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# IT'S COMPLICATED!







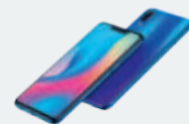
**FRIDGE**  
Keeping  
cool  
not so  
cheap



**LAPTOP**  
Higher  
price tag  
on the  
portable PC



**CARS**  
Driving  
to  
lighter  
pockets



**MOBILE  
PHONES**  
Staying  
connected now  
costlier



**COVID-19  
EQUIPMENT**  
Being safe  
now  
dearer

# Not for respite, but for restraints

In his fourth budget, Kamal brought glad tidings for businesses but hardly anything for the poor and the middle-class

ZINA TASREEN

When reassurance was needed, he exuded panic.

In Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal's fourth budget speech delivered in the backdrop of a cost of living crisis, recovering economy and strained foreign currency reserves, the key takeaway is: that better days are not around the corner for most.

Inflation pops up 29 times in his budget speech, suggesting he is overwhelmed by the possibility of reining in the spiralling price level.

The elevated inflation is mostly imported, meaning there is not much the government can do to stop it. What it could do was help the poor offset the inflationary shock.

Kamal had the scope to engage in some serious redistribution from the rich to the poor in the form of support package for households with cost of living problems. But he held back.

For instance, he increased the excise duty on bank account balances of upwards of Tk 5 crore by just Tk 10,000 to Tk 50,000.

He withdrew the advance income tax on the import of gold, a superfluous purchase for the most, and made importing aircraft and helicopters cheaper.

To encourage import substitution and local manufacturing, he raised the tax incidence on the import of products such as laptops, lifts, mobile batteries and chargers and interactive displays.

At the same time, he brought down the import duty on raw materials for those.

On paper, this looks promising, but in practice, only a select few large conglomerates stand to benefit.

The poor and the vulnerable do not have any cash support to look forward to in the incoming fiscal year beginning July 1 to help them manage the cost of living crisis.

Only Tk 5,000 crore was kept aside for this purpose, which is the same as in this fiscal year, meaning about 35 lakh would stand to get one-off handouts of Tk 2,500.

More than 35 lakh need this support and they need it every month.

For the 40 million middle-class people, there are no glad tidings.

The tax-free income ceiling was not raised from Tk 3 lakh, disregarding the need for inflationary adjustment. Neither was the excise duty lowered on bank balances corresponding to them.

This is particularly a blow to pensioners: the value of their savings has surely eroded in the face of inflation and given the interest rate cap there cannot be an adjustment there.

Admittedly, his scope to offer one-off patches – be it for moral or political reasons – is limited by the narrow fiscal space.

But some out-of-the-box thinking and chutzpah could have provided a way out.

While Kamal has allocated a whopping Tk 82,745 crore as subsidy in the budget

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## Little cushion against soaring cost of living

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN and  
AKM ZAMIR UDDIN

It is becoming harder for the poor and those with limited incomes to make ends meet as none of the government measures could rein in the rising cost of living.

Just when thousands of people were getting back on their feet as the coronavirus restrictions got lifted and the economy reopened, the war in Ukraine rattled global commodity markets and food prices.

Families are being forced to reduce consumption with point-to-point inflation hitting 6.29 percent in April, an 18-month high.

But economists say the budget for the 2022-23 unveiled yesterday was unlikely to provide any relief to the majority of low-income and middle-class people who are grappling with rising costs of healthcare, education, food and edible oil.

Debapriya Bhattacharya, a distinguished fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), said the measures mentioned in the proposed budget were not enough to contain inflationary pressure on the general

public.

The government has raised taxes on luxury goods to discourage their import. But it will have little impact as there is no scope to reduce imports of essential commodities such as fuel, fertilisers and cereal from abroad, which will play a role in increasing inflation, he said.

"The exchange rate of the taka against the dollar is now weakening, which will push inflation further. There is limited scope to tackle the ripple effect of inflation by way of revising trade and monetary policies," he said.

In the budget, the government proposed increasing subsidies in the agriculture and energy sectors and gradually adjusting the sales price of fossil fuel, gas, electricity and chemical fertilisers on a small scale.

The finance minister also kept the individual tax ceiling unchanged and vowed that the Open Market Sale (OMS) programme would continue to provide 30 kg of rice at Tk 15 a kg every month to 50 lakh low-income households.

The government is providing essential commodities to one crore poor families at a low cost under the

Family Card Programme of the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh, said the finance minister in his speech.

But the economists recommended increasing the amount of cash assistance so as to shield the poor from the price hike.

According to a recent study by Power and Participation Research Centre and Brac Institute of Governance and Development, the number of "new poor" is 3.09 crore, which is 18.54 percent of the population.

The per capita daily income among the surveyed households was Tk 117 during the pre-pandemic period. It dropped to Tk 83 during the second shutdown in August last year.

Although the per capita income increased to Tk 105 in January this year, it came down to Tk 99 in May because of inflation, the survey said.

Inflation rate averaged 5.81 percent in April and is likely to rise due to increased prices of commodities in the international market and decreased value of taka against dollar.

Yet, the government targets to contain average inflation to 5.6 per cent in the upcoming fiscal year.

### TAX MEASURES

## Relief for the rich, burden for others

SOHEL PARVEZ

Over the last couple of months, various sections of society called upon the government to raise the tax-free income limit amid the rising cost of living.

Their argument is an upward revision of the ceiling will protect the buying capacity of low-income people to some extent from spiralling inflation and prevent erosion of their living standard.

The demand, as it seems from the proposed tax measures for the next fiscal year, remains unmet with the tax-free income limit staying unchanged for another year.

This means a person with a monthly income of more than Tk 25,000 will have to pay tax even if he or she cannot afford basic commodities to lead a decent life.

The initial tax rate and corresponding slabs of income are to remain unchanged.

But the limit of eligible investment for an individual has been reduced as the National Board of Revenue seeks to cut it to 20 percent from 25 percent of a taxpayer's total income.

It wants to do away with the slabs and introduce a uniform rate of 20 percent for eligible investment and a uniform rate of 15 percent in case of tax credit.

According to NBR officials, there were claims that too many slabs on tax rebates create complexity in tax credit calculation, prompting the tax authority to bring uniformity to the rate of tax rebates.

In the outgoing fiscal year, an individual

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## A fillip to 'Made in Bangladesh'

### All export goods may get VAT exemption, tax holiday

MOHAMMAD SUMAN, Ctg

The government plans to extend VAT exemption and offer tax holiday to all export-oriented goods and services in order to create new export sectors, diversify goods and explore new markets.

The move aims at making 'Made in Bangladesh' a global brand.

The proposal of the finance minister is targeted to give a major boost to the domestic manufacturing industries, including those making automobiles (three-wheelers and four-wheelers), refrigerators, freezers, and compressors.

The manufacturers of ocean-going vessels, carrying the Bangladeshi flag, will enjoy the tax holiday until 2030. They will, however, have to bring in their income to Bangladesh through the banking channel.

In Bangladesh, the prevailing tax rate for the export-oriented garment sector stands at 12 per cent for general factories and 10 per cent for green factories. The finance minister has proposed to make the same facility available for all other exporting goods and services.

Mega industries such as automobiles with investments amounting to at least Tk 100 crore would be eligible for a 20-year tax holiday.

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## Job creation: an empty promise

AHSAN HABIB

Although Bangladesh is witnessing a golden hour in terms of demographic dividend, a lack of decent employment opportunities in the country is leading to rising unemployment among educated youths, according to experts.

Besides, the pandemic dampened opportunities in the local job market as most non-essential economic activities were put on hold for the past two years due to Covid-19, they said.

In addition, Bangladesh Bank recently tightened the money supply to contain runaway inflation but the move may slow private investment and subsequently impact job creation as loans will become costlier.

Considering the circumstances, Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal yesterday focused on employment generation in his budget proposal for fiscal 2022-23.

However, he did not include any new steps in this regard and instead opted for continuing the previous training and skills development projects.

There are mainly three ministries working for training and skills development in the country, namely the Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Industries, and Ministry of Labour and Employment.

And although the allocation for the Ministry of Youth and Sports increased by 1.42 per cent compared to the revised budget for fiscal 2021-22, the other two ministries saw their funding slashed by 31 per cent and 0.83 per

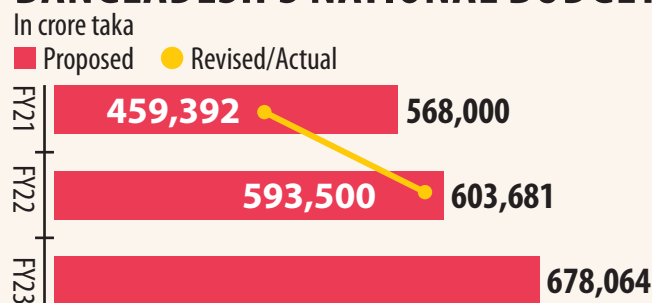
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## PROPOSED BUDGET

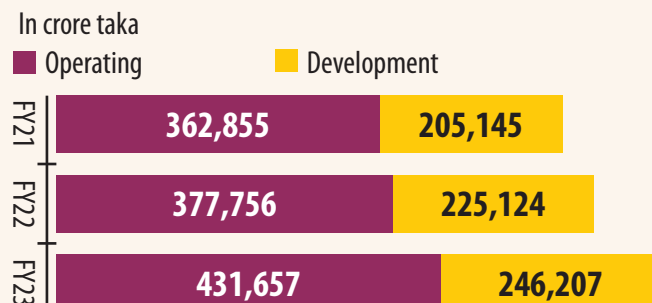
## FY2022-23



### BANGLADESH'S NATIONAL BUDGET



### EXPENDITURE BY CATEGORIES



SOURCE: FINANCE MINISTRY





**LED TV**  
Home entertainment to be less expensive



**POULTRY AND FISH FEED**  
Time to bet the farm?



**GAS CYLINDER**  
Cook a little longer as LPG prices to fall



**ROD**  
Build cheaper with solid steel



**SUGAR**  
Sweet tooth to get sweeter



## Universal pension starts from 2022-23

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

A universal pension scheme for citizens aged 61 and above will be introduced from fiscal 2022-23, said Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal yesterday.

The government has taken a policy decision to enact the Universal Pension Management Act 2022, he said.

A draft of the act has already been made and it would be presented before the parliament within this year, he added.

In his budget speech, the minister also said the average life expectancy at present is 73 years in Bangladesh which is expected to be 79.9 years in 2050 and 84.3 years in 2075.

In the next three decades, citizens are expected to live 20 years after their retirement, he mentioned.

Besides, the ageing population will continue to grow due to the expected increase in average life expectancy. It is high time the authorities introduce a universal pension scheme, he said.

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## MIDDLE CLASS

# A slur is all they get



## SUBSIDY ALLOCATION

# 54pc rise proposed

## Experts worry about economic stability

AKM ZAMIR UDDIN

The government has proposed an allocation of Tk 82,745 crore to run its subsidy programme for 2022-23, an increase of 53.7 percent from this fiscal year's original outlay, creating a challenge to macroeconomic stability.

For 2021-22, the government initially set aside Tk 53,852 crore for subsidy expenditure, but later augmented the amount to Tk 66,825 crore to contain the ripple effect of inflation.

Price increase in the global commodity market due to the Russia-Ukraine war and the coronavirus pandemic have compelled the government to take the measure.

Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal in his budget speech said the rising subsidy poses a challenge in the budget management for the next fiscal year.

He also said the proposed amount could be 15-20 percent higher than the initial estimates, considering the price trend in the global market.

The proposed subsidy expenditure stands at 1.90 percent of GDP compared to 1.70 percent this fiscal year.

But economists argue that the government should consider either withdrawing or cutting the subsidy on some sectors.

Ahsan H Mansur, executive director of the Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh, said there was no scope to assume how much the prices of essential commodities would increase in the global market.

"The government should not increase the subsidy allocation to a large degree as it would threaten macroeconomic stability," he said, adding that hiking subsidy is a political agenda.

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## Broadband, smartphones, laptops to cost more

MAHMUDUL HASAN

With prices of mobile phones and broadband internet set to go up in the next fiscal year, the proposed budget would not be favourable to further development of the ICT sector, experts have said.

While many people do not own a phone and the majority do not have smartphones, 5 percent VAT on mobile phone sales will severely hurt consumers amid the price hike of almost all products and services.

The consumers will ultimately pay for the 10 percent advance income tax on broadband internet service, stalling the growth of the internet users during the pandemic.

The government also proposed 15 percent VAT on laptop imports

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ZYMA ISLAM

The new budget provides nothing for the uncle next-door who has spent his life pinching pennies in a rented flat, nothing for the millennial slogging away 60 hours a week and still wondering how to pay for their second child's school fees, nothing for the mother hesitating to buy beef for a special day.

In short, there is nothing for the middle-income groups.

In the year in which food expenditure alone can blow off more than half the monthly income of a middle-income family, the only reference that Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal made of them in his budget speech yesterday was when he singled them out as tax evaders.

"The population belonging to the middle classes and above is about 40 million [four crore] in our country, but most of them are not paying income taxes. Hence, necessary steps are being taken to prevent tax evasions and to bring all the people, who have taxable incomes, under the tax net," Kamal said.

In a country of 16 crore people, there are 75.10 lakh registered taxpayers. Of them, only 29 lakh filed returns, according to the minister's speech.

With tax collection accounting for a paltry 7.6 percent of the gross domestic product, Bangladesh has one of the lowest tax-to-GDP ratios in the world.

But with the middle-income group being only about four crore in number, there is no indication that the vast untaxed population of the country is wholly made

of them.

"A large portion of those involved in tax evasions are high-income groups," said Dr Fahmida Khatun, executive director of the Centre for Policy Dialogue.

A 2019 research by New York-based research firm Wealth-X had forecasted that Bangladesh will see the third quickest growth in the number of high net-worth individuals in the world in the next five years.

The budget speech makes no mention of tightening the noose around tax invaders from the upper class.

The surcharge, introduced for those with assets worth over Tk 10 crore in the last fiscal year, remains at 10 percent this year too. The income tax rate of 25 percent, introduced in FY 2020-21, reduced from the previous budget's 30 percent, for individuals earning Tk 16 lakh and over per annum also remains rock solid.

On the other hand, strict measures are being taken for tax evaders in general – an act that experts worry would regressively impact the middle classes.

In order to expand the tax net, the government proposes "to introduce provision of disconnecting utility service connections, such as gas, electricity, water etc, in case of failure to pay the undisputed revenue demand of the government."

Dr Fahmida said, "These are stern measures. Such measures could prompt the authorities to discriminately reach for low-hanging fruits. The middle class is an easy target...."

This instance of upbraiding the middle class comes at a time when more than

half of the households' monthly income can easily be spent just on food due to the ongoing inflation.

A CPD study published last week found that a basket of 20 common food items, including rice, chicken, fruits, cooking oil for a four-member family in Dhaka city was Tk 21,358 on May 30.

Add to that the minimum house-rent of a three-bedroom flat, expenditure for basic health, hygiene, education, transportation and telecommunication – the minimum monthly expenditure comes to Tk 70 thousand, which is the entirety of the monthly earning of many middle-income households.

The only way to bring down that expenditure by just Tk 10,000 would be to completely cut off animal protein, except eggs.

