

EXPENDITURES IN FY 2018-19

JS gets budget of Tk 332 crore

UNB, Dhaka

The Parliament Secretariat Commission yesterday approved a Tk 332.53 crore budget for the Jatiya Sangsad for its development and non-development expenditures in the next fiscal year.

The approval came at the 29th meeting of the commission at the JS Bhaban with Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury in the chair.

Of the amount, Tk 298.43 crore will be spent on non-development purposes and Tk 34.18 crore on development ones.

The approved budget is 5.60 percent (Tk 17.62 crore) higher than the revised budget of the current fiscal year.

The meeting also approved the projected budget for fiscal 2019-20 and 2020-21. It also okayed the revised budget for the outgoing financial year.

Prime Minister and Leader of the House Sheikh Hasina, Finance Minister AMA Muhith, Law Minister Anisul Huq and Opposition Leader Raushon Ershad -- who are members of the commission -- were present at the meeting.

Chief Whip ASM Firoz attended the meeting on special invitation.

At the beginning of the meeting,

there was a screening of a video documentary on the ongoing development project on the Parliament Library.

Talking to reporters after the meeting, the Speaker said the amounts of various allowances were increased.

The payment for overtime during parliament sessions has been raised to Tk 500 from Tk 450, while it will be Tk 350 instead of Tk 300 during the off-session time.

The allowance for lunch or iftar during parliament sessions has been increased to Tk 200 from Tk 150.

Refreshment allowance has been raised to Tk 100 from Tk 50 per person for attending a parliamentary standing committee meeting.

During the meeting, the prime minister asked parliament to increase the number of books at the Parliament Library.

The speaker said the PM put emphasis on collection of books on the parliamentary rules of procedure and practices of different countries.

Currently, the number of books at the Parliament Library is 35,000 while that of booklets is 40,000.



Talukder Abdul Khaleque, newly elected mayor of Khulna City Corporation, presents a flower bouquet to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Gono Bhaban yesterday.

PHOTO: BSS

On a mission

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He started coaching them from 6.30 am till 8.30 am and it was no miracle that all 20 students appeared for the exam the next year and passed, just a result of hard work.

It gave Shahjahan the confidence to go on. He took on two assistants, Mahmud Moniruzzaman, who holds a master's in Political Science, and Mehrabin Mollika, an HSC student, to help out.

The next year, they took on 55 SSC candidates, 52 of whom passed and three got GPA 5, and 35 HSC examinees, 32 of whom passed.

"I want to support the weak students, so that no child is left behind, and eradicate illiteracy from the union by 2025. For this, I started the coaching centre -- Friendship for Unity Education and Development."

At present, the centre has 170 students, from grade six and upwards.

The trio takes classes on weekdays, except Mondays. Shahjahan has kept that day aside to visit the drop outs and their families, to persuade them to return to coaching and pass their public exams.

His father Moin Uddin Mollah and wife Monira Parvin are by his side, taking pride in this endeavour. "It wouldn't have been possible without their support."

With news of his initiative spreading fast on social media, Nazma Parvin, assistant tax commissioner of Dhaka, provided 80 vocabulary books to his coaching centre recently.

"I don't care if the students are rich or poor; I try to build their foundation for the future.

Dropping out should never be an option. Besides, we also arrange seminars on the ill effects of early marriage and dowry. We observe different national and social programmes as well."

Jannat Ara, an honours student, recently joined as an assistant at the coaching centre. "It is a noble task; teaching gives me satisfaction."

Ali of the school managing committee said the poor students are being benefitted as it is free of cost. "Year by year, students are doing better in the national exams."

Nahata Union Parishad Chairman Md Ali Mia said, "The society needs such enterprising young lads to tackle illiteracy."

Khaleda

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Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the number of freedom fighters.

Khaleda made the comment on December 21, 2015, at a meeting at the Institution of Engineers Bangladesh (IEB) in Dhaka where she said that Sheikh Mujib did not want the independence of the country but instead wanted to be the prime minister of Pakistan.

Khaleda Zia also said that there is a controversy over the number of freedom fighters.

Advocate Masud filed the petitions after the HC, earlier in the day, permitted the BNP chief to move the three bail petitions before it.

Earlier on May 16, the SC upheld an HC order that granted bail to Khaleda for four months in the Zia Orphanage Trust corruption case in which she was sentenced to five years' imprisonment.

She, however, could not get release from jail following the SC judgement as she was shown arrested in seven other cases, including the three aforementioned ones.

Govt to make first-ever gold policy

FROM PAGE 1

The demand is met with smuggled gold and the rest from recycled gold, depriving the government of a huge amount of tax. This also creates scopes for money laundering and accumulation of black money.

Many countries, including India, earn billions of dollars by exporting gold ornaments, but Bangladesh's export earning in this sector is abysmally low.

In 2016, the total export of gold ornaments was \$638 billion across the globe. Of the amount, India's export amounted to around \$42 billion.

During the period, Bangladesh exported gold ornaments worth only \$672.

The draft policy proposes giving various incentives to exporters of gold ornaments.

EASING GOLD IMPORT

To ease gold import, 11 measures have been laid out in the draft policy.

The BB will appoint dealers for importing gold bars to meet the country's requirement.

The dealer may be an authorised bank or an individual-owned firm, a joint

venture or a limited company. The BB will formulate a guideline for the dealers who will directly import gold bars.

Local manufacturers of gold ornaments will not be able to buy gold from others except for these dealers.

The dealers will be allowed to import gold through bonds, but for that they will have to get bond licences in line with the existing law.

They will also have to inform the BB about their requirement of foreign currency for importing gold and have to obtain no-objection certificate (NOC) from the BB.

The central bank will issue NOC within 15 days upon receipt of a dealer's application.

Jewellers will inform the dealers of their demand and pay them 5 percent of the price in advance which will be adjusted during the final settlement.

ENSURING TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY

Electronic cash register, electronic transfer system and VAT challan or receipt will be introduced in trade of gold, diamond,

silver and other valuable metals.

Within six months of the introduction of the policy, jewellers will have to submit statements on their existing stocks to the National Board of Revenue and then they will have to submit stock reports every month.

In case of purchase of recycled gold from a customer, the trader has to preserve a copy of the national identity card or passport, and address of the customer.

BOOSTING EXPORT OF ORNAMENTS

The draft policy proposes several incentives for increasing export of gold ornaments. Those include tax benefit for gold ornaments, especially handmade ones.

Gold ornament manufacturers will also be given cash subsidy for exporting gold items, both handmade or machine-made.

If gold bars are imported only for manufacture and export of gold ornaments, duty draw back benefit will be given to the exporters.

Besides, land will be allotted to gold

exporters for setting up factories in special economic zones.

OTHER PROVISIONS

The BB will set up a central information bureau that will keep information on the annual demand for gold, its local trade, import and export, revenue collection, seizure of gold and its sale on auction, and all other relevant data.

Since the country's independence to early 2015, 2.2 tonnes of seized illegal gold worth \$90 million had been added to the foreign currency reserves.

In recent times, gold smuggling has gone up remarkably with Bangladesh becoming a transit point for international smuggling rackets.

Big hauls of the precious metal make headlines quite often. But most of the smuggled gold enters and exits the country quite safely.

It is like a cobweb -- extremely complex and intricately designed. The way gold is smuggled in from abroad is so ingeniously planned that it often outclasses Hollywood crime thrillers.

A consignment changes several hands in its journey from the source to the

destination, but there are stages when a carrier doesn't even know who takes over from him. So, even if someone is caught with a shipment, most of the time it's impossible to trace back to the gang leaders.

The transaction for smuggled gold is usually done through hundi.

Against this backdrop, the finance ministry last year requested the Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) to come up with recommendations for formulating a gold policy.

Later, the finance ministry sent the recommendations to the commerce ministry that formed a nine-member committee with representatives from the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), the TIB, gold traders, and related ministries and agencies.

The committee then formulated the draft policy.

Cybercrime on the rise

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The unit came up with the findings after analysing 666 cases and complaints over cyber-related offences filed with different police stations in the capital since 2016, when the division started working as part of the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit.

In a similar incident, a girl was harassed after she had lost her smart phone, logged in with her email ID, in October last year.

As she called her number, she came to know that a man named Ridwanul Haque found the phone. She

requested the 32-year-old man to sign out from her email. She also gave the man her phone's password hoping that he would sign out from the email.

However, the man downloaded her personal photos from her email account and threatened her to circulate them on social media if she did not have an affair with him, according to a complaint filed with Adabar Police Station later.

On being informed, police detained the man and settled the matter, said an official from the cyber division.

Alimuzzaman, deputy commissioner of the division, said many mobile phone and computer users

were becoming victims of cyber crimes mainly due to a lack of awareness about the offenses.

The number of such victims was increasing every year, he said, adding the main challenge in dealing with such cases and arresting the culprits was the delay in reporting to police.

He said many victims did not want to go to the law enforcers fearing that their identities would be revealed.

Referring to their analysis, the DC said in most of the cases, the accused spread defamatory and fake messages on online platforms and blogs using fake IDs and photos of the victims.

They also blackmail the victims after hacking their social media profiles, he said.

The offences also include email spoofing and spamming and spreading of propaganda and militancy-related contents, the analysis revealed.

Alimuzzaman said one percent of the 666 cases were related to terrorism, seven percent to blackmailing or extortion, 14 percent to pornography, 14 percent to financial frauds, 20 percent to hacking, 18 percent to defamation, 20 percent to fake IDs and six percent to other issues.

According to the database of the cyber security and crime division, the special-

ised unit arrested 67 suspects and submitted chargesheets against 24 last year.

Of the 666 complaints, the unit completed investigation of 233 last year. The others are under probe.

Although the division has 100 sanctioned posts, currently it has around 70 officials and other employees. To meet the growing challenge, the authorities have already proposed an organogram of 282 members.

Apart from the division, the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and the Police Bureau of Investigation also have separate cyber crime units.

Man loses 6yrs amid confusion

FROM PAGE 1

in a murder case and sentenced to death in 2005.

The apex court order did not reach the jail authorities all these years for some unknown reason, causing a procedural lapse and confusion about his release.

After a primary hearing on a criminal miscellaneous petition filed by the attorney general's office, the SC stayed a High Court verdict that acquitted Azaher in 2010.

After the final hearing, the apex court issued an order in 2012 asking the government to file a leave-to-appeal petition against the acquittal in two weeks.

The apex court said the criminal miscellaneous petition (or stay petition) will be automatically dismissed if the leave petition is not filed in two weeks, implying that Azaher will have the right to be freed.

"Two weeks' time is granted to file the regular leave petition, failing which the criminal miscellaneous petition shall stand dismissed," said a seven-member bench of the SC headed by the then chief justice Md Muzammel Hossain on October 1, 2012.

The government failed to file the petition in two weeks, meaning the criminal miscellaneous petition got automatically dismissed and the HC judgment stood upheld.

But the SC order of 2012 did not reach the Dinajpur jail over the years and Azaher remained in the condemned cell.

The matter came to light after the Dinajpur jail authorities recently

communicated it to the Supreme Court Legal Aid Committee (SCLAC).

The SCLAC looked into it and requested the SC authorities to send the SC order to Dinajpur jail so that Azaher, an inhabitant of Joydevpur village in Dinajpur Sadar upazila, is released.

The SC authorities yesterday sent a certified copy of the 2012 order to the jail authorities, clearing the way for Azaher's release.

"Really!" was the reaction of his mother Mansura Begum when our Dinajpur correspondent met her at her house yesterday afternoon.

"It is you who first gave me this news. I'm so happy that my son will be free," said Mansura Begum, in her mid 60s.

Contacted, Md Sayeed Hossain, superintendent of Dinajpur District Jail, said he will take necessary steps for Azaher's release immediately after receiving the SC order.

