed around Tk 70,000 to admit my pregnant wife to a private clinic as I had no confidence in public hospitals."

Finance Minister AMA Muhith yesterday, in the proposed budget for fiscal year 2012-2013, allocated Tk 9,355 crore to health sector giving priority to 10 projects including Maternal, Neonatal, Child and Adolescent Health, Community Health Care Initiative, Family Planning Field Service Delivery, and National Nutrition Service.

In the last fiscal year allocation for health sector was over Tk 8,888 crore while in 2010-2011 it was Tk 8,148 crore. Both budgets gave priority to almost the same projects.

SHRINE LOOT CASE
Court orders quizzing of Zulfiqar in jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A Chittagong court yesterday rejected a seven-day remand prayer for Lt Col (sacked) Zulfiqar Ali Majumder, former commanding officer of Rab-7, in a case over his alleged link in robbing Tk 2.07 crore from a Chittagong shrine.

The court, however, allowed police to interrogate Zulfiqar for five consecutive days inside jail and ordered Abdus Samad, the investigation officer (IO) of the case, to submit a report before it within 20 days.

According to the case statement, Rab-7 members in uniforms and plain-clothes entered Talsara Darbar Sharif in Anwara upazila on November 4, 2011, kept Pir Ahammed Safa Shah confined to a room at gunpoint and looted the money.



Bangladesh Jatiya Sramik Jote forms a human chain before Jatiya Press Club in the capital yesterday demanding adequate allocation for Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) in the national budget so that clean water supply can be ensured.

Malaysia govt eager to hire Bangladeshis

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A visiting Malaysian delegation yesterday expressed satisfaction over Bangladesh's proposal to export manpower to Malaysia on government-to-government level.

The six-member team of Malaysia's immigration department and home and foreign ministries said they were "positive" about declaring Bangladesh a "source country" for manpower.

"Sending Bangladeshi workers on government-to-government level is a good initiative, and this will also reduce cost of migration and other hassles to a significant extent," said Haniff Bin Omar, director of Malaysia's immigration department, who leads the delegation that arrived on Tuesday.

Talking to journalists at Jatiya Sangsad Media Centre, he said the Malaysian government would take the final decision after evaluating Bangladesh's proposal.

Expatriate Welfare Minister Khandker Mosharraf Hossain said an MoU would be signed on the issue during the Malaysian home minister's visit to Dhaka at the end of this month.

Self-reliance the way for curbing graft

Says Debapriya
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Curbing corruption and establishing good governance in the country would not be possible only depending on foreign aid, if the countrymen would not come forward to solve the problems, said noted economist Debapriya Bhattacharyay yesterday.

"Without creating awareness among the people to be self-reliant for solving their own problems, nothing can be achieved by foreign aid with conditions," said Debapriya, the distinguished fellow of Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD).

He made the remark while addressing a discussion on "Re-directive Development and Rio+20: Progress of Bangladesh" organised by Bangladesh Paribesh Andolan (Bapa) and three others NGOs at the Bangabandhu International Conference Center in the city.

Debapriya said the Europeans took the idea of green economy as a remedy to revive their economy from the existing recession.

But sustainable development would not be possible without the change of consumption patterns in the developed countries, he said.

In the name of environmental safety, the green economy rhetoric could be a barrier to export of Bangladeshi products, he added.

Awami League lawmaker Junaid Ahmed Palok, Dr Atiq Rahman, Prof Mahbuba Nasrin of Dhaka University, and Advocate Syeda Rizwana Hasan, chief executive of the Bela, also spoke.

4th Death Anniversary



Today is the 4th death anniversary of our Maa, **Rezia Begum**. She was a freedom fighter, a writer & above all a loving mother.

The family members of late Rezia Begum have requested all her relatives, friends & well wishers to pray for the salvation of the departed soul.

Rumee, Jamee, Sadee

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