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"Delay in repatriation of Rohingyas, who have been deprived of basic rights for decades, may threaten regional security and stability."
FOREIGN MINISTER AK ABDUL MOMEN IN A LETTER TO THE CONSUL GENERALS OF FOREIGN COUNTRIES IN BANGLADESH (PAGE 12)

"It would be impossible to restore people's trust in ACC unless they conduct rectifying drives and ensure exemplary punishment."
TIB EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR IFTEKHARUZZAMAN ON THE BRIBE ALLEGATION AGAINST AN ACC DIRECTOR (PAGE 3)

"There is a concerted effort to incite violence in Bengal by the BJP. They will not succeed."
MAMATA BANERJEE AMID DEADLY TURF WAR BETWEEN TMC AND BJP IN THE STATE (PAGE 12)

Less ambitious, more realistic

Draft budget proposal indicates; budget size to rise by 18pc to Tk 523,190cr, revenue target by 17.92pc to Tk 377,810cr

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and WASIM BIN HABIB

In a break from the past, Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal will set a more realistic revenue income target in his maiden budget, but may shy away from undertaking some much-needed economic reforms.

In the last several years, the government focused more on setting lofty revenue earning goals, only to fall way short at the year end.

In the first nine months of the current fiscal year, for example, the government has been able to collect only Tk 1,43,071 crore against the target of Tk 280,000 crore. This means, the government will have to collect the rest Tk 136,929 crore to achieve the target, which experts say is impossible.

So the new minister, who took charge in January, will set some less ambitious targets in the budget to be placed in



parliament tomorrow.
For the next fiscal year, the revenue target has been set at Tk 377,810 crore, which is 17.92 percent more than that in the outgoing FY, according to the draft budget proposal.
In FY 2018-19, the original revenue target was Tk 3,39,280 crore, which

was 25 percent higher than that in the previous fiscal year.

Of the revenue earning in the current FY, the National Board of Revenue will collect Tk 325,600 crore, which is around 16.28 percent higher than the revised collection target of Tk 280,000 crore in the current FY. The target was 31.64 percent higher in the current budget compared with the previous one.

Similarly, the size of the upcoming budget will grow by 18.22 percent whereas it was 25 percent in the outgoing fiscal year. Compared to the GDP, the size of the upcoming budget is 18.1 percent, down from 18.3 percent in 2018-19.

Zahid Hussain, lead economist at the World Bank's Dhaka office, wants to see some structural reforms.

"Since this is the first budget of the re-elected government with a new election manifesto

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Three major challenges

Muhith says ahead of his successor's first budget

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and JAGARAN CHAKMA

Former finance minister AMA Muhith has said his successor faces three major challenges: increasing the size of the national budget, realising more revenue and improving the banking sector.

"The most important thing is to increase the size of the budget in line with the GDP," Muhith said during an interview with The Daily Star at his Banani residence in the capital recently.

The observation comes at a time when Finance Minister AHM Kamal is preparing to unveil his first budget on June 13.

Muhith had placed the national budget a record 12 times -- 10 times during the Awami League tenures and twice during Ershad rule.

As the AL government's finance minister, he presented his first budget of around Tk 95,000 crore in 2009 and finished his term with a budget of around Tk 460,000 crore in 2018.

Muhith said the size of the budgets was low in relation to the gross domestic product, largely because Bangladesh's tax-to-GDP ratio was the lowest in South Asia.

During Muhith's decade-long tenure as the finance minister, the tax-to-GDP ratio rose from 9 percent to 11 percent.

"But it has to be raised to 15 percent," he said, suggesting the government increase the contribution of income tax to the total revenue.



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Cracks appear in economy

CPD in pre-budget press briefing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Cracks are appearing in the economy in the face of deepening crisis in the banking sector, widening gap between revenue collection and expenditure, and rising pressure on foreign exchange reserves, says the Centre for Policy Dialogue.

The economy is now under more stress than at any other point of time in the last 10 years, observes the think-tank.

"It is a matter of worry," Debapriya Bhattacharya, a distinguished fellow of the CPD, said at a press briefing in the capital's CIRDAP auditorium yesterday.

The briefing followed the unveiling of the CPD's report "State of Bangladesh Economy and the Budget Challenges".

The think-tank said the country is doing comparatively well in terms of economic growth and per capita income but it lags behind in private investment and industrialisation compared to that in some other countries.

Weakness in revenue collection has become an insurmountable hurdle to development, it noted.

"The situation will turn bad if the government is to collect funds from other

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Not only did rain spoil Bangladesh's World Cup match with Sri Lanka in Bristol yesterday, it also spoiled the party for the fans.

