

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

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SAFETY NET

Where does the money flow?

Above 40pc of the total allocation for FY17-18 to be spent on public servants' pension; the rest is meant for over 100 safety net programmes

REJAUUL KARIM BYRON and REAZ AHMAD

The government will keep aside almost three-fourths of the proposed increase in the social safety net allocation for giving retirement benefits to public employees in the next fiscal year.

Finance Minister AMA Muhith has suggested raising the budget for social safety programmes by 35 percent to Tk 54,206 crore, compared to the revised one of the outgoing fiscal year.

As calculated, 72 percent of the increase of Tk 13,349 crore would be spent on public servants' pension benefits leaving only 28 percent - Tk 3,624 crore - for some 100 safety net programmes run by 23 different ministries.

Traditionally, the government incorporates retired public servants' pensions into the SSNP budget. This time the proposed allocation for pension benefits is more than 40 percent of the total budget for the safety net.

According to the statistics of the Finance

Division, expenditure on retirement benefits has been estimated at Tk 22, 392 crore for fiscal 2017-18 after a 76 percent increase of the revised allocation of only Tk 12,667 crore in the last fiscal year.

Officials of the Finance Division attributed such phenomenal increase to a "reform" brought in for the first time in payments of retirement benefits. Besides, the government decided to give a 5 percent annual increment to all pensioners.

In the budget speech, Muhith said the government was going to introduce a modern, updated and non-discriminatory system of pension by reforming the existing one.

In the first phase of the reform, he said, "We have abolished the system of encashment of 100 percent pension, introduced the system of maintaining pension-related budget certainly under Finance Division instead of distributing [it] among different ministries and taken initiative to

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Thick cover of water hyacinth in water bodies around the city has made it difficult for boats to navigate. Boat propellers also frequently get entangled in the plant's thick leaves and stalks. Water hyacinths are a common sight in Sadarghat, Kamrangi Char, Sawarighat and even in the Buriganga.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



UK PM fights for survival

Faces party rebukes for election debacle, top two aides quit; Merkel wants quick Brexit talks as worries mount

AGENCIES

British Prime Minister Theresa May was fighting for survival yesterday after a failed election gamble undermined her authority and plunged the country into a major political crisis, days before the start of talks to leave the European Union.

May's bet that she could strengthen her hand by crushing what she believed to be a weak opposition Labour Party backfired spectacularly on Thursday as voters stripped her Conservative Party of a parliamentary majority.

The stunning outcome leaves May battling to unite different factions in her party and reliant on a handful of Northern Irish parliamentarians just nine days before Britain starts the tortuous process of negotiating its departure from the EU.

May's two top aides, Nick Timothy and Fiona Hill, announced they had quit yesterday, following sustained criticism of the campaign within the party.

Britain's typically pro-Conservative press savaged May yesterday and questioned whether she could remain in power, only two months after she started the clock ticking on the two-year EU divorce process.

The best-selling Sun newspaper said senior members of the party had vowed to get rid of May, but would wait at least six months because they feared a leadership contest could propel Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn into power.

"She's staying, for now," one Conservative Party source told Reuters.

The outcome risks upsetting the political balance in Northern Ireland by aligning London more closely with the pro-British side in the divided

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Long dogged by financial hardship

Relatives say about the family after mysterious death of mother, 3 kids

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The family that lost four of its members in mysterious circumstances in the capital's Turag area early on Friday had been facing financial hardship for the last five years.

Mostafa Kamal is the lone surviving member of his family. His wife Rehana Parvin, 35, daughters Nusrat, 13, and Arisha, 9, and son Saad, aged about nine months, were found dead at their house.

Police primarily suspected the housewife committed suicide after strangling her children. They were interrogating Mostafa, his mother and sister Kohinur at Turag Police Station yesterday.

Mostafa quit his job at a Chittagong buying house and came to Dhaka in 2006. He got involved in a multi-level marketing business and sale of land, said his family members and neighbours.

The 40-year-old built 16 tin-shed rooms

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Mars rover concept vehicle unveiled



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Nasa has unveiled a new Mars rover concept vehicle designed to function "as both a working vehicle and laboratory" for the next generation of space explorers.

The 8.5-metre vehicle would not look out of place in a science-fiction film. It features six huge wheels to allow it to travel over craters, dunes and rocks, a sloping front reminiscent of the Nolan-era Batmobile and solar panels to power everything.

"It features life support systems, navigation and communication systems, and design and materials that relate to conditions and resources on Mars," Nasa said.

Created by Parker Brothers Concepts, the rover - which looks nothing like the actual vehicles that have trundled over Mars' surface, 34 million

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Two held over Jubo League man's killing

STAR REPORT

Police yesterday arrested two persons in connection with the killing of Rangamati's Longadu upazila unit Jubo League leader Nurul Islam Nayan at Dighinala upazila in Khagrachhari.

The arrestees have been identified as Runel Chakma and Junel Chakma.

The police also recovered a motorcycle, which they said was used by Nayan, from Maini Bridge area in Dighinala after Navy and Fire Service and Civil Defence teams jointly conducted a drive in the Maini river, reports our Khagrachhari correspondent.

The law enforcers have meanwhile arrested three Bangalee settlers in Longadu. Md Jasim, Md Didar and Md Babul Mia were arrested during a raid on Friday midnight.

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Ramadan	June	Sehri	Iftar
15	11		6-50
16	12	3-38	6-50
17	13	3-37	6-50

SEHRI, IFTAR TIMINGS



SIBL Foundation Hospital & Diagnostic Center

PRAYER TIMING JUNE 11

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	3-44	12-45	5-00	6-50	8-15
JAMAAT	3-54	1-15	5-15	7-00	8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



All life-saving drugs to be VAT-exempt

NBR says

BSS, Dhaka

All life-saving drugs will be exempted from Value Added Tax, said National Board of Revenue.

"All types of life-saving drugs, including the imported ones, will remain out of VAT net," said NBR Chairman Md Nojibur Rahman while speaking at a roundtable discussion on "VAT in pharmaceutical sector" here yesterday.

NBR member (VAT) Barrister Jahangir Hossain said there is no possibility of increasing prices of drugs in the local market. People will not have to pay any VAT for purchasing drugs because the drug producers will pay 15 percent VAT as per the new VAT law to be enforced from July 1, he added.

State Minister for Health Zahid Malek said the proposed budget will have no negative impact on the health sector. The present government's prime challenge is to ensure quality

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Dust cloud reduces visibility and creates health hazard on this stretch of road from Rampura Bridge to Malibagh intersection. Trenches dug up for utility works are causing the problem. Top right, a rickshaw-puller covers his face to prevent breathing in the harmful dust. Bottom left, dust reduces visibility for drivers, adding to the hazard.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQUE