

Social protection

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The study, however, used 2009 government data, meaning the increases in safety net spending in recent years were not reflected. In fact, in the following fiscal year, the country doubled the sum to 2.64 percent of GDP.

In the budget for fiscal 2013-14, Tk 25,371 crore has been set aside for social safety net schemes, which is 2.13 percent of GDP. The allocation is 9.85 percent higher than the immediate-past fiscal year's.

Over the last four years, the government allocated Tk 82,325 crore for social safety net projects, Finance Minister AMA Muhith said on Tuesday.

The study still recommended that the country be "more ambitious" about bolstering its social protection systems.

Meanwhile, spending in most middle-income countries, including India, Indonesia and Pakistan, also remained below 3 percent of GDP.

Only in Japan, South Korea, Mongolia and

Uzbekistan did it equal at least 5 percent of per capita gross domestic product.

The failure to support large numbers of poor and vulnerable people in many of these fast-growing middle-income countries in Asia and the Pacific is leaving them exposed to risks and unexpected difficulties like unemployment, ill health and natural disasters.

"There are many vulnerable groups, including women and informal sector workers, who can't access unemployment, health or other social insurance but are also not poor enough to be eligible for social assistance such as cash transfers," said Bart Édes, director in ADB's regional and sustainable development department.

He recommended the government social protection programmes be expanded to cover this unprotected 'missing middle,' a demographic which stands the chance of falling into poverty if an economic, environmental, or health shock of some kind

takes place.

The study also noted that relatively little was being spent on labour market programmes like cash-for-work and skills development.

Bangladesh, whose labour market programmes account for 36 percent of all social protection expenditures, however, was lauded in this respect.

Of the country's three major programmes, the Employment Generation for the Ultra-Poor, which is the largest, reach well over 6 million beneficiaries, or about 23 percent of all social protection beneficiaries.

"Bangladesh, India, Mongolia and Samoa have relatively high SPIs for these programmes, principally because of sizable and active labour market programmes."

Bangladesh's expenditure on disaster relief has been a major part of its social assistance system, accounting for 19 percent of social protection spending in 2009. Almost 18 million people, roughly 12 percent of the population, were beneficiaries that year.

Unpaid tax

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government, even if he dies," NBR Chairman Md Ghulam Hussain told reporters yesterday.

The revenue authority had earlier instructed the Mercantile Bank and IFIC Bank to block Mannan's accounts for his continuous avoidance in paying Tk 24 lakh income tax for 2007-08.

The tax was imposed on an income of about Tk 81 lakh mentioned in Mannan's return without any source, said Hussain.

The NBR yesterday also reiterated that freezing Mannan's bank accounts had nothing to do with politics or the polls.

On Tuesday, Mannan alleged that the move against him ahead of the election was part of a government conspiracy.

The NBR chief said, "We did not choose the election time. We have done it reasonably well ahead of the polls, on June 5 ...", adding that

the tax could be demanded anyway.

He said the law did not prohibit NBR to block bank accounts of a person who was contesting an election.

Hussain also said the revenue authority last month had blocked accounts of many other people, including politicians of ruling and opposition parties and top businessmen, to realise due taxes by June.

After being taxed Mannan had filed an appeal and lost the case, said the NBR chief, adding, "Even after losing and repeated reminders, he was not paying the money. We then decided to freeze his bank accounts."

Besides, he had started paying taxes from Gazipur tax office from last year without informing it that he had a tax file in Dhaka. As per rules, a taxpayer should inform the tax office, said Hussain.

Mobarak helped Pak army

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In the name of forming a "panchayat" committee, Razakars including Mobarak, Mukta Mia, Bozu Mia and Shahid Mia invited the villagers of Tanmandyl to gather at Nur Bokhs' house on August 22, said Akbar.

About 130 villagers gathered at the house around 3:00pm that day, said the witness, adding, "The Razakars interrogated us about whose relatives had taken part in the Liberation War."

The Pakistani army had meanwhile cordoned off the house and directed the Razakars to tie them all, the witness added.