PHOTO: BCB

পদ্মা সেতুর

মূল কাঠামোতে ব্যবহৃত হচ্ছে শুধুমাত্র

স্ক্যানসিমেট

Rain ruins Tigers' vital opportunity

SAKEB SUBHAN from London

It would not be an exaggeration to say that the results that hurt the Bangladesh team most are not the comprehensive defeat against England or the narrow one to New Zealand. Most painful could well have been yesterday's abandoned World Cup match against Sri Lanka at the County Ground in Bristol, where incessant rain prevented them from trying to defeat a lower-ranked opposition at a crucial stage.

The Tigers' three previous matches were against higher-ranked opposition, and they started positively by winning against one of them -- South Africa -- on June 2. As head coach Steve Rhodes said after the match was called off at 1:37pm, they were targeting this match as an encounter from which to extract two points. Instead, they have taken a solitary point from the match and, with three points from four games, sit at number seven on the 10-team table. Sri Lanka -- whose previous match against Pakistan at Bristol was also abandoned -- are in fifth position with four points from four games.

With each team having to play the nine

others in the round-robin first stage of the mega event, the equation just became tougher for Bangladesh. Sri Lanka skipper Dimuth Karunaratne saying that they did not want to get 'free points' and Rhodes insisting that they will see this washout as a point dropped was evidence enough of which way the respective teams were expecting the match to go. To be fairly certain of a semifinal spot, seventh-ranked Bangladesh will now have to claim the scalp of a third higher-ranked team, assuming they beat eighth-placed West Indies in Taunton on June 17 and Afghanistan, who are ranked 10th. With South Africa's scalp already in the bag, the candidates now are two of India, Australia and Pakistan, whom they have beaten four times out of four since the last World Cup.

Their next match on June 17 against West Indies, whom the Tigers have beaten in ODI series home and away in 2018, will not be a simple one as the Taunton County Ground is a small one where the threat from West Indies' power-hitters will be amplified.

As rain pelted the city of Bristol the previous evening, the Bangladesh players at the team hotel were

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Good chance of Shakib playing WI

SPORTS REPORTER from Bristol

The one silver lining of a dark cloud over Bangladesh's abandoned World Cup match against Sri Lanka yesterday was that ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan would get more time to recover from a left thigh injury ahead of their next match against West Indies on June 17. Head coach Steve Rhodes said yesterday that he expected Shakib to be fit in time for their crucial game at Taunton, which has now become a virtual must-win match as it is one of only two remaining matches against lower-ranked opposition.

Shakib went for a scan

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Address rights issues, ensure inclusiveness

EU urges govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The European Union wants Bangladesh to address the issues relating to inclusiveness of the political process, space for the civil society and freedom of the press, says a statement from the EU.

"In Dhaka, I have held various meetings devoted to a wide range of human rights issues, including core labour standards, an area in which Bangladesh needs to make urgent progress," EU Special Representative for Human Rights Eamon Gilmore said in the statement following his visit to Bangladesh on June 10-11.

Human rights, including labour standards, are an important element in bilateral EU-Bangladesh relations as well as in the trade relations under the "Everything But Arms" trade scheme, he said, terming Bangladesh an important country for the EU.

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With a running train only a few metres away, a motorcyclist crosses the FDC level crossing in the city's Karwan Bazar area yesterday, putting himself in harm's way. Although the gatekeepers lowered the barriers (not in picture), the biker slipped through a small gap at the level crossing.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Why shouldn't rape victims get compensation?

HC rule asks govt, also wants to know why Tk 50 lakh shouldn't be given to families of 2 gang-rape victims

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday issued a rule asking the government to explain why a scheme for interim compensation for rape victims should not be made.

The HC rule also asked why the authority should not be instructed to formulate guidelines to ensure that women, girls and children are safe and not prone to sexual abuse in any public vehicles and places.

The rules came following a writ petition filed by the Children's Charity Bangladesh Foundation.

In the petition, the child rights organisation said punishment of those guilty was not the only step in providing justice to rape victims who suffer irreparable loss -- both psychological and physical. In many cases, rape leads to death or life-long disabilities.

It also sought Tk 50 lakh compensation for the families of two gang-rape victims.

Barrister Md Abdul Halim, who filed the petition on behalf of the rights organisation, said an alarming number of rape victims were children. "They face social stigma in every phase of their lives as they grow up..."

Explaining interim compensation, he said the victims should be compensated during the trial period.

The government should ensure that victims get social and financial support to help them overcome trauma and

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