This math shows that for many households, there is nary a torn banknote left to save, let alone enough to pay the income tax with.

The budget proposes that subsidised rice be sold at Tk 10 per kg, with microfinance for small traders and Family Cards for the poor. There is, however, no such relief for those who are too rich to be poor or too financially stretched to be rich.

Currently, out-of-pocket healthcare expenditure is 77 percent of the total expenses in this regard, and this will continue to be one of the biggest threats to existence faced by middle-class families because the government's health budget is less than six percent.

At a roundtable session on June 5, Atiur

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## BUDGET SNIPPETS

### 1 TAX-FREE INCOME LIMIT UNCHANGED

The tax-free income limit for individuals has been kept unchanged at Tk 300,000 for the next fiscal year. The threshold for women, senior citizens, individuals belonging to the third gender, physically challenged persons and wounded freedom fighters also did not see any change.

### 2 NO CHANGE IN WEALTH SURCHARGE

Wealthy taxpayers will not have to pay any increased amount of wealth surcharge in the next fiscal year as the ceiling on net wealth and the corresponding rate of tax surcharge have been kept unchanged for one more year. This is the second year the surcharge was kept unchanged.

### 3 PROOF OF TAX RETURN MANDATORY

Contractors and suppliers may have to pay an additional 50 per cent in source tax from the next fiscal year if they fail to submit the proof of submission of income tax returns.

### 4 TECH GIANTS TO COME UNDER TAX NET

Global tech giants such as Google and Facebook will come under the tax net from the next fiscal year as the National Board of Revenue seeks to make submission of returns mandatory for the firms that have no physical presence in Bangladesh but are doing business here.

### 5 SHOW PROOF OF RETURN FOR LOWER TAX ON INTEREST

Savers at banks and financial institutions will have to show the proof of tax return filing to enjoy a 10 per cent tax on their interest earnings. If savers fail to furnish proof, the rate of deduction will be 50 per cent higher.

### 6 PAY TAX ON TIME OR LOSE UTILITY SERVICES

The National Board of Revenue has sought to include a provision in the income tax law in the FY23 that would allow it to ask utilities to cut off the gas, electricity and water connections of users if they fail to pay bills on time.

## GOLD IMPORT Advance tax withdrawn

SHARIFUL ISLAM

Withdrawal of the existing 5 percent advance tax on gold import has been proposed in the budget for fiscal 2022-23 to encourage import of the precious metal through formal channel and discourage its smuggling.

The government made the decision expecting that it will lead to much growth of local jewellery industry and increase tax revenue collection.

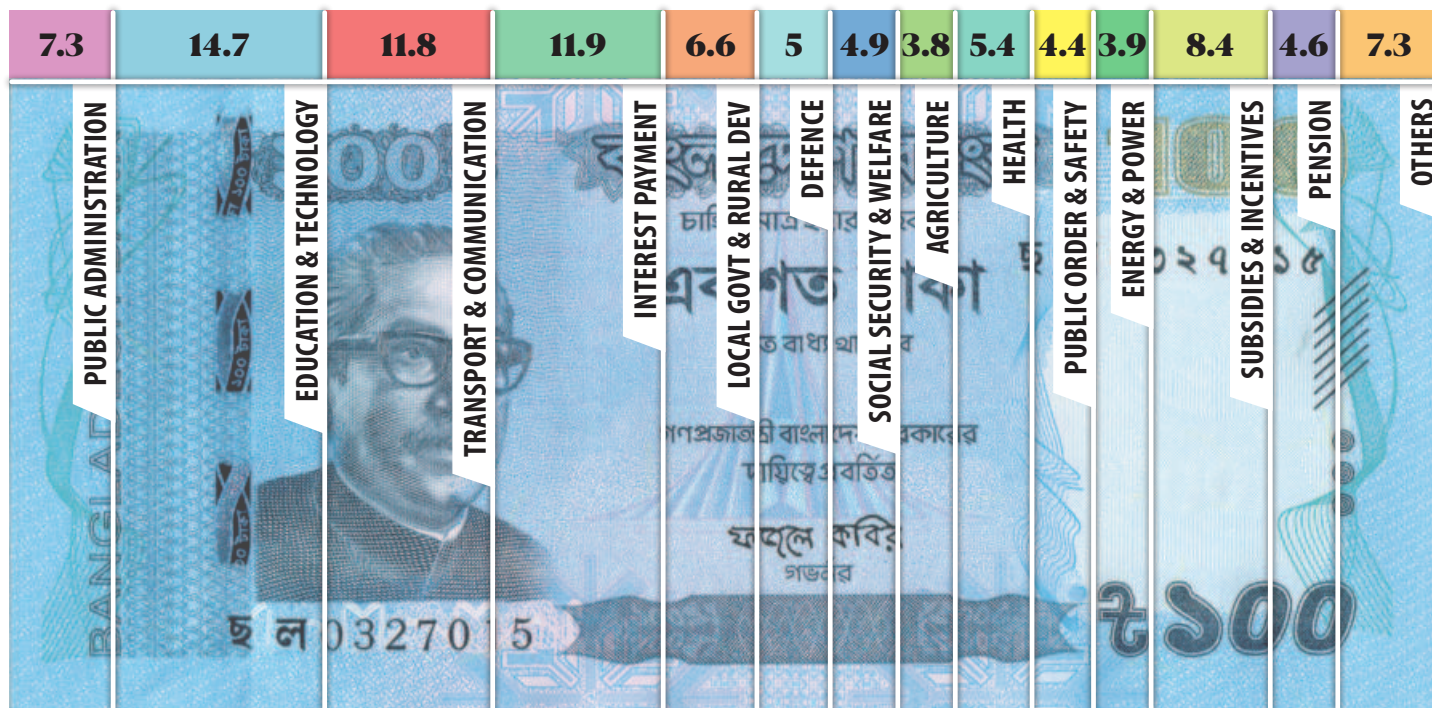
Annual local demand for gold ranges between 20 and 26 tonnes and a large part of it is recycled, according to industry insiders and customs officers.

But since the Gold Policy came into force in 2018, only 253kg was imported for business purposes through LC (letter of

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## WHERE IS THE MONEY GOING?

Let's consider, for the ease of understanding, that the government has proposed an expenditure plan involving Tk 100. In this context, the highest (Tk 14.7) is meant for the education and technology sectors. The second highest allocation (Tk 11.9) is for paying interests, which are accrued for borrowing from local and foreign sources to fill the gap between revenue collection and expenses. The other top recipients are transport and communication, subsidies and incentives, and public administration.





SOCIAL SAFETY NET

Approach not  
a good fit for  
multiple crises

WASIM BIN HABIB *and*  
REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The need for expanding the coverage of social protection schemes with new approaches has never been felt so badly than now as people are struggling to keep their heads above water amid one crisis on top of another.

First, there was a two-year long pandemic that plunged thousands into poverty. As they saw their livelihoods bounce back with a decent economic recovery, then came the war in Ukraine. The unforeseen event has already caused food inflation because of supply chain disruptions, putting tremendous pressure on people since their cost of living went up and purchasing power weakened.

So, when Finance Minister AHM

Mustafa Kamal placed the national budget for 2022-23 fiscal year in parliament, all eyes were fixed on the government's measures to protect the vulnerable groups, who are feeling the squeeze of rising inflation that hit 6.29 percent in April.

However, the proposed budget did not offer much hope for them as the government did not devise new approaches in the social safety net schemes to deal with the multiple crises. It seems more like old wine in a new bottle.

The finance minister emphasised on the ongoing schemes with a proposal to increase the number of beneficiaries and assistance in some of the programmes.

Kamal yesterday proposed increasing the allocation by 5.5 percent year-on-year for the social protection programmes as

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FOOD, AGRICULTURE

A lot of hype,  
little promised

PINAKI ROY

Amid the Russia-Ukraine war and global food price hike, Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal placed emphasis on boosting food production to ensure food security in the country.

Presenting the budget for the 2022-23 fiscal year in parliament yesterday, the finance minister quoting the World Economic Forum said the world is on the brink of starvation.

"But our government has been watchful since the onset of the pandemic to ensure continuity of agricultural production in the country," he said in his budget speech.

He proposed an allocation of Tk 33,698 crore for food, fisheries and agriculture for the coming fiscal year, which is only 6.2 percent of the total budget. The allocation was Tk 24,345 crore in FY 2021-22.

However, the finance minister did not mention any new measures for farmers to increase production other than increasing subsidy on fertiliser.

Dr M Asaduzzaman, former research director at Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, said, "It seems to be a low-key budget. The finance minister did not give us much hope regarding the agricultural sector."

He added, "He [finance minister] should have outlined an agricultural growth path in the context of climate change and irrigation water scarcity."

As the price of fertiliser has increased in the international market due to the Russia-Ukraine war, the minister has increased the subsidy for fertiliser to Tk 16,000 crore in the coming fiscal year, a rise of Tk 4,000 crore from 2021-22.

In the previous fiscal year, the subsidy for fertilisers was initially Tk 9,000 crore but that had to increase to Tk 12,000 crore as the price of fertiliser in May 2022 shot up by 177 percent in the international market.

"We have prioritised farmer welfare by expanding fertiliser subsidies," the finance minister said in parliament.

In addition to providing subsidy to the agriculture sector, the minister mentioned offering incentives and rehabilitation aid to farmers to enhance productivity. However, he did not elaborate.

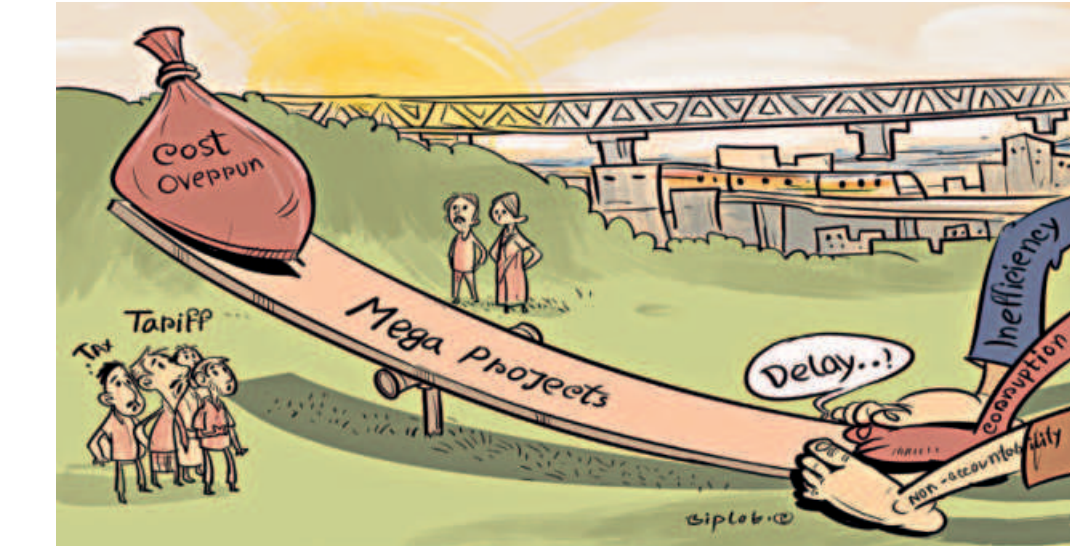
Like the current FY, the minister proposed a 20 percent cash incentive for exports of agricultural products and a 20 percent rebate on electricity bills for power use in irrigation pumps.

He also proposed disbursement of special agricultural credit at 4 percent for cultivating 24 crops including

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FAST-TRACK PROJECTS

Debt repayment  
a worry now



TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

After the Awami League government came to power in 2009, it took up several gigantic development projects with a view to transforming the country's communication and transport infrastructure.

Later, more mega projects were added to the list, especially in the power and energy sector. The government poured thousands of crores of taka, sourced mostly from foreign loans, into the projects over the years.

But the cost and deadlines of the projects were revised multiple times amid poor planning, uncertainty over funding, and the Covid pandemic.

However, people are set to benefit from the initiatives, as some of the structures will become usable in the new fiscal year, starting from July 1. It will begin

with the inauguration of Padma Bridge, the country's longest bridge, on June 25. The country's first metro rail is expected to be partially operational in December.

The Chattogram-Cox's Bazar Rail Link project and a unit of the Rampal Power Plant project could be ready in the first half of 2023.

As four of the eight fast-track projects near completion, the budgetary allocation for them is set to come down significantly in the new budget.

Similarly, the physical work of several other new major projects is set to begin in the next fiscal year, with some ongoing projects finally gaining momentum, prompting the government to divert more funds to the projects.

The construction of the country's first underground metro rail, known as Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) Line-1, another metro line MRT Line-5

(northern route), the Dhaka-Sylhet highway expansion project and the Dhaka-Ashulia Elevated Expressway project is likely to kick off in FY23.

Now, the challenge for the government is to make the most of the mega structures because the debt repayment of some of the projects will begin in a few years.

It will also need to speed up the physical work of the ongoing projects and put funds in the others.

The size of the annual development programme for FY23 has been fixed at a record Tk 246,066 crore, even though the country is facing crises from the fallout of the Russian-Ukraine war and the pandemic.

The proposed ADP has increased by 9.2 percent compared to what it was in the original budget for the fiscal year 2021-22.

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'Ethically unacceptable'

Experts criticise budgetary  
proposal for amnesty to  
laundered money

REJAUL KARIM BYRON *and* DWAIPAYAN BARUA

Money laundered out of the country can be legalised in exchange of seven to fifteen percent tax under a new proposal aimed to boost revenue as well as mobilise foreign currency.

Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal yesterday proposed the amnesty to undisclosed assets or cash stashed in foreign shores, which the economists term "ethically unacceptable" as it would encourage more money laundering.

The new move has the proposition that no question would be raised by any authorities, including the tax administration, about the source of any undisclosed assets located outside Bangladesh if a certain amount of tax is paid.

The opportunity will remain effective from July this year to June next year if the proposal is passed.

The government, however, will discontinue the opportunities of whitening black money amassed in the country.

Under the new proposal, Bangladeshi citizens who have immovable assets bought outside the country with undeclared income from Bangladesh can legalise those by paying 15 percent tax.

Citizens who have any movable assets, including cash or cash equivalents, bank accounts, securities and financial instruments, squirrelled away in foreign shores can legalise those by paying 10 percent.

And those who have any cash or cash equivalents, bank deposits, bank notes, bank accounts, convertible securities and financial instruments squirrelled away abroad can bring them back home by paying 7 percent.

In his budget speech, Mustafa Kamal hoped that the proposal would increase the flow of foreign currency and increase revenue.

"... and the taxpayers will also feel relieved by availing this opportunity to declare their assets and money acquired or earned abroad in their respective income tax returns," he added.

