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Target high, but can be reached

Muhith on goal of revenue collection in next fiscal year

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Finance Minister AMA Muhith yesterday admitted that the revenue collection target for next fiscal year is high but the National Board of Revenue is ready to achieve it.

"We know that our target is ambitious -- it is very high. We have decided to give a push this time and we want to do it," he said while responding to queries from journalists at a post-budget press conference at Osmani Memorial Auditorium in Dhaka.

Muhith said the NBR's manpower has been doubled and they have all been trained.

If the country wants to hit the 7 percent GDP growth target, extra efforts must be made, he said. "In my consideration, the nation as well as the NBR is ready for it."

NBR Chairman Md Nojibur Rahman also said the tax authority has the capacity to collect Tk 200,000 crore in any given year. Since the target for fiscal 2015-16 is lower



than that, his team can achieve it.

Although the government has revised down the revenue collection target for this fiscal year after weak performance, the finance minister is still aiming for a 27 percent growth in the upcoming fiscal year.

Not only the revenue collection target, the budget size has also been increased to Tk 295,100 crore for fiscal 2015-16.

The finance minister said measures have been taken to bring in new taxpayers and the additional taxes will come from them.

When Muhith assumed the role of finance minister six years ago, the total number of taxpayers stood at 7 lakh. The number now is 11 lakh. "The increase is very slow, very slow."

Many said that no specific guideline was followed for implementing the budget, he said.

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State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam welcomes West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee at the Shahjalal International Airport yesterday evening. Mamata is in Dhaka on a two-day visit.

PHOTO: PID

Financing biggest challenge: CPD

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Financing the proposed budget for 2015-16 will be the biggest challenge, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) yesterday said, raising doubts about achieving the revenue collection targets to implement the Tk 2.95 lakh crore outlay.

"We are not concerned about the size of the budget. Our concern is rather about the financing of the budget and the financing mix to

not bother the existing taxpayers in any way as it looks to meet its increased revenue earning targets.

"Rather, the government should think of expanding the tax net and identifying new taxpayers," said its Vice-President Syed Jamal Ahmed.

He also called for the withdrawal of tax for the private sector education institutes.

The government's intent to raise the export tax at source to 1 percent from the existing 0.3 percent in fiscal 2015-16 has not gone down well with the

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RMG makers slate tax hike

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Garment makers yesterday demanded that the government continues the 0.3 percent tax at source instead of the proposed hike to 1 percent saying the sector would be badly affected if the tax was increased.

"Although I welcome the proposed budget, as it is business-friendly, it is not textile and garment friendly," said Atiqul Islam, president of Bangladesh Garment

Widen tax net

Businesses urge govt not to put pressure on existing taxpayers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government should widen tax net to reach its revenue earning target instead of putting pressure on the existing taxpayers, leading chambers said yesterday in their budget reactions.

"All sectors of the economy should be progressively brought under the tax net," said the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI).

The Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry, in a statement, said the government should

not bother the existing taxpayers in any way as it looks to meet its increased revenue earning targets.

"Rather, the government should think of expanding the tax net and identifying new taxpayers," said its Vice-President Syed Jamal Ahmed.

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'Water wife' in Indian village

MAIL ONLINE

In a parched Indian village where there is no running water, men are marrying multiple women so they can fetch it for the family.

For villagers in Danganmal in western India, the only drinking water comes from two wells at the foot of a nearby rocky hill -- a spot so crowded that the sweltering walk and wait can take hours.

For Sakharan Bhagat, and for many of his neighbours in the village 85 miles from Mumbai, the answer was a "water wife".

Bhagat, 66, now has three wives, two of whom he married solely to ensure his household has enough water to drink and cook with.

"I had to have someone to bring us water, and marrying again was the only option," said Bhagat, who works as a day labourer on a farm in a nearby village.

"My first wife was busy with the kids. When my

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Migrants, who were found adrift on a fishing boat six days ago, wash themselves at a temporary refugee camp near the Bangladesh border fence in Rakhine state of Myanmar yesterday.

Dhaka summons Myanmar envoy

UNB, Dhaka

Dhaka yesterday summoned Myanmar envoy Myo Myint Than over a comment Rakhine Affairs Minister made at a briefing in Yangon.

At the Yangon briefing, Rakhine politician U Zaw Aye Maung said the high population growth and lack of economic opportunities in Bangladesh were driving illegal migration, according to Myanmar Times.

He also said many Bangladeshis claim to be from Myanmar for "political reasons".

"Because of the dense population and a large increase in population [in Bangladesh] there are less economic opportunities there," U Zaw Aye Maung said at the briefing, which focused on the two rescue missions recently conducted by the Myanmar navy.

"It's natural for those people to migrate to other areas like Myanmar, Indonesia, Malaysia and other neighbouring countries [which has happened] for decades,

Salahuddin granted bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Shillong court in the Indian state of Meghalaya yesterday granted conditional bail to BNP leader Salahuddin Ahmed in a case filed for trespass.

The conditions bar Salahuddin, BNP's joint

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PRAYER TIMING
JUNE 6

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
4-05	12-30	5-00	6-45	8-15

JAMAAT 4-40 1-15 5-15 6-50 8-55

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Shelve Rampal power project, save Sundarbans

Greens ask two PMs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ahead of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Bangladesh, environmentalists have urged the prime ministers of the two countries to take steps for cancelling the "controversial" Rampal power plant project.

At a discussion marking the World Environment Day 2015 yesterday, speakers alleged that the project to be implemented jointly by Bangladesh and India was posing a threat to the environment of Sundarbans, the largest mangrove forest.

Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (Bapa) organised the programme at Mukti Bhaban in the capital.

Bapa General Secretary Abdul Matin said the environment of the Sundarbans was under threat due to several "anti-environment" projects, including the one to construct the Rampal power plant, surrounding the forest.

Khushi Kabir, coordinator of Nijera Kari, an NGO, said, "The Rampal project can never be acceptable as it will affect the entire country, not just the Sundarbans."

Mujahidul Islam Selim, president of the Communist Party of Bangladesh, alleged that attempts were being made to implement the project after providing people with "misinformation" on the issue. "The interest of people and the

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