



LEGALISING BLACK MONEY

Kamal drops hints of continuation

The finance minister says govt will be able to implement the budget, achieve 7.2pc GDP growth target



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The controversial move to legalise untaxed money with ease, which was absent in Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal's proposed fiscal measures for the next financial year, might continue, after all.

"If [the step] is profitable, we will try to continue it. We will see one more month before taking any decision," Kamal said at a post-budget media briefing yesterday.

The option to legalise untaxed income was always present in some form but in

June last year, Kamal had expanded the ambit for it.

At present, black money can be whitened by investing it in any sector and without facing any questions on the source of the funds. This opening is due to close at the end of the current fiscal year on June 30.

On May 19, Kamal said the opportunity would be there as long as undeclared income exists, drawing flak from economists and anti-graft campaigners.

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16 die at RMCH Covid unit in 24hrs

Bordering districts see spike in deaths, cases
STAR REPORT

Sixteen people died at the Covid unit of Rajshahi Medical College Hospital in 24 hours until 8:00am yesterday. The surge in deaths and positive cases was also reported in other bordering districts.

Countrywide, 34 more people died from Covid-19 in the 24 hours, says a press release of Directorate General of Health Services.

Of the dead in Rajshahi, 10 were Covid positive and six suspected Covid cases. The death toll was the highest at RMCH in a day. Of the deceased, nine were from Chapainawabganj, six from Rajshahi and one was from Naogaon.

In the last 12 days, 93 people died at the RMCH Covid unit. Fifty-eight

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A budget that forgot new poor exists

Says the CPD in its analysis of the proposed outlay for fiscal 2021-22

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Expectations were high that the proposed budget for fiscal 2021-22 would address the hardships of the sizeable population of new poor created by the pandemic.

But it failed on that count, said the Centre for Policy Dialogue yesterday.

"We have not seen any measure that will have any direct impact on the new poor," said Mustafizur Rahman, a distinguished fellow of the CPD, at a media briefing to disclose the think-tank's analysis of the Tk 603,680 crore budget announced by Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal on Thursday.

About 20.5 percent of the population was already living in poverty and the pandemic added another 1.60 crore to the group, according to an estimate of the CPD in April. In the same month, another survey by



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PROF. MUSTAFIZUR RAHMAN
DISTINGUISHED FELLOW, CPD

the Power and Participation Research Centre and the Brac Institute of Governance and Development showed that the ongoing economic shock pushed 2.45 crore people into poverty even before the second wave of the pandemic hit.

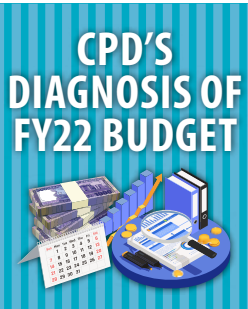
The World Bank also said Bangladesh's poverty rate jumped to 30 percent due to the pandemic.

The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics does not have the latest data on poverty; its most recent one dates back to 2019, when the poverty rate

was estimated to be 20.5 percent. "We have discussed a lot about the new poor and marginalised poor due to Covid-19 but their issues were not addressed in the budget," Rahman said at the briefing held at the capital's Lakeshore Hotel.

The government has allocated Tk 107,610

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Failed to address the needs of new poor

Social safety net programme budget below average

No special fund for vaccine purchase

Not enough measures to create jobs lost

Education budget needed to be much bigger

Leading trade bodies welcome tax cuts

Say implementation is a major challenge

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leading business associations yesterday lauded the government's proposed budgetary measures, but pointed out that implementing those would be a major challenge.

The reaction came a day after Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal proposed the Tk 6,03,680 crore national budget, offering a cut of 2.5 percentage points in corporate taxes for listed and non-listed companies and tax exemptions for several sectors to stimulate investment in manufacturing.

In its reaction, the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) said the

proposed budget for the next fiscal year 2021-22 was courageous and forward-looking in many aspects, but its proper implementation would face major challenges.

The budget focuses on health, agriculture, human resources, rural development, job creation, and continuation of the stimulus packages, it said in a statement, adding that these steps were commendable.

However, the major challenges in proper implementation and ensuring the quality of public spending must be addressed if the nation is to obtain the full benefits of the proposed budgetary allocations and

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SINOPHARM VACCINE China voices annoyance at disclosure of sale price

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

China has expressed annoyance over making public its offered selling price of Sinopharm vaccine to Bangladesh.

The two countries had signed a non-disclosure agreement guaranteeing that the selling price would not be disclosed.

"We have expressed

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The Louhajang river in Tangail's Khudirampur area is badly polluted due to discharge of untreated waste into the water body by local factories. Many rivers in the district have become highly polluted over the years. This pollution is causing serious damage to the life and livelihood of the local people. The photo was taken recently.

Tangail rivers in peril

Toxic industrial wastes polluting rivers, water bodies

MIRZA SHAKIL, TANGAIL

Several mills and factories with dyeing and printing units have long been polluting rivers and other water bodies in Tangail by dumping industrial waste into them.

The worst affected water bodies are the Bonshai river, the Jhenai river and the Sohagpara canal in Mirzapur upazila, and the Louhajang river in Sadar upazila.

As the rivers and canals became badly polluted by the untreated and harmful industrial wastes, aquatic life vanished from the water bodies.

The very rivers and water bodies that were supposed to be a blessing for the local people and the environment have become a curse.

According to the Tangail office of



Department of Environment (DoE), there are 14 mills and factories in Mirzapur upazila, including Gorai Industrial Area, with dyeing and printing units.