The minister stressed the need for adopting and implementing a visionary fiscal policy aiming at generating more revenue to face the tough challenges in the coming fiscal year, as the

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INDIVIDUAL  
INCOME TAX

MINIMUM INCOME TAX BASED ON LIVING AREA (In taka)		
PERSON	TAXABLE INCOME LIMIT 2021-22	TAXABLE INCOME LIMIT 2022-23
Dhaka and Chattogram city corporations	5,000	Unchanged
Others city corporation areas	4,000	Unchanged
All areas other than city corporations	3,000	Unchanged

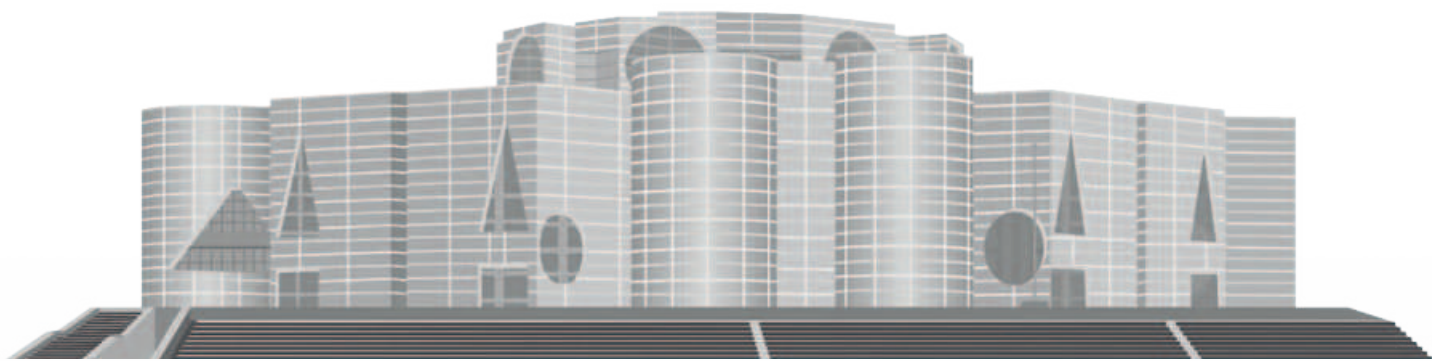
TAXABLE INCOME EXEMPTION LIMIT (In taka)		
PERSON	TAXABLE INCOME LIMIT 2021-22	TAXABLE INCOME LIMIT 2022-23
General taxpayer	300,000	Unchanged
Women taxpayer	350,000	Unchanged
Senior citizens: 65 years & above	350,000	Unchanged
Persons with disability	450,000	Unchanged
Gazetted freedom fighters	475,000	Unchanged
Parents with physically challenged child	Normal exemption+50,000	Unchanged

TAXABLE INCOME RANGE	TAXABLE INCOME	CUMULATIVE TAXABLE INCOME	TAX RATE: 2021-22	TAX RATE: 2022-23
0-Tk 300,000	0	0	0%	UNCHANGED
Tk 300,001-Tk 400,000	100,000	400,000	5%	UNCHANGED
Tk 400,001-Tk 700,000	300,000	700,000	10%	UNCHANGED
Tk 700,001- Tk1,100,000	400,000	1,100,000	15%	UNCHANGED
Tk 11,00,000- Tk 16,00,000	500,000	1,600,000	20%	UNCHANGED
Tk 16,00,001 >		1,600,000	25%	UNCHANGED

SURCHARGE ON NET WEALTH		
	Income year 2021-22	Income year 2022-23
NET WEALTH	Rate	Rate
Up to Tk 3cr	0%	Unchanged
Over Tk 3cr to Tk 10cr, or one more motor car or over 8,000sqft house property in city corporation	10%	Unchanged
Over Tk 10cr to Tk 20cr	20%	Unchanged
Over Tk 20cr to Tk 50cr	30%	Unchanged
Over Tk 50cr	35%	Unchanged

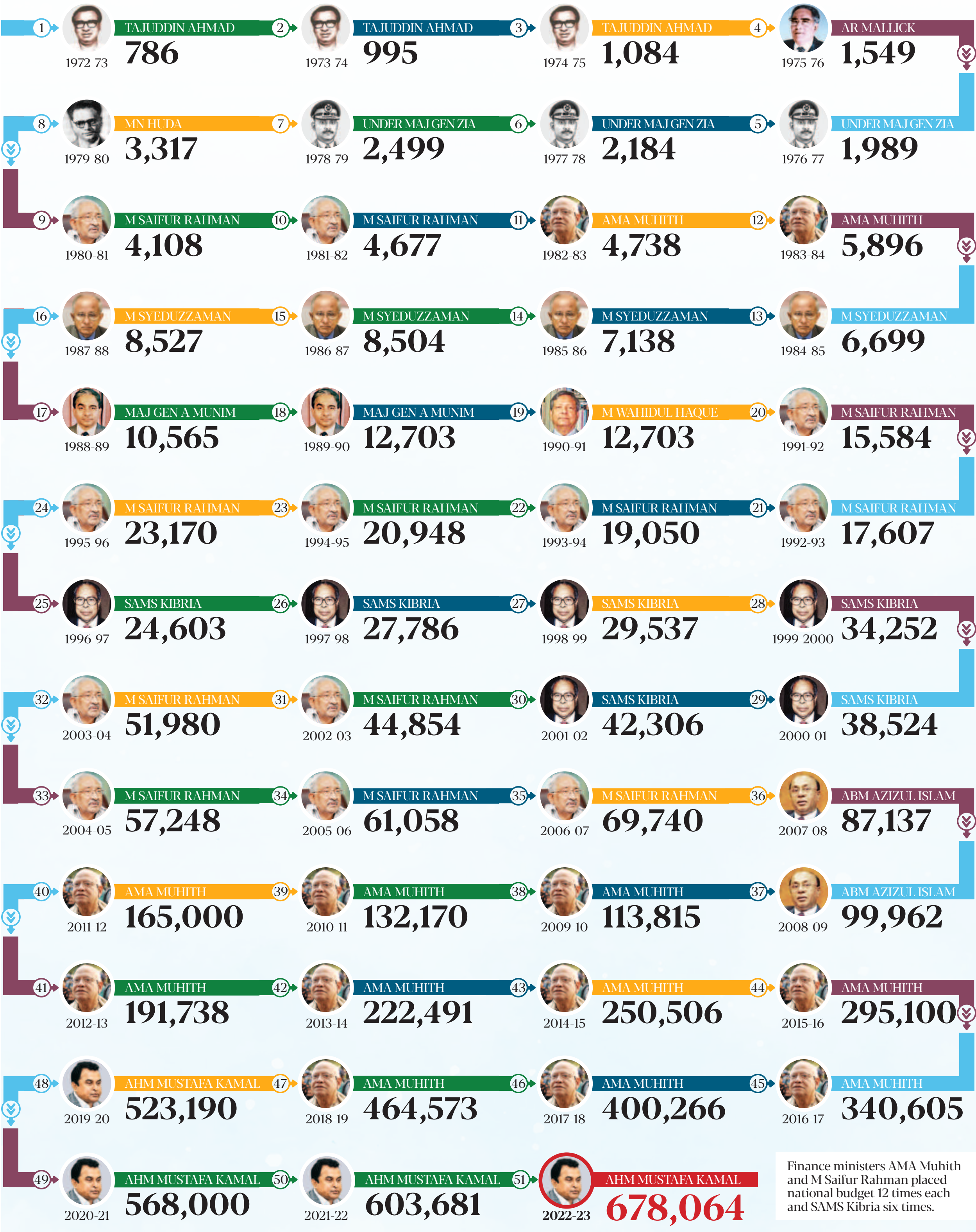






THE HISTORY OF BUDGET

TAKA IN CRORE



Finance ministers AMA Muhith and M Saifur Rahman placed national budget 12 times each and SAMS Kibria six times.







# 31 more hospitalised with dengue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 31 people with dengue fever were admitted to hospitals in the country during 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday. Only three were from outside the capital.

With the new cases, total number of dengue patients rose to 510 this year, according to the Directorate General of Health Services. Among them, 83 are still undergoing treatment.

A total of 427 patients have recovered and released from hospitals.

Warning the two city corporations of a major outbreak of dengue virus this year, experts suggested the corporations take extensive measures to control the Aedes mosquitoes.

Dhaka is at risk of a major dengue outbreak this year compared to the last couple of years, as clear, stagnant water, the breeding ground for Aedes mosquitoes, at under-construction buildings is abundant this time around.

The situation came to light after the DGHS conducted a pre-monsoon survey between March 23 and April 4.

The survey found three Dhaka South City Corporation wards to be at “high risk” and 10 at “medium risk” of an outbreak. Nine wards in Dhaka North City Corporation are at medium risk.



## Two killed in road accident

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

Two people were killed after a pickup and truck collided on Jhenidah-Kushitia highway early yesterday.

The deceased are pickup driver Billal Hossain (45) and his helper Khokon Mia (25), said police.

Sanjoy Kumar Debnath, fire service official in Shailakupa upazila, said the pickup, on its way to Barishal, hit a truck from behind at Chandpur.

Billal and Khokon were declared dead at a local health complex. The bodies were sent for autopsy.

# ‘Pay up, or you’ll end up like Tipu’

People connected with the AL leader getting threatening calls

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Just a week before Eid-ul-Fitr, a businessman, who has shops at the capital’s AGB colony kitchen market, received a call from an internet-generated number.

The caller, without disclosing his identity, claimed that he was calling from Dubai.

“You have to pay up if you want to continue your business. Or else, your fate will be like that of Jahidul Islam Tipu,” he said.

Tipu, former general secretary of Motijheel Awami League (AL), was shot dead by unidentified assailants on March 24. To add to that tragedy, Samia Afran Jamal Prity (22), a rickshaw passenger, got hit by a stray bullet and died.

After the call, the businessman was terrified and contemplated shutting down his shop.

The shops have been closed ever since Eid.

“My life is more important than money,” he said on June 1, seeking anonymity out of fear.

“Tipu had a bodyguard and yet got killed. We don’t have that kind of support, so we have to think about our life first,” he said.

He has filed a GD with Motijheel Police Station.

This is not a one-off incident. Businesspeople in Motijheel area, especially those who were well-connected with Tipu, are getting such calls since the murder, according to local ruling party leaders and traders.

At least seven GDs have been filed by traders of Motijheel for such threats, they said.

They claimed that those who are making the threats are the planners of Tipu’s murder.

Abdul Ahad, deputy

commissioner of Motijheel police, told this newspaper on June 4 that several GDs were filed in this connection, and they have forwarded the complaints to police’s Detective Branch (DB), as it is investigating Tipu’s murder.

Asked about the traders’ security, Ahad said police patrolling has been increased. Of the complaints, this newspaper has managed to collect three. One of the complaints was filed by Tipu’s wife Farhana Islam Doly, also a ward councillor, on April 1.

According to the complaint, around 6:17pm on April 1, Doly received a phone call from the number 72972823.

“Are you Doly?” the caller

Detectors said the arrest of Musa, the prime suspect, will be a vital breakthrough in investigating the extortion calls and the murder.

asked. “Yes,” she replied and asked for the caller’s identity.

Without answering, the caller asked, “Where do you stay?”

She asked for the caller’s identity again, and he replied, “I’m Tomal. I’m calling from Dubai. You shouldn’t have mentioned my name to police,” the complaint read.

Earlier on March 25 and 30, Doly got calls from the same number, asking for her address.

“Now, I feel really unsafe,” Doly mentioned in the GD.

Talking to these correspondents at her residence on May 30, Doly said law

enforcers have arrested some people over the murder, but investigation remains stalled.

“Now, planners of Tipu’s murder are threatening me to back away from the case. But I won’t do that,” she said.

Asked about all this, Rifat Rahman Shamim, deputy commissioner of DB’s Motijheel division, told The Daily Star that investigation is underway.

The investigators earlier claimed that Tipu was murdered by his political and underworld rivals to establish supremacy at Motijheel. They mentioned Sumon Shikder Musa, who is believed to have connections with underworld gangs, as the murder’s mastermind.

The killing was planned three to four months back, with a contract of Tk 15 lakh.

Musa received the money and went to Dubai on March 12. From there, he coordinated and hired hitmen, claimed law enforcers.

Police said Musa has been arrested in Oman. A police team brought him to Dhaka from Oman on June 9. Six people have so far been arrested in the case.

Detectors said Musa’s arrest will be a vital breakthrough in investigating the extortion calls and the murder.

A trader filed a complaint against Musa with Motijheel Police Station on April 10.

As per the complaint, a call came from +882391, and the caller identified himself as Musa.

The caller then asked for money. When the businessman refused, he made threats.

About the arrest, Doly said, “Law enforcers arrested Musa. But, I think there is someone behind him.”

# Bangladesh-India bus service resumes today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After remaining suspended for over two years due to the pandemic, the bus service between Bangladesh and India will resume today.

Tazul Islam, chairman of Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC), confirmed this to The Daily Star yesterday.

Except the Dhaka-Sylhet-Shillong-Guwahati-Dhaka route, services on four other routes will resume from tomorrow and the first bus will start from Motijheel at 7:00am, he added.

The development came after the rail service between the two countries resumed on May 29.

Both bus and train services were suspended in March 2020, when the coronavirus hit Bangladesh.

Before suspension of services, buses were operated on five cross-border routes: Dhaka-Kolkata-Dhaka, Dhaka-Agartala-Dhaka, Dhaka-Sylhet-Shillong-Guwahati-Dhaka, Agartala-Dhaka-Kolkata-Agartala, and Dhaka-Khulna-Kolkata-Dhaka.

Discussion over resumption of bus service came to the fore after both the countries decided to resume train service.

Suvenker Ghosh Rakesh, managing director of Shyamoli NR Travels, said they are all set to resume services from June 10.

The discussion over the operation of fifth route is also going on, said a BRTC official.



**ট্রেডিং কর্পোরেশন অব বাংলাদেশ**

প্রধান কার্যালয়  
১, কাওরান বাজার, ঢাকা।

নং-২৬.০৫.০০০০.০২৩.২২.০৯৫.২২.৩০৮ তারিখঃ ০৯-০৬-২০২২ খ্রিঃ

**টিসিবি'র ১,৪২১ মেঃ টন (প্রায়) ছোলা 'ওপেন সেল' এ বিক্রয়।**

এতদ্বারা সর্বসাধারণের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, “আগে আসলে আগে পাবেন” ভিত্তিতে টিসিবি'র ক্রয়/আমদানিকৃত সর্বশেষ উৎপাদন মৌসুমের (Latest Crop Year) ছোলা প্রতি কেজি ৫০/- (পঞ্চাশ) টাকা (ভ্যাট ও ট্যাক্সসহ) দরে টিসিবি আঞ্চলিক কার্যালয় ঢাকার আওতাধীন ২৩০ ও ৩৪৪/সি তেজগাঁও, গুদাম এবং নিউদাপা, ফতুল্লা, নারায়ণগঞ্জ গুদাম হতে 'ওপেন সেল' এর মাধ্যমে আগামী ১৩-০৬-২০২২ খ্রিঃ তারিখ হতে বিক্রয় করা হবে।

অগ্রহী ক্রেতাগণ উক্ত ছোলা টিসিবি'র আঞ্চলিক কার্যালয়, ঢাকার আওতাধীন গুদাম হতে যে কোন পরিমাণ ছোলা ক্রয় করতে পারবেন। তবে ক্রেতার সংখ্যা অধিক হলে আনুপাতিক ভাবে বরাদ্দ প্রদান করা হবে। মজুদ শেষ না হওয়া পর্যন্ত উক্ত বিক্রয় কার্যক্রম চলমান থাকবে।

( মোঃ শেখাবুর রহমান)  
প্রধান কর্মকর্তা (সিএমএস ও বিওবি)

## Save CHT forests to protect biodiversity

### Experts tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

To conserve the country’s biodiversity, efforts must be taken to protect the forests of Chattogram Hill Tracts (CHT), said speakers at a seminar.