"The Razakars made rope from jute fibre and tied us all. They took us to the army camp at Gangasagar Dighirpar on six boats," Akbar said.

The detainees were tor-

tured and interrogated again. The Razakars made a list of the detainees whose relatives had taken part in the war.

The collaborators also demanded money from a fund of about Tk 34,000, which was collected for the freedom fighters.

"They assured us that if their demand was met, we would be freed," he said.

"Upon their assurance, Fayed Mia, Daru Mia, Munnaf Mia and Abul Hashem agreed to bring money and they were released to that end," Akbar said.

They came back with Tk 18,000 and handed the amount over to the Razakars.

"At this, the Punjabis [Pakistani army] became more suspicious that the villagers had helped the freedom fighters. Fayed Mia,

Daru Mia, Munnaf Mia and Abul Hashem were tied up again," he added.

"They [Pakistani army and Razakars] picked up 33 villagers and confined them to Terjhuri prison. The rest of us were kept at a mosque," he said, adding, "At around 8:00pm the 33 villagers were taken to the west side of Gangasagar."

The villagers were forced to dig a burrow there, he said, adding, they were later killed and buried in that mass grave.

Mobarak, former Jamaat-e-Islami member who later got affiliated with ruling Awami League, was produced before the tribunal yesterday.

Defence counsel Ahsanul Huq Hena later cross-examined the witness.

The proceeding of the case was adjourned until July 14.

On official trip, for niece's wedding

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Tulip Siddiq, elder daughter of Sheikh Rehana and granddaughter of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, said a senior official on condition of anonymity.

"But this trip turns into an official visit, as British Foreign Secretary William Hague will call on her and she will hold a breakfast meeting with the members of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Bangladesh," the official added.

A Labour Party politician and elected councillor from London's Regent Park, Tulip a few months ago married British civil servant Chris, who studied at Cambridge University.

The wedding reception is scheduled for Sunday (July 7).

She is not meeting the British prime minister or having any bilateral meeting with any UK leader, but for all five days the government will have to bear the cost of the stay by her 43-member entourage at the expensive London Hilton on Park

Lane.

Official sources said this was neither the prime minister's bilateral visit nor she was on any invitation from the British government.

Asked, a senior official at the British High Commission in Dhaka yesterday confirmed to The Daily Star over the phone that there was no invitation from the British government.

So, she (PM) will not get any protocol or security from the British government during her stay in London, the official added.

Reached by phone, a senior official of the Bangladesh High Commission in London confirmed that the PM would not get British protocol or security as she would be on a private visit.

"But we informed the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office about the programme details of the visit," he added.

Officials in Dhaka said a 15-member team of the Special Security Force (SSF) would accompany the PM during her London visit.

A VVIP flight of Biman

Bangladesh Airlines (BG-015) carrying the Prime Minister and members of her entourage, including Foreign Minister Dipu Moni, will leave Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport for London at 9:30am today.

On arrival at 2:50pm (London time), the premier will be received at Heathrow airport by the Bangladesh High Commissioner to the UK, Mijarul Quayes.

As per the programme book published by the Foreign Ministry, there is no mention of any British government official who will be present at the airport to receive the PM.

On the first day of her visit, UK Foreign Secretary William Hague will call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her hotel suite at 6:30 pm (London time). There is no mention of any other programme for the prime minister on the day.

On Friday (July 5) evening, the prime minister will meet with Bangladeshi citizens living in UK at the hotel.

On Saturday (July 6), she will give an interview to

Belarusian Television at 10:00am for half an hour.

On Sunday (July 7), she has no programme.

On Monday (July 8), the Prime Minister will hold a breakfast meeting with the members of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Bangladesh at 9:00am for an hour.

The same day, Hasina will leave London for Belarus at 3:00pm (London time) on a four-day bilateral visit. Bangladesh High Commissioner Mijarul Quayes will see her off. Again, no British government official will be present at the airport at the time.

On her arrival at Minsk International Airport by a VVIP flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines (BG-006), Belarusian Prime Minister Mikhail V Myasnikovich will receive the Bangladesh leader.

