



BAD LOANS' IMPACT

High nonperforming loans eroded banks' earnings last year

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SHADOW EDUCATION

Are coaching centres instilling creativity in young learners or killing it altogether?

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THE EMAIL SAGA

Clinton denies sending or getting classified emails on private account

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Hike now only in basic pay

Controversial perk system to be excluded; govt to fork out Tk 14,000cr more on salaries this year

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The government will implement the new pay structure for public servants excluding time scale and selection grade -- two compensatory perks for those who deserve promotions but cannot be given due to a shortage of posts.

Though some government officials oppose this exclusion, the finance ministry officials said it was necessary since the systems, especially the controversial selection grade, often breed corruption and discrimination among the staff.

Even then, the government has to count several hundred crore taka every month once the new pay scale takes effect.

An additional amount of around Tk 14,000 crore will be required to pay only the increased basic salaries of the government employees, finance ministry officials estimate.

The ministry may place the new wage structure at next week's cabinet meeting, as recommended by a secretary-level review committee and the Pay and Services Commission.

The finance ministry sent a report on the proposed pay structure, including the disputes surrounding it, to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

The PM later sent it back to the ministry with "some instructions" and it now awaits the finance minister's approval, according to highly placed ministry officials.

After the minister signs it, the report will

be placed for the cabinet's approval. Once approved there, it is likely to take another 30 to 45 days to issue the circular on the new pay scale, according to the officials.

This means though the new pay structure has been in place since July 1, the public servants may start drawing the increased salaries from October with arrears of the previous three months.

TIME SCALE & SELECTION GRADE

The pay commission, headed by former Bangladesh Bank governor Mohammed Farashuddin, submitted its report to Finance Minister AMA Muhith on December 21 last year, recommending the abolition of time scale and selection grade systems.

The suggestion was backed by a secretary-level review committee headed by Cabinet Secretary Musharraf Hossain Bhuiyan. After reviewing the report, the committee tendered its recommendations to the finance minister on May 13.

Under the existing system, if government employees serve satisfactorily long enough to deserve a promotion but cannot get it due to unavailability of higher posts, they are given salaries in that higher grade as financial compensation. This is called the time scale.

The selection grade works the same way as the time scale, except that it is given to a selected few based on their performance.

"A lot of underhand dealings are made for the selection grade as it completely

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Negotiating downpours, people wade through knee-deep water on Bandarban-Chittagong link road while some others ride a boat on an inundated road in Bandarban Bus Stand area yesterday morning. Bottom right, the Sangu river bursting its banks in the town.

PHOTO: STAR

SALAHUDDIN IN SHILLONG

How is he doing?

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Shillong

Set in a serene location, Sunrise Guest House is a lavishly built two-storey building with a neatly furnished drawing room, four large bedrooms, plush bathrooms, a well-decorated library and a spacious, lush lawn at the front. There's also a mini bar with alcoholic beverages.

This is where Salahuddin Ahmed, BNP's joint secretary general, has been staying. The BNP leader is facing trial for illegally entering the state of Meghalaya in India.

Upon a visit to the luxurious guest house on Thursday, this correspondent found that Salahuddin, who has rented two rooms on the first floor, is the lone guest at the house. He was

seen browsing through four newspapers -- one Bengali daily and three English dailies -- published from Assam.

Apart from his personal assistant, there are a manager, two caretakers and two gardeners at the house, which is located in a highly secure area as it is very close to the local offices of Indian Air Force and an intelligence agency.

Sources at the house said he has rented the rooms for 4,000 Indian rupees (Rs) per day for two months, which amounts to a total of nearly two and a half lakh rupees.

Asked about how he was paying the rent, he refused to make any comment on anything while at the guest house on the ground of being

under constant watch.

However, when this correspondent had met him on the premises of a Shillong court on Wednesday, he had agreed to talk. He had gone there to appear before the court.

"How are your days going in Shillong?" this correspondent had asked.

"Doesn't this go without saying? My health is not that good. I need to see a doctor. My back pain is worsening. I don't want to take the risk of undergoing a surgery. Let's see what the doctors do," Salahuddin answered, buying a betel leaf from a vendor on the premises.

"Don't you want to return home?"

"Of course I do. But it's a legal

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PRIME MINISTER
SHEIKH HASINA
ADDRESSING THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS SELECTION BOARD AT
DHAKA CANTONMENT YESTERDAY.



TOP QUOTE

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