They said this at a seminar titled “Priorities of Forest Landscape Restoration and Biodiversity Conservation in The Chattogram Hill Tracts” organised by Arannayk Foundation on Wednesday.

According to the foundation data, CHT accounts for about 10 percent of the country’s total land area. Only one percent of the total population live there.

The forest is now severely degraded due to multiple factors, including jhum cultivation, overharvesting, change in land use and lack of sustainable forest management, said speakers.

“To conserve the wildlife and greater biodiversity, we must protect CHT from the multiple threats it is facing,” said Ishiaq Sobhan, senior environmental specialist of the World Bank.

Satellite data from 2000 to 2015 suggest that the rate of deforestation and degradation is much higher in CHT than in the rest of the country, said Md Amir Hossain Chowdhury, chief conservator of the department.

**Analysing satellite data from 2000 to 2015, it was noticed that the rate of deforestation and forest degradation is much higher in CHT than the rest of the country.**

## SAVAR ROAD CRASH

### Another scientist dies

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

Another scientist from Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission (BAEC) – who was injured in a road accident on Dhaka-Aricha highway – died at Combined Military Hospital in Dhaka early yesterday.

The deceased is scientific officer Farhana Islam. The death toll currently stands at six. On June 5, a Safe Line Paribahan lost control and hit three vehicles, including a BAEC bus. The driver of the Safe Line Paribahan bus and four BAEC staffers were killed. Twenty others were injured.

Police are yet to make any arrests in this connection.

“The bus has no road permit and legal document. We are trying to find the current owner of the bus,” said SI Golam Mostofa of Savar Highway Police Station.



**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**

Office of the Project Director (BRCP-1), MoC  
Bangladesh Regional Connectivity Project-I  
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Memo no: 26.00.0000.066.07.0369.22-348 Date: 09/06/2022

**Request for Expressions of Interest (Consultancy/Research Firm)**

**Assignment Title:** Consultancy/Research firm for conducting 03 studies suggested by NTFC in FY 2021-22.

**Reference No:** BRCP1/MOC/SD-16

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh has received financing from the World Bank for implementing the Bangladesh Regional Connectivity Project-I and intends to apply part of the proceeds for the consulting services to conduct studies suggested by NTFC in FY 2021-22.

The broad scope of consulting services (“the Services”) includes conducting the following three studies in 2021-22/23 fiscal year that are critical for export promotion and trade facilitation: These studies will be conducted under a single package to explore best output from the study.

The study will cover the following relevant areas, but not limited to:

Study 1: Vehicle and Cargo tracking under free transit regime

Study 2: Assessment study on necessity of more Off Dock/Dry Port

Study 3: Feasibility study on enhancing trade and connectivity with North East India and Bangladesh.

The detail scope of the 3-studies proposed above is described in the Terms of Reference (ToR) – which will be available at address of the undersigned given at the top of the letterhead and in project website: [www.brpcp-1.gov.bd](http://www.brpcp-1.gov.bd)

Expected date for commencement of the services is 01 November, 2022 and duration of the assignment is anticipated to run for a period of six months commencing on the date of signing the agreement.

The Project Director, representing the Ministry of Commerce, Government of Bangladesh now invites eligible consultancy/research Firms to express their interest in providing the Services. Interested consulting/research Firms shall have to provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experiences to perform the Services. The qualifications and experiences for short listing are:

- The consulting firm shall have the legal capacity to enter into the contract;
- The firm shall have at least 10 years of general experience in providing consulting/research services out of which at least 05 years of experience in national and international trade related research or studies for public and private sector;
- The firm must have successfully completed one service contract/study/research related to cross-border trade and related issues;
- The firm should have experience in working with development partner's funded projects (IDA financed project experience would be desirable).

The firm should propose the structure and composition of its team members as indicated in the ToR. It should list the main disciplines of the assignment, key experts, technical and support staffs.

Consultants are requested to submit, but not limited to, the following supporting documents in support of the above-mentioned criteria:

(i) The Firm's Incorporation/Trade/registration documents from the country of the firm (ii) Firm's brochures; and (iii) Description of similar consultancy contracts, including the scope, contract amount, name of Client, period of the contract (date of contract signing to date of completion), location/country of the services, etc.

The attention of interested Consultants is drawn to the Section III, Para 3.14, 3.16, and 3.17 of the World Bank's 'Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers, July 2016 and updated in November 2020,' setting forth the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest.

A consulting/research Firm is allowed to submit the Expressions of Interest (Eoi) along if it considers itself to be fully qualified on its own for the assignment, as it is not mandatory for consultants to associate with any other firm(s), whether foreign or local. Alternatively, if consultants themselves choose to associate to enhance their qualifications and capability for the assignment, then such associations may either be as a Joint Venture (i.e. all members of the joint venture shall be jointly and severally responsible) and/or Sub-consultants (i.e. the Consultant will be responsible, including for the services of the sub-consultant). In case of an association, the Consultants must explain in the Eoi submission (a) the rationale for forming the association and (b) the anticipated role and relevant qualifications of each member of the Joint Venture and/or of each sub-consultant for carrying out the assignment, to justify the proposed inclusion of the JV members and/or sub-consultants in the association. Failure to provide the above explanation in the Expressions of Interest may risk the association not being shortlisted for the assignment. However, the qualifications/experience of sub-consultants will not be considered by the Client in the evaluation of Expressions of Interest for Shortlisting purposes.

A consultancy/research Firm will be selected in accordance with the Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS) method set out in the Procurement Regulations of the World Bank.

Further information can be obtained at the address of the undersigned given at the letterhead, during office hours from 9:00am to 5:00pm Bangladesh Standard Time (BST).

Expressions of Interest (Eoi) must be delivered in a written form to the address of the undersigned (in person or by mail or by e-mail) by 4:00pm (BST), **04 July, 2022.**

The Client will not be responsible for any expenses incurred by the firm(s) in connection with the preparation or delivery of the Eoi. The procuring entry reserves the right to accept or reject all Eois.

**Md. Mijanur Rahman**  
Project Director (Joint Secretary)  
Bangladesh Regional Connectivity Project-1  
Ministry of Commerce

GD-1206





(L) An art performance at the exhibition. (R) (From left) Prof Anu Muhammad, Shahidul Alam, Habibul Haque, Rani Yan Yan and Sanjeeb Drong.



PHOTOS: MONON MUNTAKA

# ‘Trunk Call’ portrays Habibul Haque’s mindful voyage through nature

“Those who have seen Habibul Haque’s work know that he likes to tell human-centric stories. By creating this project, he unlearned this creative practice,” added the curator of the show, ASM Rezaur Rahman.

MONON MUNTAKA

Drik Gallery has organised a photographic exhibition titled “Trunk Call” by eminent photographer, Habibul Haque to commemorate World Environment Day 2022.

Habibul Haque, who has been working with Drik for around 25 years, has been avidly journeying amidst nature since his youth and researching the interaction between humans and the environment.

The inauguration for the exhibition took place on June 5, 2022, around 6 PM at Drik Gallery, Panthapath. Professor Anu Muhammad, Rani Yan Yan, Sanjeeb Drong, Shahidul Alam, along with ASM Rezaur Rahman, the curator of the exhibition, graced the inaugural ceremony with their opening remarks. The event also included live songs and art performances by artists Amal Akash and Bithi Ghosh.

“Trunk Call” is a very different visual representation of trees, where Haque tried to build a relationship with the trees to understand their silence, pain, and moods. Habibul Haque has been working on this project since 2005.

“I started photography back in 2002. Like other photographers, I started my journey



by taking images of nature. Among all the elements of nature, trees always fascinated me. But I do not want to portray them generically. I always tried to explore trees in such a way where I can interact with them, express their language, spirit, tone, vibe and impression through my photographs,” shared Haque.

“Those who have seen Habibul Haque’s work know that he likes to tell human-centric stories. By creating this project, he unlearned

this creative practice,” added the curator of the show, ASM Rezaur Rahman.

The exhibition’s story is told in two parts. The first section’s images depict the photographer’s in-depth observation of trees. The photographs in the second section depict the suffering of nature and trees, with the tale concluding with a little green leaf that represents hope.

“Trunk Call” will remain open every day till June 14, 2022, between 3 PM and 9 PM.

## “It’s a thrilling new challenge”: BTS’s J-Hope on headlining Lollapalooza

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

**J-Hope, of BTS fame, will be headlining**

Lollapalooza, an annual music festival that takes place in Chicago. J-Hope will be closing out the show on July 31, making it the first time a Korean artist has headlined the main stage of a major US music festival.

The four-day festival will also host a wide range of bands and musicians such as Metallica, Green Day, Dua Lipa, Glass Animals, J. Cole and so on. The festival will take place at Grant Park, Chicago, Illinois.

An excited J-Hope shared the announcement on his Instagram profile saying, “This is going to be my first performance at @lollapalooza. It’s a thrilling new challenge that I think will become a really memorable chapter in my musical history! I’m gonna give you guys a great show. Get ready to



## Prachyanat to stage ‘Khawabnama’ in BSA

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Popular theatre troupe, Prachyanat is ready to stage their popular play “Khawabnama” at Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy on Saturday.

Directed by Kazi Toufiqueul Islam Emon, the screenplay has been written by Md Shawkat Hossain Sajib. The production features Sanjida Preeti, Sakawat Hossain Rezvi, Saim Bin Mujib, and M S Rana, among others.

The play is based on Akhteruzzaman Elias’s novel of the same name. It revolves around the socio-political scene in Bengal before the partition of 1947.



PHOTO: SHAHREAR KABIR HEEMEL

## Nothing to make up for learning loss

FROM PAGE 16

has so far proved to be a great disadvantage for underprivileged learners, mainly for a lack of devices and poor access to the internet.

Economists and educationists expressed dissatisfaction over the proposed budget providing no way out for addressing the important issue of learning loss.

They quoted a study of October 2021 saying that nearly eight million students across the country were at risk of learning loss due to the prolonged school closure caused by the pandemic.

But the government still appears to be in the dark about the situation on the ground, said the joint study by the Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC) and Brac Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD).

State-run Bangladesh Examination Development Unit (BEDU) is assessing the Covid-induced academic loss for secondary-level students and it is at the final stage, said BEDU Chief Robiul Kabir Chowdhury.

Published on October 19, the study said 3.96

million primary and 3.9 million secondary students – a total of 7.86 million students – were at risk of learning loss.

Hossain Zillur Rahman, executive chairman of the PPRC, told The Daily Star that it seemed the government’s main focus was the reopening of schools.

“Unfortunately learning loss challenge has not been well understood by the government and therefore we don’t see the proper reflection in the budget,” he said.

“We were hoping for a big initiative,” he said, adding that there should be a mega national dialogue exclusively on learning loss recovery.

“I think you cannot give the load of learning loss to schools, they are already loaded with resuming classes. We need a community level solution,” he added.

Professor Emeritus Manzoor Ahmed of Brac University said the long school closure created an extraordinarily difficult challenge of learning loss.

For instance, children who were in class five at the beginning of the pandemic

in March 2020 are in class seven now, skipping two school years and largely unprepared for their new lessons.

He suggested taking up a remedial plan for them to catch up alongside technical and financial support to teachers and schools to implement the remedial plan and others.

“The authorities may not have proposed specific budget lines for these activities,” he said.

Prof Mohammad Tariq Ahsan of the Institute of Education and Research at the University of Dhaka said normally the education budget of Bangladesh was lower than many other South Asian countries.

He said the country’s education system does not have the resistance capacity to face the hit generated by the Covid-19 pandemic. A new arrangement of the education system is needed following the hit already suffered, he said.

There is no alternative to increasing investment in education for enhancing the quality of teachers and education and increasing facilities at schools, he said.

“Increasing the capacity of teachers is a very

important matter, so that they can improve their classroom delivery for implementation of the new curriculum,” he added.

The new curriculum, which is set to be implemented in phases from January 2023, will be fully implemented by 2025.

Campaign for Popular Education Deputy Director KM Enamul Hoque said a huge investment was needed for building the capacity of teachers.

They will need to take innovative approaches and spread motivation for the recovery from the huge learning loss stemming from the Covid-19 pandemic, he said.

He said the government should increase coverage of social safety net programmes such as stipends and their amount as out of pocket education expenditure has been increasing due to a hike in the price of education materials.

He proposed for the introduction of special stipends for female students who were victims of child marriage during the pandemic so that they can continue their education.

## Suspect

FROM PAGE 16

College student Prity, 22, who happened to be in a rickshaw next to the vehicle, also got shot. The two were declared dead after being taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Musa entered Oman from the UAE on May 8, said a top official of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

## Services

FROM PAGE 16

of applying for a loan exceeding Tk 5 lakh from a bank or financial institution, becoming a director or a sponsor shareholder of a company, and obtaining or continuing an import or export registration certificate.

It will also be needed to secure or renew a trade licence in city corporations or municipalities and get the registration of a co-operative society.

The move comes as only 24 lakh out of 75 lakh TIN-holders in the country submit tax returns.

According to the Finance Bill 2022, the taxpayers will have to show the proof in order to obtain or maintain a credit card, the membership of the professional body as a doctor, dentist, lawyer, chartered accountant, cost and management accountant, engineer, and architect.

In order to open postal savings accounts exceeding Tk 5 lakh, maintain bank accounts with a credit balance exceeding Tk 10 lakh, and purchase savings instruments of Tk 5 lakh, the individual will have to show the proof.

It will be applicable for an employee who draws a basic monthly salary of Tk 16,000.

Similarly, obtaining or continuing commercial, industrial and residential connection of gas and getting the admission of a child or a dependent in an English medium school will require providing the proof of the tax return submission.

## Job creation

FROM PAGE 2

cent respectively.

The government usually sets lofty goals for job creation in its annual national plan but the proposals almost never translate into real allocations or projects, said Professor Sayema Haque Bidisha, research director of the South Asian Network on Economic Modeling.

She suggested the government boost employment by providing incentives and rebates to large, labour-intensive industries.

“But there should be a tracking system to see whether the steps taken actually contribute towards job creation,” she added.

Bidisha, also a professor of economics at the University of Dhaka, went on to say that the government could announce some specific projects and allocations with a view to creating market access for rural women entrepreneurs.

She also proposed forming a fund for lending to startups.

“Some projects and allocations should have been made available to reduce the skill mismatch of educated unemployed youths by equipping them with the skills industries need,” Bidisha said.

Rizwanul Islam, a

former special adviser for the employment sector of the International Labour Organization in Geneva, said that while the country’s economic growth accelerated in pre-pandemic years, employment growth slowed down and resulted in inadequate job creation.

On the supply side, there is sometimes a mismatch between educational qualifications and the requirements of the labour market.

“A comprehensive employment strategy is needed with a particular focus on youth employment,” Islam said.