The mills and factories have Effluent Treatment Plants (ETPs).

But locals allege that most of the mills and factories have not installed ETPs following rules and as per capacity and also that they do not run these properly.

Moreover, the ETPs were kept shut most of the time due to high costs.

Consequently, they dumped the untreated toxic industrial wastes into rivers and canals through pipelines.

"The installed ETPs are just an eye wash. The waters of the nearby rivers, canals and water bodies have been made poisonous due to dumping of untreated toxic industrial wastes," said Azad Rahman, a local rights activist and founder of Ideal Mirzapur, a social organisation.

"We have held various programmes protesting mindless river- and water pollution and also demanding action against the polluters but to no avail," Azad said.

Locals also allege that the polluters are influential and have managed to keep the authorities concerned at bay through bribes. The officials

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শেখ হাসিনার বাংলাদেশ
জীববৈচিত্র্যসমৃদ্ধ উন্নত পরিবেশ

গণবিজ্ঞপ্তি

সেন্টমার্টিনের বিরল জীববৈচিত্র্য ও প্রতিবেশ
সুরক্ষায় পরিপালনীয় বিধি-নিষেধ

বাংলাদেশের একমাত্র প্রবালসমৃদ্ধ দ্বীপ সেন্টমার্টিন সরকার ঘোষিত একটি প্রতিবেশগত সংকটাপন্ন এলাকা। অনিয়ন্ত্রিত পর্যটন এবং পর্যটকদের অসচেতনতা, দায়িত্বজ্ঞানহীনতা, পরিবেশ এবং প্রতিবেশ বিরোধী আচরণের কারণে সেন্টমার্টিনের বিরল প্রতিবেশ এবং জীববৈচিত্র্য এখন ধ্বংসের দ্বারপ্রান্তে উপনীত। দ্বীপের পরিবেশ, প্রতিবেশ ও বিরল জীববৈচিত্র্য পুনরুদ্ধারসহ দ্বীপটিকে টিকিয়ে রাখার লক্ষ্যে পরিবেশ সংরক্ষণ আইন ১৯৯৫ (সংশোধিত ২০১০)-এর ০৪ ধারার ক্ষমতাবলে এ দ্বীপে ভ্রমণের ক্ষেত্রে নিম্নলিখিত কার্যক্রমসমূহ নিষিদ্ধ ঘোষণা করা হলোঃ

- ▶ দ্বীপের সৈকতে সাইকেল, মটর সাইকেল, রিক্সা, ভ্যানসহ সকল প্রকার যান্ত্রিক ও অযান্ত্রিক বাহন চালানো;
- ▶ দ্বীপের সৈকত, সমুদ্র এবং নাফ নদীতে প্লাস্টিকসহ সকল ধরনের বর্জ্য ফেলা;
- ▶ পশ্চিম পার্শ্বের সৈকতে কোনোপাড়ার পর দক্ষিণ দিকে এবং পূর্ব পার্শ্বের সৈকতে গলাচিপার পর দক্ষিণ দিকে পরিভ্রমণ;
- ▶ দ্বীপের চতুর্পার্শ্বে নৌ-ভ্রমণ করা;
- ▶ জোয়ার ভাটা এলাকায় পাথরের উপর হাঁটা;
- ▶ সামুদ্রিক কাছিমের ডিমপাড়ার স্থানে চলাফেরা, রাতে আলো জ্বালানো এবং ফ্ল্যাশ লাইট ব্যবহার করে ছবি তোলা;
- ▶ সৈকতে রাতের বেলা কোন প্রকার আলো বা আগুন জ্বালানো, আতশবাজি ও ফানুস উড়ানো;
- ▶ সৈকতে মাইক বাজানো, হৈ-চৈ এবং উচ্চস্বরে গান-বাজনা করা, বার-বি-কিউ পার্টি করা;
- ▶ ছেঁড়াদিয়া দ্বীপে স্পীড বোট, কান্ট্রি বোট, ট্রলার বা অন্যান্য জলযানে যাতায়াত এবং নোঙ্গর করা;
- ▶ সংরক্ষণের উদ্দেশ্যে সরকার কর্তৃক অধিগ্রহণকৃত ছেঁড়াদিয়া দ্বীপ ভ্রমণ;
- ▶ প্রবাল, শামুক, বিনুক, সামুদ্রিক কাছিম, পাখি, তারা মাছ, রাজকাঁকড়া, সামুদ্রিক ঘাস, সামুদ্রিক শৈবাল এবং কেয়া ফল সংগ্রহ ও ক্রয়-বিক্রয়;
- ▶ জাহাজ থেকে পাখিকে চিপস বা অন্য কোন খাবার খাওয়ানো;
- ▶ দ্বীপে সুপেয় ভূগর্ভস্থ পানি সীমিত বিধায় পানির অপচয় করা;
- ▶ সেন্টমার্টিন দ্বীপের প্রতিবেশের জন্য ক্ষতিকর যে কোন কার্যক্রম গ্রহণ করা;

উল্লিখিত বিধি-নিষেধের লঙ্ঘন আইনত দণ্ডনীয় অপরাধ।

আসুন বাংলাদেশের একমাত্র প্রবালসমৃদ্ধ দ্বীপ সেন্টমার্টিনকে সংরক্ষণ করি।
বর্তমান ও আগামী প্রজন্মের জন্য টেকসই পরিবেশ গড়ি।

মহাপরিচালক
পরিবেশ অধিদপ্তর