"I have heard that the office concerned of the Supreme Court has reissued a certified copy of the apex court order today [yesterday] and sent it by post.

"The order might reach my office tomorrow [today] or the day after. When my office receives the Supreme Court order, I will release Azaher from jail upon completing relevant procedures."

THE CASE

The jail super could not give details of the murder case and only said Azaher was sentenced to death by a Dinajpur court on July 24, 2005 and acquitted by the High Court in 2010.

According to the convict's family members, he was arrested nearly two months after the murder of his father-in-law Abdul Zabbar in 1997.

Third among the seven siblings, he used to run a small turmeric shop at Kishanbazar village in Dinajpur Sadar upazila.

His daughter was only 11-month-old when he was arrested.

His wife left him. But their daughter, Ajmira, was brought up by her grandmother. She was married off only two years ago and is now a mother of a child. Azaher's father died in 2000.

"I met my son whenever I could manage to save some money from the old-age allowance. The last time I met him was on December 16 last year at Dinajpur jail," said Mansura Begum.

Jail Super Sayeed Hossain said the then second additional sessions judge of Dinajpur sentenced Azaher to death in the murder case.

Following the appeal filed by the defence, the High Court scrapped the verdict and acquitted him.

The memo of the HC order reached the office of second additional sessions judge of Dinajpur on July 20, 2010.

The Dinajpur jail authorities received the memo the same day from the Dinajpur court office and later communicated with the offices of attorney general and SC registrar about the HC order.

The SC stayed the HC verdict in 2010 after the attorney general's office filed the criminal miscellaneous petition.

The Dinajpur jail authorities had become confused in 2011 as to whether

Azaher will be released or not because the anomaly in the date of leave to appeal filed by the government, according to jail documents.

'TREATED AS DISMISSED'

Yesterday, the SC registrar general's office issued an order saying, "As per the said [2012 SC] order, no steps had been taken on behalf of the petitioner [the government] within the stipulated period. Since the petitioner failed to take redress, so, the instant criminal miscellaneous petition is treated as dismissed."

Md Abu Taher Bhuiyan, assistant registrar of the SC, who certified yesterday's order, told The Daily Star that he did not know why the 2012 order was not sent to the Dinajpur court and jail authorities.

He joined the office in 2015 and is not aware of the 2012 order following which the HC verdict on Azaher stood upheld.

Requesting anonymity, an SCLAC high official told this newspaper that this is a very rare incident that an acquitted person could not walk out of jail because the copy of an SC order was not sent to the jail.

He said the implication of 2012 order was that Azaher was acquitted, and it should be investigated to find out who is responsible for his languishing in jail over the last six years.

The official said the SCLAC has pursued the matter after the Dinajpur jail super informed them about it at a meeting on May 12.

Azaher's overstay in prison could have been avoided had the SC office concerned properly communicated

with the jail authorities or the lower court and made things clear, he added.

The SCLAC official also said the family members of Azaher had not taken any initiative to inform the implication of the 2012 SC order to the jail authorities, as they are very poor and not so conscious.

The Dinajpur jail authorities wrote to SCLAC on March 14 this year and the SC registrar's office on April 25 about the case.

In the last six years, the jail authorities sent at least five letters to the offices of attorney general, SC registrar and SCLAC to know the outcome of the leave to appeal and current status of the case.

'A PUNISHABLE OFFENCE' Contacted, Supreme Court Registrar General Md Zakir Hossain told The Daily Star that he did not know why the SC order did not reach the Dinajpur jail authorities.

"I don't communicate the Supreme Court orders [to relevant authorities], as it is the responsibility of some deputy registrars and assistant registrars."

The registrar general said he will look into matter and find out whether any official or staff of the SC had any negligence in this regard.

Contacted, Attorney General Mahbubey expressed surprise saying the persons who were responsible for not communicating the SC order to the jail should be punished through conducting a probe.

Not communicating the court order to offices concerned is a punishable offence, he noted.