According to Labour Force Survey 2016-17 by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, the national unemployment rate is 4.2 per cent while the youth unemployment rate stands at 10.6 per cent.

The unemployment rate seems to be high among youths with higher educational qualifications. For instance, the unemployment rate is 13.4 per cent among youths having a tertiary level of education while it is 28 per cent among youths with secondary level education.

“Macroeconomic and sector-level policies need to be geared towards the growth of more labour-intensive industries in addition to the garment

industry,” Islam said.

“The government can provide support to potential migrants and returning migrant workers in their efforts to find jobs or be self-employed,” he added.

For boosting startups, the government proposed exempting the businesses from the bindings of all other types of financial reporting aside from income tax returns.

It also recommended fixing the turnover tax rate at 0.1 per cent in place of the current 0.6 per cent.

As per the proposed national budget, the government has taken up a plan to raise employment in the information and communication technology sector up to 30 lakh by 2025.

For the purpose of job creation and establishing a central database for employment generation with education and training, steps are being taken to create a “Directorate of Employment”.

In last year’s budget proposal, the government planned to set up an “employment bank” and internship programmes in the private and public sectors for new graduates.

However, no updates in this regard were seen in the proposed budget for 2022-23.

## Edible oil price shock continues

FROM PAGE 16

It came a week after the Bangladesh Vegetable Oil Refiners and Vanaspati Manufacturers’ Association, a platform of refiners and marketing companies, sent a letter to the commerce ministry and the tariff commission, saying the prices need to be adjusted in 15 days.

Yesterday’s upward price revision was the third this year. On May 5, the price of bottled soybean oil had increased by Tk 38 to Tk 198, the sharpest increase in the country.

Refiners blamed the stronger dollar for the price hike of soybean oil.

The taka has fallen

against the American greenback in recent months amid dollar shortages, making imports expensive.

The global commodity market volatility, which was caused by the supply disruptions, pent-up demand, and the Russia-Ukraine war, has hit Bangladesh hard as the country depends on the international markets to meet at least 80 per cent of its edible oil demand.

Biswajit Saha, director for corporate and regulatory affairs of City Group, admits that the price of soybean oil is low in the international market at the moment.

“But when the edible oil was imported, the price was high.”

The spike, which surprised many, will pile more pressure on the consumers struggling to make ends meet owing to higher costs of basic essentials.

“A week ago, the commerce minister said the price would come down. Now, we see the opposite,” said SM Nazer Hossain, vice-president of the Consumers Association of Bangladesh.

Noor Mohammad, a private job-holder who lives in the capital’s Adabar, said the price of every essential has gone up.

“I can’t tell you exactly

what a hard reality I am facing now.”

Abul Hashem, general secretary of the Bangladesh Edible oil Wholesalers Association, said they didn’t know about the latest price increase.

At present, edible oil is being sold at Tk 2-3 lower than the government’s fixed price.

Soybean oil is being sold at Tk 176 per litre in the wholesale market in Dhaka and palm oil at Tk 155.

According to the National Board of Revenue, six large refiners imported more than 15.11 lakh tonnes of palm oil and soybean oil worth Tk 18,182 crore in the five months to May.



## ASIAN SECURITY MEETING

## US, China set to clash over Ukraine, Taiwan

REUTERS, Singapore

The United States and China are expected to use Asia's top security meeting this week to trade blows over everything from Taiwan's sovereignty to the war in Ukraine, although both sides have indicated a willingness to discuss managing differences.

The Shangri-La Dialogue, which attracts top-level military officials, diplomats and weapons makers from around the globe, will take place June 10-12 in Singapore, the first time the event has been held since 2019 after it was postponed twice because of Covid-19.

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky will address the meeting in a virtual session today, organisers said.

On the sidelines of the summit, US

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and Chinese Minister of National Defence General Wei Fenghe are expected to hold their first face-to-face meeting since President Joe Biden took office.

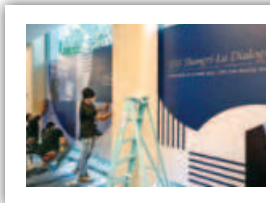
"We expect, from our perspective, the substance of that meeting to be focused on managing competition in regional and global issues," a senior US official said.

The official said the focus would be on trying to set guard rails in the tense relationship between the two countries and ensure that issues would not spill over into some sort of military misunderstanding or miscommunication.

"We are taking every effort to ensure that it is a professional, substantive meeting and we are going to be talking about some very serious issues, but no desire on the part of the United States to make a public spectacle," the official said.

Chinese media have also said Beijing will use the meeting to discuss cooperation with the United States.

Austin and Wei are likely to then use speeches over the weekend to re-affirm their commitment to the Asia-Pacific region, while delivering some pointed remarks in the direction of the other.



People attend the funeral of Palestinian Mahmoud Abu Ayhour, who was killed by Israeli forces during clashes in Halhul, near Hebron, in the Israeli-occupied West Bank yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## FIERCE BATTLE FOR SEVERODONETSK

## Troops holding onto key city

Says Ukraine, claims advances in southern Kherson region

REUTERS, Kyiv

Ukrainian forces yesterday claimed to have pushed forward in intense street fighting in the eastern city of Severodonetsk, but said their only hope to turn the tide was more artillery to offset Russia's massive firepower.

In the south, Ukraine's defence ministry said it had captured new ground in a counter-attack in Kherson province, targeting the biggest swathe of territory Russia has seized since its invasion in February.

The battle amid the ruins of Severodonetsk, a small industrial city, has become one of the war's bloodiest, with Russia concentrating its invasion force there. Both sides say they have inflicted massive casualties.

Severodonetsk and its twin city Iysychansk on the opposite bank

of the Siverskyi Donets river are the last Ukrainian-controlled parts of Luhansk province, which Moscow is determined to seize as one of its principal war objectives.



Russian forces are focusing all of their might in the area, Ukraine's Security Council Secretary Oleksiy Danilov told Reuters in an interview yesterday.

"They don't spare their people, they're just sending men like cannon fodder," he said. "They are shelling

our military day and night."

In a rare update from Severodonetsk, the commander of Ukraine's Svyoboda National Guard Battalion, Petro Kusyik, said Ukrainians were drawing the Russians into street fighting to neutralise Russia's artillery advantage.

But he said his forces were suffering from a "catastrophic" lack of counter-battery artillery to fire back at Russia's guns, and getting such weapons would transform the battlefield.

President Volodymyr Zelensky said the battle for the city was "very fierce... very difficult. Probably one of the most difficult throughout this war. "In many ways, the fate of our Donbas is being decided there."

He also warned: "Millions of people may starve if the Russian blockade of the Black Sea continues."

## Not for respite, but for restraints

FROM PAGE 2

such that the prices of fuel, gas, electricity and fertiliser do not increase too much at the consumer level, this expenditure would have been better used as targeted support to those who need it the most: the middle-class and below.

The 2.5 percent cash incentive for sending in remittance through the official channel is absolutely not necessary given the Bangladesh Bank's decision to let the taka float, which has effectively brought parity to the official exchange rate for dollar to those in the kerb market.

For the same reason, the cash incentive for exports is no longer necessary.

Austerity could also start at home: the allocation for government employees' pay and allowances could have stayed the same and the slow-moving development projects could have been put on hold.

If Kamal is not one for short-term political fixes, he is not one for effective, long-term policies, either.

He spoke of preparation for Bangladesh's graduation from the least-developed country bracket in 2026 and yet did not provide a roadmap.

He made human resource development one

of his priorities and yet, the allocation for education as a share of GDP was down to 1.53 percent in the budget for fiscal 2022-23.

This is lower than this fiscal year's 2.08 percent and lagging far behind Unesco's recommended spending of 4-6 percent of GDP.

When the need for the hour was more allocation to make up for the learning losses for the pandemic and to prepare the youth for the fourth industrial revolution, he went with the shears to this sector.

He earmarked the agriculture sector as another priority and yet did not have a definitive plan to increase its productivity and ensure food security.

When food security is not guaranteed, the logic to provide a 20 percent cash incentive for agricultural exports is rather baffling.

The 20 percent rebate on electricity bill for irrigation pumps and the concessional import facility for combined harvesters and threshers are a step in the right direction.

And so is the proposal to no longer extend tax exemptions on project implementation or maintenance work as it will bring transparency to revenue administration

and help manage the budget deficit.

The need to show proof of returns filing to get many services and the snapping of utility connections for failure to pay the government's undisputed revenue are indeed bold strides.

On paper, they would surely widen the tax net and improve tax compliance. Whether it pans out that way in the absence of full automation of the tax administration remains to be seen.

The slash in corporate tax for both listed and non-listed companies in some sectors was a much-needed step to bring parity with Asian peers.

Extending the lower corporate income tax, which has so far been the preserve for garment manufacturers, to the other exporting sectors is a long-sighted move that can go on to expand the country's narrow export basket.

The proposal to increase the applicable duty on the import of some finished products made by the small and medium enterprises, which contribute at least 25 percent to Bangladesh's GDP and generate as much as 90 percent of the private sector jobs, is

another significant move.

The slash in import duty from 25 percent to 5 percent on sewage treatment plants can lead to cleaner water bodies, which is much-needed for sustainability.

The push for import substitution for motorcycles and cut in import duty for hot-rolled stainless steel sheets to encourage domestic stainless steel product manufacturing can go on to boost the 'Made in Bangladesh' agenda.

The increased total tax incidence by imposing a supplementary duty on high-end luxury motor vehicles and jeeps along with chandeliers and light fittings at the import stage should bring in easy money to the state coffers.

And yet, there are doubts in Kamal's mind that all his tax measures would not be enough to mobilise adequate revenue.

Which is why, he has proposed to increase the stamp duty that has remained unchanged since 2012.

All said and done, what is absolutely essential is the implementation of whatever is laid out in the budget. This is where the government is found lacking every year. Let's hope next year is different.

documents.

The Bangabandhu Tunnel under the Karnaphuli in Chattogram are expected to open this December. These two projects will get large sums.

But, two major projects of Bangladesh Railway – Joydebpur-Ishwardi double line and Akhaura-Sylhet rail expansion – involving around Tk 30,000 crore were approved more than three years ago. But the projects fell into uncertainty over funding. The Joydebpur-Ishwardi project will get only Tk 47 crore while the other will not get any allocation.

## Ensuring

FROM PAGE 13

He said ill-treatment of migrant workers at the local airports, the Bangladeshi embassies and remittance houses abroad push them to adopt illegal means.

"Migrant workers are very emotional. When they don't find good services from the government, they tend not to remit through banking channels," Anisur Rahman, who himself was once a migrant in Saudi Arabia, told The Daily Star.

He said incentive to migrants is a way of increasing remittance but improving the services, their protection and skills are the most important steps the government can take.

Mustafa Kamal yesterday proposed Tk 990 crore allocation for the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment, a rise from Tk 714 crore last year.

Is it enough?

Shakirul Islam Shakil, chairman at Oviyashi Karmi Unnayan Program, said this increase is nothing compared to the needs of the migrants if the government really means to ensure migrants' welfare and protection.

"You need a lot of welfare and protection staff for the migrants abroad. For example, there are some 25 lakh Bangladeshis working in Saudi Arabia, but there are only 10 to 15 officials in the labour wings there. This is simply inadequate," he said.

Adequate and trained officials should be appointed for addressing the migrants' complaints and pursuing the legal cases for abuses and checking the visas if they are genuine as visa trading is a huge issue, Shakil said.

"Whatever allocation is required for this should be made available," he said.

Generally speaking, when the skill level of workers is higher, their income will be higher. The government has quite a number of training centers, but there is a question about their quality.

"So, if you ensure migrants' welfare, improve the facilities, the remittance will automatically come," Shakil said.

## Govt to invest

FROM PAGE 13

Referring to the NDC (Nationally Determined Contribution), a non-binding national target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the minister said that the government has updated the NDC, setting the target to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 6.73 percent by 2030 with the country's own financing and technological capabilities.

He said the country has a plan to reduce emissions by another 15.12 percent which is subjected to the availability of international funding and technical assistance.

Reaffirming Bangladesh's commitment to phase out fossil fuel, he said the government has revised its decision on ten coal-based power plants scrapping four and replacing others with renewable energy or gas.

The government is also proceeding with the plan to produce 40 percent of energy from renewable sources by 2041, he added.

Upholding the government initiatives taken to conserve the overall environment, Mostafa Kamal said 35

new protected areas have been declared in the last 13 years. They include nine national parks, 18 wildlife sanctuaries, three eco-parks, one botanical garden, two marine protected areas, and two special biodiversity areas. Total protected areas in Bangladesh now stand at 51.

Syeda Rizwana Hasan, chief executive of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA), told The Daily Star that the \$80 billion fund will not be enough considering the challenges Bangladesh is facing. She also questioned how the fund will be allocated to different parts of the country.

"The question arises on which sectors government will invest in and how they will determine the priorities. Will the fund be allocated for sustainable dams in haor areas or will it go to Dakop of Satkhira?" she questioned.

Based on her past experiences, she added that the fund often doesn't reach the people most affected by natural catastrophes.

## ANTI-MUSLIM REMARKS

## Delhi police file FIRs against Sharma, others

THE HINDU ONLINE

Delhi Police registered FIRs against former BJP spokespersons Nupur Sharma and Naveen Kumar Jindal, AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi, controversial priest Yati Narsinghanand and others for allegedly posting and sharing messages on social media against the maintenance of public tranquillity and inciting people on divisive lines, officials said yesterday. The FIRs were registered after an analysis of social media, they said. The cases have been registered under sections 153 (want only giving provocation with intent to cause riot), 295 (injuring or defiling place of worship with intent to insult the religion of any class), 505 (statements conducing to public mischief) of the Indian Penal Code, a senior police officer said. One case has been registered against Sharma and another against multiple social media entities, including Owaisi, Jindal, Narsinghanand, Shadab Chauhan, Saba Naqvi, Maulana Mufti Nadeem, Abdur Rehman and Gulzar Ansari, based on the analysis.

## LANKA ECONOMIC CRISIS

## President's brother quits public office

AFP, Colombo

Another member of Sri Lanka's ruling family quit public office yesterday, denying responsibility for an economic crisis that has caused severe hardship in the island nation. Basil Rajapaksa was once nicknamed "Mr. Ten Percent" in a BBC interview, in reference to commissions he allegedly skimmed from government contracts. He has insisted that he had committed no wrongdoing in office. The 71-year-old had until April served as finance minister under President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, his elder brother, who has stared down months of protests demanding his resignation for economic mismanagement. "I entered parliament to manage the economy, but since I am no longer the finance minister, there is no point in remaining an MP," Basil told reporters in Colombo.

## Erdogan

## says he will run in 2023 presidential election

AFP, ISTANBUL

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan yesterday said he would run in next year's presidential vote and brushed aside rumours of a snap poll in the economically-battered nation.

It was the first time that the strongman, who has been in power since 2003, officially announced his widely-expected candidacy.

"Let me say it here. Tayyip Erdogan is the candidate of the People's Alliance", Erdogan told a party rally in the western city of Izmir, referring to an alliance between his ruling conservative AKP party and the right-wing MHP party.

The opposition CHP party, the second largest in parliament, has not yet fielded a candidate and Erdogan tossed a challenge to its leader Kemal Kilicdaroglu.