She will be leading an 81-member Bangladesh team, including a 29-member business delegation, at Minsk. Businessmen usually travel with the prime minister at their own cost.

Toufiq wins

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Returning Officer Md Jahid Islam.

His rival independent candidate and AL rebel Syed Mohitul Islam Asim secured 59,224 votes with the symbol "football".

The voting started at 8:00am. The main opposition BNP boycotted the election.

AL candidate Toufiq cast his vote at Kamalpur Govt Primary School centre nearby his house in Mithamoin upazila at 9:00am.

Mohitul cast his vote at Murshidjam Govt Primary School centre in Astagram upazila.

Talking to newsmen at night, Mohitul alleged that his rival rigged the election.

He also complained that Toufiq's supporters had driven away his agents from different polling centres, including those at Abdullahpur Govt Primary School and Khayerpur Govt Primary School in Astagram upazila, within two hours into the opening of polling. They stamped ballot papers in favour of Toufiq.

The ruling party candidate and his supporters had deliberately created a panicky situation in the constituency over the last few days, which might have contributed to the low turnout of voters, observed Mohitul.

The Jatiya Sangsad seat (Kishoreganj-4) fell vacant as former Speaker Abdul Hamid was elected president of the country on April 22.

Morsi ousted

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Thousands of people immediately took to the streets of the capital to celebrate, cheering, whistling, letting off firecrackers, and honking car horns in joyous scenes.

But Morsi's office rejected the move as "illegal" and called on Egyptians to peacefully resist the "coup".

Morsi, Egypt's first freely elected president, came under massive pressure in the run-up to Sunday's anniversary of his maiden year in office, with his opponents accusing him of failing the 2011 revolution by concentrating power in Islamist hands.

The embattled 62-year-old proposed a "consensus government" as a way out of the country's worst crisis since the 2011 uprising ended three decades of authoritarian rule by Hosni Mubarak.

But the United States urged Morsi to "do more" as a military deadline passed for him to meet the demands of the people following a week of bloody unrest during mass protests calling for him to quit.

The advice came too late, however, as the army said the head of the Supreme Constitutional Court, Adly al-Mansour, a previously little known judge, would become the new leader of the Arab world's most populous country.

Opposition leader Mohamed ElBaradei, the UN nuclear watchdog chief, and the heads of the Coptic Church and Al-Azhar, Sunni Islam's highest seat of learning, sat alongside the armed forces chief as he announced Morsi's overthrow on state television.

The choreography was designed to show broad civilian support for the military's move to topple Morsi, Egypt's first freely elected leader, dashing the hopes of supporters who had seen his



Adly al-Mansour, to be head of the interim government.

elevation to the presidency after years underground as one of the key achievements of the 2011 revolution.

Morsi's camp had earlier denounced the army's intervention as a coup.

"For the sake of Egypt and for historical accuracy, let's call what is happening by its real name: military coup," Essam al-Haddad, Morsi's national security adviser, said in a statement on Facebook.

As tension mounted and crowds poured onto the streets to demand Morsi's resignation, Haddad said: "As I write these lines I am fully aware that these may be the last lines I get to post on this page."

AFP correspondents reported seeing dozens of armoured personnel carriers heading towards Islamist gatherings at Cairo University, Heliopolis and Nasr City.

But in Cairo's Tahrir Square, the security forces looked on as tens of thousands of anti-Morsi protesters rallied in a demonstration that dwarfed that of the embattled president's supporters in Nasr City, on the opposite side of town.

"Come here O Sisi, Morsi isn't my president," the flag-waving protesters chanted in the square, referring to the army chief.

The crowd swelled at

nightfall, after a scorching day that saw police officers hand out water to the demonstrators in the middle of Tahrir, epicentre of the 2011 uprising that ended three decades of authoritarian rule by Hosni Mubarak.

The powerful military had issued a 48-hour deadline on Monday for Morsi to meet the "people's demands", a day after millions of protesters took to the streets across the troubled country calling for him to resign.