## 'Ethically unacceptable'

FROM PAGE 4

coronavirus outbreak and the ongoing unstable situation in certain parts of the world raise the fear of global recession.

The new move comes also when the country's forex reserve is under pressure due to the rising import payments amid global price hikes of commodities.

The economists, however, criticised the proposal.

Mustafizur Rahman, a distinguished fellow of the Centre for Policy Dialogue, termed it a kind of opportunity for whitening black money.

"Whoever took the money abroad obviously did it by violating the existing law of the country through hundi or by other

means," he told The Daily Star.

They did it either by over-invoicing or under-invoicing, he added.

"Now by giving these people such an opportunity, what signal are we actually giving to those who work or invest honestly in the country and do not smuggle money?" he questioned.

"What signal are we sending about the issues like the rule of law in the country and zero tolerance to corruption?"

He added, "Such a move is ethically unacceptable."

Assuming that it won't yield expected results, the economist said the people mostly took the money abroad through corruption and they may not feel comfortable

bringing back that money since they might have to face questioning in the future.

Binayak Sen, director general of Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, said with introducing this provision, it has been indirectly acknowledged that a huge amount of money is held up by Bangladeshis abroad.

In terms of growth, it is a good step since inflow of any sort of resource from abroad would be in the use for investment in the country, he said.

But, he added, it may encourage people to make black money to a great extent and send that abroad since they would have the opportunity to legalise the illegally earned money later.

## Debt repayment a worry

FROM PAGE 4

While revealing the new budget at parliament, Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal said, "Overall implementation progress of the mega projects until March 2022 stands at 68.60 percent."

The Padma Bridge, Metro Rail, Karnaphuli Tunnel, and elevated expressway from Dhaka Airport to Kutubkhali near Jatrabari will be open to traffic soon, he said.

"Completion of several other major projects, including Payra Seaport, Matarbari Deep Seaport and Rampal Power Station

will add a new dimension to the progress of the country," he added.

The implementation of the low-priority projects will slow down while high and medium priority projects will pick up the pace.

Seven of the eight fast-track projects – Padma Bridge, Padma Bridge Rail Link, MRT Line 6, Chattogram-Cox's Bazar rail link, Rooppur nuclear power plant, Matarbari 1,200MW coal-fired power plant and preparatory works for the Payra deep seaport – will get Tk 33,355 crore in FY23, Tk 2,434

crore less than the revised allocation this fiscal year.

Except for the Matarbari power project, allocation for all six projects declined in the next FY.

On the other hand, allocation for MRT Line-1, MRT-Line 5, Dhaka-Sylhet 4-lane project, Dhaka-Ashulia Elevated Expressway, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Railway Bridge over the Jamuna, Expansion of Dhaka airport project will more than double compared to the current fiscal year.

These projects will get Tk 19,795 crore, up from Tk 8,411 crore, according to



# An ordinary budget for an extraordinary time

## Govt must be ready for the enormous challenges that lie ahead

FINANCE Minister Mustafa Kamal on Thursday unveiled the country’s 51st annual budget which amounts to Tk 678,064 crore, up from last year’s budget of Tk 603,681 crore (revised down to Tk 593,500 crore). As per his speech delivered in parliament, the proposed budget is expected to be 15.2 percent of the GDP. While preparing the previous two budgets, the government had to take the Covid-19 pandemic into consideration, which naturally forced them to be somewhat conservative. So, a lot was expected from this one, even though the Russia-Ukraine war means that the budgetary preparation was again affected by a global crisis. We are disappointed to say that this budget has not lived up to that expectation. In fact, from the information that has so far come out, it seems to be more or less a continuation of the previous one.

There is nothing that particularly stands out in the proposed budget. In his speech, the finance minister highlighted six major challenges for the upcoming fiscal year, including containing inflation and enhancing domestic investment; financing additional subsidies; utilising funds available through foreign assistance and ensuring timely completion of high-priority projects; ensuring timely completion of projects in the education and health sectors; increasing the collection of Valued Added Tax (VAT) and raising the number of individual taxpayers; and maintaining exchange rate stability of the taka and foreign exchange reserves. These challenges have been previously highlighted by experts and the media, too.

As if reflecting those challenges, the government has, for example, increased social safety net spending by a meagre 5.5 percent only, despite the poor struggling immensely because of job and income losses brought about by the pandemic as well as the ongoing inflationary pressure. Its cautionary approach to increasing expenditure on social safety net programmes is perhaps the result of trying to keep inflation down. Therefore, the message to low-income groups seems to be: keep practicing austerity. Middle-income people will also feel squeezed, as the government has targeted them to increase its tax net, going as far as announcing strict measures – including cutting off utility services – should anyone fail to pay their taxes on time. So, for the time being, the middle class too will have to continue on with their current difficulties.

Allocations for the health and education sectors have not seen much change, which is concerning. After the learning loss that occurred due to Covid-induced lockdowns, the fact that the proposed education budget has come down as a percentage of GDP compared to the current budget – from 2.08 percent to 1.83 percent – is particularly upsetting. Bangladesh has always had lower-than-expected allocations for education, and this budget too fails to acknowledge the importance of investing in human resources through higher allocations. Therefore, it will be more important than ever for the government to make quality and timely use of whatever little fund has been allocated to the sector – of which the government has a very bad track record anyway.

In fact, given the challenges we have been facing, what is most essential is for the government to use the budgetary allocations efficiently, cutting down on corruption and wastage. And that is where it has always failed. That failure, it must be said, has only further contributed to our current predicament, besides the ongoing global economic instability.

That is perhaps why the government has increased the prices of luxury items, which could bring down their imports, leading to less pressure on our foreign exchange reserves. Moreover, it has increased the excise duty on individuals who have a bank account balance of over Tk 5 crore. This, however, may not make too much difference to the government’s revenue stream, which needs to be bumped up significantly. The budget should have clearly spelt out what measures the government is planning to take to increase its revenue besides token steps like allowing money launderers to whitewash their money for a small fee, like it has proposed again, despite similar moves previously never paying off. So we believe the government needs to urgently formulate some concrete steps to solve this problem over the next years.

The government has an enormous task on its hand. At a time when the country is facing some of the biggest economic challenges in recent memory, the government seems to have very little room for manoeuvre, which has once again forced it to prepare a somewhat cautionary budget. However, given the circumstances, there are numerous areas of the economy where Bangladesh desperately needs greater investment. Since the government has decided not to increase that investment by any substantial margin, it must now ensure that whatever resources it has allocated are put to best use. Thus, it can no longer continue on with a business-as-usual attitude – where crores of taka are wasted on big projects whose completion dates are extended *ad nauseam*, resulting in one cost escalation after another. Every bit of resource that it has at its disposal must now be used to return some form of stability to our overall economy, and to alleviate the massive sufferings of ordinary people.

BUDGET 2022-23

# Inflationary concerns not addressed adequately



**MACRO MIRROR**  
Dr Fahmida Khatun is executive director at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD). Views expressed in this article are the author’s own.

FAHMIDA KHATUN

THE finance minister deserves congratulations for presenting the proposed national budget for the 2022-23 fiscal year. This budget has been presented in the context of an unprecedented economic crisis that neither Bangladesh nor the world has seen in several decades. The poor are the worst victims of this economic crisis. In the run-up to the tabling of the national budget, containing inflationary pressure and providing relief to the poor and the low- and fixed-income groups have been at the centre of recommendations. Additionally, increasing export and remittance income, reducing import expenditures, expediting revenue collection, and rationalising public expenditure by curtailing unnecessary costs and prioritising employment generation projects are issues that needed to be emphasised in the budget.

If one looks at the inflationary measures that are proposed in the FY2022-23 budget, there are ample reasons to be frustrated on several grounds.

First, the proposed budget does not have any visible and adequate measures to contain inflationary pressure on people. The tax-free personal income threshold per year remains the same at Tk 3 lakh. The Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) suggested raising this threshold to Tk 3.50 lakh, given the pressure of rising food inflation and income erosion induced by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Second, there are a few measures that are targeted for higher income groups: i) The limit of annual tax-free allowances in addition to salaries, such as housing, transportation, and healthcare, has been increased from Tk 5.5 lakh to Tk 10 lakh; ii) The rate of tax rebate on investment has been proposed to be increased from 10 percent to 15 percent; iii) Special tax treatment will be provided at various rates for undisclosed assets. There are proposals for reducing corporate tax. This may help businesses to grow, but will not help the low- and middle-income groups.

Third, the allocation for social safety net programmes is 16.75 percent of the total budget. Sadly, this is lower than the revised budget of FY2021-22, where allocation for social safety net is 18.78 percent. To ensure food security, the need for availability of essential commodities at reasonable prices through open market sales (OMS) by the government is essential. The government



ILLUSTRATION: SYED RASHAD IMAM TANMOY

**If one looks at the inflationary measures that are proposed in the FY2022-23 budget, there are ample reasons to be frustrated on several grounds.**

is distributing 500,000 tonnes of rice and 509,000 tonnes of wheat through OMS in the outgoing fiscal year. The budget speech mentions that in the lean season, during September-October and in March, food assistance equivalent to 30kg of rice at Tk 15 per kg will be provided to five million low-income households every month. But the number of households requiring such support is much bigger. Also, more items

adjusted gradually. The government has already increased the gas prices, both at the household and the industry levels. This will increase inflationary pressure on the common people.

Seventh, the inflation target for FY2022-23 is set at 5.6 percent. Such a target is based on two unhelpful assumptions. First, the enormous economic challenges faced around the world will be over by next year.

should be covered under the OMS system.

Fourth, the finance minister had earlier mentioned that the universal pension scheme would be introduced from FY2022-23. This is presented in the budget speech, which highlights that it will ensure old age protection under a sustainable and well-organised social security framework. However, there are no details on the implementation of this scheme.

Fifth, the recommendation for reducing import tax from some essential items has not been included in the proposed budget. The CPD has earlier mentioned that at least 29 imported essential food items currently face a high incidence of tax. Some of these items – rice, palm oil, lentils and sugar – could have been considered for tariff reduction. Regarding the import tax reduction, the government’s worry on lower domestic resource mobilisation is understandable. However, there are several measures that have been proposed for the higher income groups that would reduce tax collection. This also raises concern on tax justice.

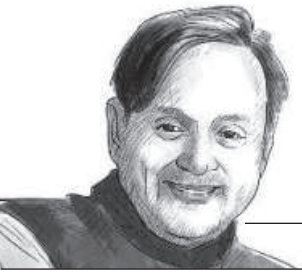
Sixth, the proposal to increase the subsidy on agriculture will help the poor. However, ensuring prices to farmers for their products is most important, so that farmers are encouraged to produce more. The government has indicated that the prices of gas and electricity will be

As it is, inflation does not reflect the real pressure of prices, since the commodity basket of people has changed. If the consumption pattern of the poor is taken into consideration, inflation would be in the range of 10–15 percent. In fact, the price data provided by the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) shows high prices of all major essential items. Second, the finance minister has probably assumed that even if the global economy does not turn around, Bangladesh will continue to thrive and solve all economic problems on its own. It seems the policymakers have overlooked the global economic context and the predictions by international organisations. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has revised its projection of global growth from 6.1 percent to 3.6 percent for 2022. The World Bank says global growth will come down to 2.9 percent this year, as opposed to 5.7 percent in 2021. Earlier in January 2022, the World Bank had projected that the global growth would be 4.1 percent. Worse, it has also forecasted that most countries would face recession and there will be stagflation, as was experienced in the 1970s.

So, how Bangladesh will remain insulated from such critical circumstances has not been clarified by the finance minister through budgetary measures.

## PROJECT SYNDICATE

# The promise and pitfalls of Indian foreign policy



**AWAKENING INDIA**  
Shashi Tharoor, a former UN under-secretary-general, is an MP for the Indian National Congress.

SHASHI THAROOR

TWO episodes in the first week of June starkly illustrate both the promise of Indian foreign policy and the pitfalls it faces as a result of the country’s increasingly toxic domestic political culture.

The promise lies in a response by India’s foreign minister, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, to a question posed by an interviewer at the GLOBSEC 2022 forum in Bratislava, Slovakia, which focused on the Ukraine war. Jaishankar’s response resonated so powerfully that it quickly went viral, not just in India, but also in Europe and many other countries.

The interview with Jaishankar focused on India’s continuing reluctance to choose sides in the war. India has refused to condemn Russia’s invasion, while at the same time sending humanitarian aid to Ukraine and maintaining good relations with the United States both bilaterally and in the Quad.

But Jaishankar pushed back strongly against European assumptions that other countries should support their point of view on the conflict. “Europe has to grow out of the mindset that Europe’s problems are the world’s problems, but the world’s problems are not Europe’s problems,” he said, adding that the world “cannot be [as] Eurocentric as it used to be in the past.” India, he continued, would do exactly what Western countries do – evaluate a situation in the light of its own interests. Those interests, he emphasised, justified India’s current stance on the war.

**A government that should know better has allowed the BJP to give free rein to its loudest chauvinist voices. When perceived domestic political interests undermine clear national interests, the country obviously should come first.**

It was a clear, confident, and defiant assertion of India’s strategic autonomy, and it played well at home, except perhaps with the few of us who believe that the country’s strategic interests warrant a tilt towards the West in its growing confrontation with China and Russia. What was striking, too, was the way that Jaishankar’s comments impressed some Muslim countries that themselves resent Western tutelage.

But no sooner had the applause for India’s forthrightness echoed around the developing world than news hit of an entirely unwelcome kind of Indian outspokenness – offensive statements about the Prophet Muhammad by two of the principal spokespersons of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party. Muslim-baiting has become standard for the Hindu-chauvinist BJP, which gains votes by stoking Islamophobia among the Hindu majority.

This time, however, the attacks went too far, crossing all acceptable limits by demeaning the Prophet himself. The internet long ago rendered obsolete the myopic assumption that India’s political debates, conducted in Hindi, will affect only domestic Hindi-speaking television audiences. It did not take long for Muslim countries to erupt in fury.

Nine Muslim countries, summoned India’s envoys in their capitals, dressed them down for the “unacceptable” statements, and demanded punishment for those who made them. Qatar cancelled a formal lunch for the visiting Indian vice-president. The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation capitalised on the moment by condemning it and calling on the UN to take action against it. Movements to boycott Indian goods erupted in several Muslim countries, and some Indians working in the Gulf had their employment terminated.

Indian officials scrambled to contain the damage, assuring the Muslim world that the offensive statements in no way represented the view of the Indian government but had been made by “fringe

elements.” The two BJP spokespersons were summarily removed from their positions, with one being suspended from the party and the other expelled. But the incident highlighted the Islamophobia unleashed or condoned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s government, and the extensive damage it has caused to India’s standing in the Muslim world.

The backlash from the Islamic world, and India’s rapid response to it, served as a reminder that the Gulf region remains vital to the country’s interests. It is a key trade partner, an indispensable contributor to India’s energy security, a host to eight million Indian expatriate workers whose remittances support their families back home, and a significant security partner in the fight against terrorism.

For the BJP to jeopardise all of this for the sake of its vindictive, self-serving Muslim bashing is profoundly irresponsible. Ironically, the Modi government had invested considerable effort in strengthening relations with Muslim countries, especially in the Gulf, and thus increased their salience in Indian foreign policy.

India had long enjoyed a reputation for being hospitable to Muslim interests, celebrating its diversity, and embracing its own substantial Muslim population with pride. It was India’s established record, and its domestic traditions of coexistence, that made Muslim countries all the more receptive to its efforts to improve relations, despite the hostility of Pakistan.

But now a government that should know better has allowed the BJP to give free rein to its loudest chauvinist voices. When perceived domestic political interests undermine clear national interests, the country obviously should come first. Perhaps Jaishankar should direct some of his plain speaking to his own political leadership, before all his work abroad is undone by his party colleagues at home.



# The twisted plight of Bangladeshi transgender community

## A critical error in policymaking



Nazifa Raidah is a sub editor at The Daily Star.

NAZIFA RAIDAH

ON May 26, during a meeting at Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Social Welfare recommended that measures be taken to prevent “harassment” by third gender people on the streets, despite the government providing various facilities. A press release issued by the Parliament Secretariat said the committee had recommended taking necessary steps after conducting a medical examination to identify “real” third gender individuals, issue an ID card, and hold a meeting with the home ministry to prevent “harassment.”

This development leaves us with two questions: 1) If these “facilities” are really that accessible, why aren’t we seeing more transgender people in job roles? 2) Even if they are accessible, why aren’t more transgender people getting their national verification as well as these “facilities”?

This is where the paradox of recognising the transgender community lies.

To unravel these answers, let’s start with the first issue – the policy itself. On January 26, 2014, the social welfare ministry announced the recognition of hijras in its gazette with a single sentence: “The Government of Bangladesh has recognised the hijra community of Bangladesh as a hijra sex.” However, the policy had a fundamental loophole.

When you think of the term “hijra,” you probably imagine it’s a person who, because of their biology, is neither male nor female, or is both. Most think that they are “intersex,” meaning a person is born with reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn’t fit the definition of “female” or “male.”

But in reality, “hijra” is used as an umbrella term to designate a group of individuals that may include intersex individuals, castrated men, and transsexual women (assigned male at birth). This group lives as a community or “family” under the guidance of a community leader or “guru.” Therefore, hijra is not a gender, rather a community. This is where the policy fails, since it doesn’t clearly define the diverse

gender categories under the term “hijra.” Individuals with different gender identities, such as transgender women and transgender men, are excluded because they are not part of the hijra culture – yet they remain vulnerable to societal shame, discrimination, and violence.

As a result, various government agencies have been allowed to carry out



identification processes in the manner they saw fit. In addition to “male” and “female,” national ID cards in Bangladesh now have a “hijra” category. Other than “male” and “female,” the Bangladesh passport features a third category: “other.” “Third gender” is now an option on several government forms (such as those for opening a bank account at state-run institutions). Although this may seem like progress to many, one may miss out on how unaware these government institutions are about sexual orientation and gender identity. This, in turn, entrenches many deep-rooted misconceptions about the term “hijra” among common people.

But an even more horrendous consequence of this lack of awareness was found during physical examinations carried out pursuant to a memorandum issued by the health ministry requiring “authentic hijras to be identified through

▲ **Fixing the existing government policy and building gender consciousness within the government institutions that are meant to cater to hijras are the only way to give them a better life.**

FILE PHOTO: STAR

medical check-ups.” A report by Human Rights Watch (HRW) in 2016 found that after the social welfare ministry invited hijras to apply for government employment in December 2014, many trans individuals said they had been harassed and asked inappropriate questions about their gender identity and sexuality.

Physicians instructed non-medical

altered their appearances, they were cast out of their own communities – leaving these trans individuals with no support system, or a roof over their heads as most of them had been turned away from their biological families.

This precedence of abuse of privacy and harassment resulted in members of the hijra community shying away from getting their national verification IDs as the citizens of Bangladesh, barring them from opening bank accounts, having passports and, most importantly, getting jobs. As a result, most trans individuals and members of the hijra community, despite wanting to have access to better opportunities, resort to begging to survive. Some even employ violent language and persistence to meet their daily income cap.

The social welfare ministry has implemented numerous social inclusion programmes for hijras as part of its social safety net programme, which includes a monthly allowance for people aged 50 years and up, scholarships for “hijra children,” and skills and capacity development training to engage them in income-generating enterprises. According to home ministry data, among a total of 13,000 members of the hijra community, 1,920 members have received training this fiscal year. Only those aged 50 years and above are being given an allowance of Tk 600 per month.

But members of the hijra community claim that they have hardly ever received this allowance or the skills training from government agencies. It begets the question: Where are all the funds allotted for these initiatives going?

As the social welfare ministry scrounges for a way to keep members of the hijra community off the streets, what they don’t realise is that they don’t have to go too far to find it. The solution lies in fixing the policy and building gender consciousness within the government institutions that are meant to cater to this segment of the citizenry. Without that, social awareness campaigns would be futile. It also gets easier for the society at large to accept them as fellow members when ordinary people see them in roles beyond just beggars and sex workers.

Bangladesh has performed a progressive duty by recognising the members of hijra community as citizens, but that still remains on paper. Without creating proper channels for them to access opportunities like other citizens, this recognition is nothing more than a facade.

# How to avoid buying LNG from the spot market



Dr Badrul Imam is a former professor at the Department of Geology of Dhaka University.

BADRUL IMAM

WE have known for a while that dependence on the expensive liquefied natural gas (LNG) would put Bangladesh under major financial stress. Four years after LNG was introduced to the local gas supply chain, Bangladesh Oil, Gas and Mineral Corporation (Petrobangla) feels the pinch more than anyone. Meeting the mounting LNG import bill, Petrobangla has apparently exhausted its financial basket and asked the government for help in the form of a major subsidy. It got only a fraction of what it wanted. So it turned to the banks for loans. It even took money from the gas development fund (GDF), which was created exclusively for exploration and development of local gas resources, with contributions from ordinary consumers subscribing to the pipeline gas supply.

How expensive is LNG in the present international market? Bangladesh supplies about 3,100 mmcf (million cubic feet per day) to the national gas grid. Out of this total gas supply, according to Petrobangla, about 75 percent comes from the local gas fields, which costs an estimated Tk 20,000 crore per year, including tax and other expenses. The remaining 25 percent is imported as LNG from the international market, for which the cost is estimated at Tk 44,000 crore.

Bangladesh buys and procures LNG from two sources: i) Qatar and Oman under long-term contracts at a price agreed upon in the contract – e.g. about USD 11 per mmbtu (million British thermal unit); and ii) The spot market at a fluctuating price. The LNG price in the spot market is volatile and jumps up or down depending on the market situation. At one point early this year, Bangladesh bought LNG from the spot

market at USD 35 per unit. So, the prices of gas consumed in Bangladesh compare as follows: USD 2 per unit for locally produced gas to USD 11 per unit for LNG imported under long-term contracts and up to USD 36 per unit for LNG imported from the spot market.

From the above it appears that the spot market price of LNG makes a big difference when accounting for the LNG import bills. This is in spite of the fact that the volume of LNG procured from the spot market comprises the smaller part of the imports – e.g. 150-200 mmcf out of the total volume of 800 mmcf. So one way to reduce the financial burden of LNG import is to avoid buying it from the spot market and procure it more under long-term contracts. But that is not possible at the moment because of the lack of contract opportunities. A more immediate option of avoiding spot LNG purchase is to procure gas from the local sources. Bangladesh can very well add to its gas production the volume equal or even more than the amount of LNG bought from the spot market. There are several means to do so, such as:

**1. Extracting stranded gas:** There are several places where gas reserves have been discovered but remain untouched. This gas is unnecessarily stranded due to the absence of simple measures. For example, the Bhola North gas field, discovered in 2018 with substantial reserves, has not gone into production yet. Bhola is an island district, detached from mainland Bangladesh by a short channel. It is shocking that a simple pipeline connecting Bhola to the mainland was not built to add the gas to the national grid at a time when gas feed from imported LNG is draining crores of taka out of our pockets. This gas field can produce about 60 mmcf, per a conservative estimate.

Furthermore, a second gas field in Bhola, Shahbazpur, produces less than half of its capacity due to the absence of a pipeline. Zakiganj gas field, discovered in 2021, is yet another unused gas field that can be brought under production immediately.

**2. Work over the old wells:** Another

▲ **It is evident that there are practical ways for the government to avoid procuring LNG from the very expensive spot market.**

## CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

### ACROSS

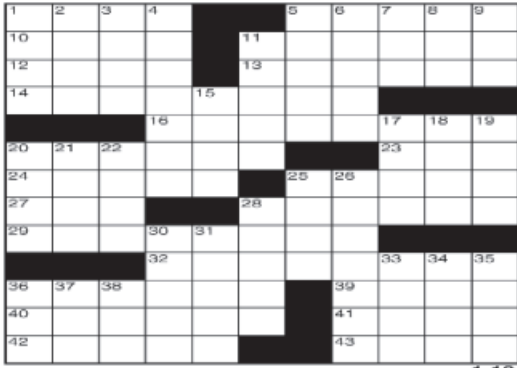
- 1 LummoX
- 5 Toledo setting
- 10 Own
- 11 Missouri motto
- 12 News article
- 13 Would-be lawyer's major
- 14 Metallic element
- 16 Metallic element
- 20 Astronomical sightings
- 23 Spanish gold
- 24 Stand
- 25 R2-D2, for one
- 27 Buddy
- 28 Dunne and Cara
- 29 Metallic element
- 32 Metallic

### DOWN

- 1 Stylish
- 2 Wood strip
- 3 Finished
- 4 Lowers in rank
- 5 Show indifference
- 6 Frost creations
- 7 Piercing tool
- 8 “— Believer”
- 9 Fresh
- 11 Takes turns

- 15 Remote button
- 17 Animated character
- 18 War of 1812 port
- 19 Tacit approvals
- 20 Scout's base
- 21 Spoken
- 22 Layered mineral
- 25 Oil container
- 26 Dance versions
- 28 Busy
- 30 Eagle's claw
- 31 “You don't say!”
- 33 Tide type
- 34 “Do — others ...”
- 35 Ship staff
- 36 Easy victim
- 37 Baseball's Ott
- 38 History segment

WRITE FOR US. SEND US YOUR OPINION PIECES TO [dsopinion@gmail.com](mailto:dsopinion@gmail.com).



## YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS





GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH  
Office of the Executive Engineer  
Rajshahi PWD Division-2, Rajshahi  
Phone-0247-812276; Fax-772279

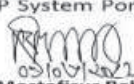
**e-Tender Corrigendum (Tender Id-700414)**

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following work at **18-05-2022**:  
**Name of the Work:** Construction of Female Hostel at Rajshahi Medical College.


Correction in BOQ	Description
<b>Civil Part-1:</b> Item No-20,21,22,23,24,25,26, 27, 28, 29 & 30	Change has been made in Quantity at BoQ of Civil Part-1 of these Particular Items.
<b>Civil Part-2:</b> Item No-176,177,178,179	Change has been made in Quantity at BoQ of Civil Part-2 of these Particular Items and New Items No-180,181,182,183,184 & 185 have been Included.
<b>External Electrification</b> Item No-1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8 & 13	Respective Items No. at BoQ of External Electrification Part have been Excluded.

New Opening Date & Time: 23/06/2022; 12:00  
New Document last selling date & time: 22/06/2022; 17:00  
New Last date & time for Tender/Proposal Security Submission: 22/06/2022 17:00

This is online tender where only e-tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP System portal have to be deposited online through any e-GP registered Banks' Branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

  
(Md. Mostafizur Rahman)  
Executive Engineer  
Rajshahi PWD Division-2, Rajshahi  
Email: ee\_raj2@pwd.gov.bd

GD-1209

  
**বাংলাদেশ শিশু হাসপাতাল ও ইনস্টিটিউট**  
শেরে বাংলা নগর, ঢাকা-১২০৭

**শিশু স্বাস্থ্য প্রশিক্ষণ**

বাংলাদেশ শিশু হাসপাতাল ও ইনস্টিটিউটে (বিএসএইচআই) শিশু স্বাস্থ্য বিষয়ে (শিশু মেডিসিন, শিশু সার্জারী, পিআইসিইউ এনআইসিইউ, এইচডিউএন্ডআই এবং সিসিএনএন্ডডি) স্নাতকোত্তর/উচ্চশিক্ষা গ্রহণে আগ্রহী ইন্টার্নশীপ সম্পন্নকারী মেডিকেল গ্র্যাজুয়েটদের নিকট হতে এক বছর মেয়াদী অবৈতনিক প্রশিক্ষণ গ্রহণের জন্য বাংলাদেশ শিশু হাসপাতাল ও ইনস্টিটিউটের নির্ধারিত ফরমে দরখাস্ত আহবান করা যাচ্ছে। উল্লেখ্য, শিশু রোগ বিষয়ে উচ্চ শিক্ষা যথা এমডি, এমএস, এফসিপিএস, এমআরসিপি (সিএইচ) এন্ড ডিসিএইচ ডিগ্রীর ক্ষেত্রে উল্লেখিত প্রশিক্ষণ দেশে ও বিদেশে স্বীকৃতিপ্রাপ্ত।

আগ্রহী প্রার্থীগণ অত্র দস্তুর হতে ৫০০ (পাঁচশত) টাকা মূল্যে নির্ধারিত ফরম সংগ্রহকরতঃ যথাযথভাবে পূরণপূর্বক তৎসঙ্গে সকল সনদপত্রের সত্যায়িত অনুলিপি এবং সদ্য তোলা ২(দুই) কপি পাসপোর্ট সাইজের সত্যায়িত ছবিসহ আপ্যমী ২৫/০৬/২০২২খ্রিঃ তারিখের মধ্যে "পরিচালক, বাংলাদেশ শিশু হাসপাতাল ও ইনস্টিটিউট, শেরে বাংলা নগর, ঢাকা-১২০৭" বরাবরে কুরিয়ার সার্ভিস/ডাকযোগে প্রেরণ অথবা সরাসরি জমা প্রদান করতে পারবেন।

**অধ্যাপক (ডাঃ) মোঃ জাহাঙ্গীর আলম**  
পরিচালক  
বাংলাদেশ শিশু হাসপাতাল ও ইনস্টিটিউট

জিডি-১২০২

Government of The People's Republic of Bangladesh  
Office of The Director  
Chattogram Medical College Hospital  
[www.cmch.gov.bd](http://www.cmch.gov.bd)


Memo No. CMCH/Re-Tender/2021-2022/e-GP/7443 Date: 09-06-2022.

**Re-Tender Notice**


This is an online tender, where only e-tenders will accepted in e-GP portal and no offline/ hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-tender, please register on e-GP system portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>). For more details, please contact support desk contract numbers. e-Tender are invited in e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by Brigadier General Md. Shamim Ahsan, Director, Chattogram Medical College Hospital, Chattogram for the Procurement of:

SL. No.	Tender Id	Name of Goods	Tender/ Proposal Last Selling Date & Time	Tender/Propo al Closing Date & Time	Tender/Proposal Opening Date & Time
1	709334	Procurement of Leverage for the Financial Year 2021-2022	20-Jun-2022 16:00	21-Jun-2022 13:00	21-Jun-2022 13:00
2	709335	Motor Vehicle Repair for the Financial Year 2021-2022	20-Jun-2022 16:00	21-Jun-2022 13:00	21-Jun-2022 13:00
3	709336	Repair of MSR Equipment & Electro-medical Equipment for the fiscal year 2021-2022	20-Jun-2022 16:00	21-Jun-2022 13:00	21-Jun-2022 13:00

For pursuer e-Tender details can be downloaded on e-GP system portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>). e-tender will be accepted only as stated in above list, accepted tenders will be opened online as stated in above list.