Thousands of people also gathered in Nasr City in a show of support for Morsi, despite an attack that killed 16 of them and injured 200 overnight.

That spate of bloodletting took to almost 50 the number of people killed in Egypt since the latest crisis flared a week ago ahead of Sunday's anniversary of Morsi's swearing-in.

Opponents accuse Morsi of having betrayed the revolution by concentrating power in Islamist hands and of sending the economy into freefall. His supporters said he inherited many problems, and that he should be allowed to see out his mandate, which had been supposed to run until 2016.

In a late night speech on Tuesday, a defiant Morsi said he had been freely elected more than a year ago and intended to carry on his duties. The only alternative was more bloodshed.

Upping the stakes, senior armed forces commanders meeting yesterday swore to defend Egypt with their lives, a source close to the military told AFP.

"We swear to God that we will sacrifice our blood for Egypt and its people against all terrorists, extremists and the ignorant," they declared in an oath led by General Sisi, the source said.

Big shots make most

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would be allowed to stay in the electoral areas after midnight today.

"On the directives of the Returning Officer's office, we have made the announcements for the outsiders using one vehicle [equipped with loudspeakers] today. We will announce other restrictions to be imposed on vehicular movement and others tomorrow," Nasima Akter, assistant information officer, told The Daily Star.

Apart from 57 ruling Awami League lawmakers, assigned for the same number of wards, ruling party senior leaders Tofail Ahmed, Mohammad Nasim and Amir Hossain Amu were among the bigwigs who campaigned for Ajmat yesterday.

Opposition BNP central leaders Tariqul Islam, Nazrul Islam Khan and Alfat Hossain Chowdhury were among the BNP stalwarts who were on the hustings for Mannan yesterday.

It was a mudslinging contest as well.

Awami League men protested the BNP supporters' campaign poking at religious sentiments of voters while supporters of Mannan protested the negative campaigning against him.

"We are making person to person contact and trying to make the voters understand that BNP men are conducting a propaganda campaign," said Ahmad Hossain, Awami League Dhaka divisional organising secretary.

Another central leader, Sujit Roy Nandi, said, "Since it is the last day, we are trying to make the voters realise how important our candidate is for developing Gazipur city and its industrial area."

Lawmakers Aslamul Haque, Junayed Ahmed Palak, Biren Sikder, Sadhan Majumder, Engineer Enamul Haque, Amanur Rahman Rana, Abu Jahid, Manjur Quader Qureshi, Golam Faruk Prince and

Israfil Alam were among the campaigners for Ajmat.

Many leaders and activists of Awami League-associated bodies and pro-Awami League bodies were also campaigning there, said Amanat Hossain Khan, a campaigner for Ajmat.

BNP senior leaders Brig Gen (ret) Hannan Shah, AKM Mosharrar Hossain, Osman Faruk, Shahjahan Omar, Shamsuzzaman Dudu and former Rajshahi city mayor Mizanur Rahman Minu also campaigned for Mannan.

BNP standing committee member Tariqul Islam said, "We told people about the misrule, misdeeds and corruption of the government. We also made it clear that the propaganda against our candidate was totally false."

Shoyeb Akhter, personal secretary to Mannan, said, "At least 80 central leaders and activists campaigned for Mannan today [yesterday]."

Meanwhile, at a press

conference yesterday, MA Mannan protested news reports that "he indulged in corruption involving money of hajj pilgrims" when he was the state minister for religion during the 1991-1996 tenure of the BNP-led government.

"If I was involved in corruption, why didn't the authorities concerned file a case against me?" he said.

During electioneering around yesterday noon, Mizanur Rahman Minu along with around 200 supporters of Mannan disrupted traffic movement at Shivbair-Munshibari while BNP MP Asfia Ashrafi Papiya and hundreds of BNP supporters halted traffic while campaigning at Harinal Bazar area in the evening.

On election day, all institutions, offices and factories will be closed in Gazipur city. However, any institution holding public exams will remain open.



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