  
(Brigadier General Md. Shamim Ahsan)  
Director  
Chattogram Medical College Hospital.  
Tel: 031-630179. Email:cmch@hospi.dghs.gov.bd

GD- 1199

  
**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**  
Ministry of Road Transport and Bridges  
Dhaka Transport Coordination Authority  
Office of the Project Director  
Mid-term Review and Updating of the Revised Strategic Transport Plan for DTCA Area Project (MTR-RSTP)  
Nagar Bhaban (Level 12), 5, Phoenix Road, Fulbaria, Dhaka-1000

Memo No. 35.02.0000.002.14.001.2022-111 Date: 08/06/2022


**Request for Expression of Interest**  
**For**  
**Individual Technical Consultant (Transport Planner-National)**

**1. Background**  
Dhaka Transport Coordination Authority (DTCA) is the Transport Planning and Coordination Authority of greater Dhaka. It has prepared the Transport Master Plan for greater Dhaka named as Strategic Transport Plan (STP) (revised and modified in 2015). The objective of the abovementioned project under DTCA is to mid-term review and updating of the Revised Strategic Transport Plan (2016) with an integrated approach to enhance the public transport network, accessibility aiming to arrest the growth of private car use and also significantly improve the quality of transport services in terms of travel efficiency, affordability, equity, safety, and reliability. So, DTCA is recruiting a Transport Planner for the assignment of mid-term review and updating of RSTP, which is expected to mobilize in August, 2022.


**2. Scope of Tasks/Service and Qualifications**  
The main objective of the consultancy service is to provide technical and analytical support to Project Director (PD) and PIU (Project Implementation Unit) at DTCA. S/he will not only be a part of the PIU but also the Technical Team comprised of consultants and DTCA officials. S/he will provide technical assistance to facilitate the implementation of the project and ensure the quality of mid-term review and updating of RSTP by providing advice/deliverables on specific issues encountered during the implementation of the project. However, the service responsibility is not limited to the abovementioned tasks, apart from these they have to render service as bestowed by the employer. The brief scope of the services, qualifications, and experiences required for the service are given below:

Title	Brief Scope of Tasks/Service	Qualification and Experience
Individual Technical Consultant (Transport Planner-National)	The selected individual will: 1. Work under he guidance of the Project Director, DTCA in all planning and policy issues on urban transport sector. 2. Review inception report, interim report, draft final report and relevant documents to finalize the transport masterplan. 3. Provide advisory support of overseeing the overall activities of the study firm to ensure quality as well as advice on specific issues throughout the study. 4. Identify the relevance of the study outcomes with the existing land use policies, rules and regulations of the Government.	The selected individual must: 1. Have a minimum Master's degree in transport planning/transportation engineering or equivalent with Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering. 2. Have minimum 12 (twelve) years of overall experience with five years of relevant experience in Urban Transport planning. 3. Have clear understanding of principal urban transport issues, particularly in public transport and road traffic management issues in Dhaka and be prepared to work independently to provide technical and intellectual service to employer.

3. Interested applicants shall obtain further information in Request for Application (RFA) provided by the office of the undersigned which may be obtained in any working day during normal office hours before the closing date.  
4. Applicants are requested to submit their Expressions of Interest (EOI) in accordance with the standard application form provided in RFA.  
5. Applicants shall have to submit EOI with their CV and attachments along with a forwarding letter in a sealed envelope labeled with "Expressions of Interest (EOI) for Individual Technical Consultant (Transport Planner-National)" to the address of the undersigned mentioned above on or before **28 June, 2022** up to 3:00pm.  
6. The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all EOIs.

  
**Mohammad Rabiul Alam**  
Project Director, MTR-RSTP  
Tel: 02-47120390 (Office)  
E-mail: rabiulrhd@gmail.com

GD-1198

  
**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**  
Ministry of Road Transport and Bridges  
Dhaka Transport Coordination Authority  
Office of the Project Director  
Mid-term Review and Updating of the Revised Strategic Transport Plan for DTCA Area Project (MTR-RSTP)  
Nagar Bhaban (Level 12), 5, Phoenix Road, Fulbaria, Dhaka-1000

Memo No. 35.02.0000.002.14.002.2022-112 Date: 08/06/2022


**Request for Expression of Interest**  
**For**  
**Individual Technical Consultant (Transport Modeler-National)**

**1. Background**  
Dhaka Transport Coordination Authority (DTCA) is the Transport Planning and Coordination Authority of greater Dhaka. It has prepared the Transport Master Plan for greater Dhaka named as Strategic Transport Plan (STP) (revised and modified in 2015). The objective of the abovementioned project under DTCA is to mid-term review and updating of the Revised Strategic Transport Plan (2016) with an integrated approach to enhance the public transport network, accessibility aiming to arrest the growth of private car use and also significantly improve the quality of transport services in terms of travel efficiency, affordability, equity, safety, and reliability. So, DTCA is recruiting a Transport Modeler for the assignment of mid-term review and updating of RSTP, which is expected to mobilize in August, 2022.

**2. Scope of Tasks/Service and Qualifications**  
The main objective of the consultancy service is to provide technical and analytical support to Project Director (PD) and PIU (Project Implementation Unit) at DTCA. S/he will not only be a part of the PIU but also the Technical Team comprised of consultants and DTCA officials. S/he will provide technical assistance to facilitate the implementation of the project and ensure the quality of mid-term review and updating of RSTP by providing advice/deliverables on specific issues encountered during the implementation of the project. However, the service responsibility is not limited to the abovementioned tasks, apart from these they have to render service as bestowed by the employer. The brief scope of the services, qualifications, and experiences required for the service are given below:

Title	Brief Scope of Tasks/Service	Qualification and Experience
Individual Technical Consultant (Transport Modeler-National)	The selected individual will: 1. Review the regular usage of the Travel Demand Model/ Forecast developed by the RSTP consultants to render and review outcomes. 2. Maintain and update necessary models for the use of market demand estimation, network analysis, geographical factors and impact of fares and other simulations. 3. Establish the transport model using available software in order to develop as a tool to analyze transportation project regularly for DTCA. 4. Support PD, DTCA with technical outputs and model data analysis on transport research, mapping, and presentation.	The selected individual must: 1. Have a minimum Master's degree in transport planning/transportation engineering or equivalent with Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering. 2. Have minimum 10 (ten) years of overall experience with five years of relevant experience in Urban Transport. 3. Have experience on Transport Demand Modelling in urban context. 4. Have to be highly skilled in transport modelling software (both micro and macro).

3. Interested applicants shall obtain further information in Request for Application (RFA) provided by the office of the undersigned which may be obtained in any working day during normal office hours before the closing date.  
4. Applicants are requested to submit their Expressions of Interest (EOI) in accordance with the standard application form provided in RFA.  
5. Applicants shall have to submit EOI with their CV and attachments along with a forwarding letter in a sealed envelope labeled with "Expressions of Interest (EOI) for Individual Technical Consultant (Transport Modeler-National)" to the address of the undersigned mentioned above on or before **29 June, 2022** up to 3:00pm.  
6. The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all EOIs.

  
**Mohammad Rabiul Alam**  
Project Director, MTR-RSTP  
Tel: 02-47120390 (Office)  
E-mail: rabiulrhd@gmail.com

GD-1201

  
**National Housing Authority**  
Office of the Executive Engineer  
Mirpur H&S Division-2  
Section-2, Mirpur, Dhaka  
[www.nha.gov.bd](http://www.nha.gov.bd)

Memo No. 25.38.2648.701.73/1.002.19-2280 Date: 08.06.2022

**e-Tender Notice**

This is to notify all concern that the following tender is invited in the National e-GP:

SI No.	Tender ID	Name of works	Tender publication & closing date & time
01	708754	Development of Site, Construction of HBB Road Network and adjacent Surface Drain, Masonry Culvert, RCC Box Culvert, Palisading, Boundary Demarcation Piller, Plot Demarcation Piller, Barbed Wire Fencing and Arboriculture in the Premises of Site and Services Residential Plot Project at Dohar Upazilla, Dhaka, Under Mirpur H&S Division-2, National Housing Authority.	09-06-2022, Time-15:00 27-06-2022, Time-15:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no office/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)) and NHA site [www.nha.gov.bd](http://www.nha.gov.bd).

  
**Md. Abu Horaira**  
Executive Engineer  
Mirpur H&S Division-2, NHA

GD-1197

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার  
বাংলাদেশ কপিরাইট ভবন নির্মাণ প্রকল্প,  
সংস্কৃতি বিষয়ক মন্ত্রণালয়।  
জাতীয় আরকাইভস ভবন, আগারগাঁও, শেরেবাংলা নগর, ঢাকা।

আরক নং- ৪৩৮.২৩.০০০০.০০২.০৪.০০২.১৭/৫৩৮ তারিখঃ ০৯/০৬/২০২২

**নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি**

বাংলাদেশ কপিরাইট ভবন নির্মাণ প্রকল্প চলাকালিন সময়ের জন্য অস্থায়ী ভিত্তিতে সর্বসাকুল্যে বেতনে নিম্নবর্ণিত পদে লোক নিয়োগের জন্য প্রকৃত বাংলাদেশী নাগরিকদের (পুরুষ/মহিলা) নিকট থেকে নির্ধারিত ফরমে ([www.copyrightoffice.gov.bd](http://www.copyrightoffice.gov.bd)) এর নোটিশ বোর্ডে পাওয়া যাবে। দরখাস্ত আহবান করা যাচ্ছে:

ক্রমিক নং	পদের নাম ও বেতন স্কেল (জাতীয় বেতন স্কেল - ২০১৫ অনুযায়ী)	পদের সংখ্যা ও বয়স	শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা
১	হিসাব প্রকল্প (গ্রেড ১১) স্কেল -১২৫০০-৩০২৩০/-	০১(এক) টি অনুসং ৩০ বছর	একাউন্টিং, ফিন্যান্স ও ব্যবস্থাপনা প্রশাসন বিষয়ে স্নাতকোত্তর/মাস্টার ডিগ্রীধারী এবং কম্পিউটারে এমএস ওয়ার্ড, এমএস এক্সেল সহ ইন্টারনেট ব্যবহারের দক্ষতা থাকতে হবে।

**শর্তাবলি**

১. প্রার্থীকে আবেদনপত্র "প্রকল্প পরিচালক" কপিরাইট ভবন নির্মাণ প্রকল্প, জাতীয় আরকাইভস ভবন, আগারগাঁও, শেরেবাংলা নগর, ঢাকা-১২০৭ বরাবর আপ্যমী ১৪/০৭/২০২২ ইং তারিখ পর্যন্ত অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ের মধ্যে সরাসরি/ডাকযোগে/কুরিয়ার সার্ভিসের মাধ্যমে আবেদন পর পৌছাতে হবে। নিখরতি তারিখের পর কোন আবেদন পর গ্রহণযোগ্য হবে না। আবেদন পত্রের সাথে নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে উল্লেখিত পদের জন্য ১০০/- (দুইশত) টাকার অফেরত যোগ্য যে কোন ভরসিলি ব্যাকের পে-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক্রাফট সংযুক্ত করতে হবে। ব্যাংক ড্রাকট/পে-অর্ডার এর নম্বর ও তারিখ এবং ইস্যুকৃত ব্যাংক ও শাখার নাম আবেদন ফরমের নির্ধারিত স্থানে উল্লেখ করতে হবে।  
২. প্রাপ্ত আবেদনসমূহাচাই-বাছাইয়ের পর শুধুমাত্র গ্রহণযোগ্য প্রার্থীদের লিখিত ও মৌখিক পরীক্ষা গ্রহণ করা হবে।  
৩. আবেদন পত্রের সাথে প্রার্থীর সদ্য তোলা ০৪(চার) কপি ৫ X ৫ সে.মি. সাইজের সত্যায়িত রবিন ছবি, সকল শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতার সনদ, অভিজ্ঞতা সনদ, জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র, জন্ম নিবন্ধন সনদ, ন্যায়িকত্ব সনদ প্রথম শ্রেণীর গেজেটেড কর্মকর্তা কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত চারিত্রিক সনদ প্রথম শ্রেণীর গেজেটেড কর্মকর্তা কর্তৃক সত্যায়িত কৃটেক্ষ প্রদান করতে হবে এবং মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় মূলকপি দেখাতে হবে।  
৪. নামের উপর প্রার্থীর নিজের নাম, ঠিকানাসহ আবেদনকৃত পদের নাম এবং নিজ জেলার নাম স্পষ্টাক্ষরে লিখতে হবে। প্রার্থীর যোগাযোগের ঠিকানা স্বাক্ষরিত ৯.৫" X ৪.৫" সাইজের ১টি ফেরত খাম ১০ টাকা মূল্যমানের অববহৃত ডাকটিকিটসহ আবেদন পত্রের সাথে আনুষঙ্গিকভাবে সংযুক্ত করতে হবে।  
৫. কর্মরত প্রার্থীকে অবশ্যই যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের মাধ্যমে নির্ধারিত তারিখের মধ্যে আবেদনপত্র পৌছাতে হবে।  
৬. প্রার্থীদের বয়স ০৯/০৬/২০২২ তারিখে বয়স ৩০ বছরের মধ্যে হবে। তবে মুক্তিযোদ্ধা/শহীদ মুক্তিযোদ্ধাদের সন্তান, এতিমাবাদা নিবাসি ও প্রতিবন্ধী ব্যক্তিদের জন্য সর্বোচ্চ বয়সসীমা ৩২ (বত্রিশ) বয়স।  
৭. প্রার্থী মুক্তিযোদ্ধা/শহীদ মুক্তিযোদ্ধার পুত্র-কন্যা বা পেশা আবেদনকারীকে উপযুক্ত সনদ দাখিল করতে হবে, যা যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃক যাচাই করা হবে।  
৮. ভূটপূর্ণ/অসম্পূর্ণ আবেদন পত্র সরাসরি বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে।  
৯. কর্তৃপক্ষ যে কোন আবেদন গ্রহণ অথবা বাতিল এবং এ নিয়োগ কার্যক্রম/বিজ্ঞপ্তি সম্পূর্ণ অথবা আংশিক সংশোধন, গ্রহণ বা বাতিল করার অধিকার সংরক্ষণ করেন এবং এ নিয়োগের ক্ষেত্রে নিয়োগকারী কর্তৃপক্ষের সিদ্ধান্তই চূড়ান্ত বলে গণ্য হবে।  
১০. নির্বাচনী পরীক্ষার মাধ্যমে প্রার্থী বাছাই করা হবে। লিখিত পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের জন্য যোগ্য প্রার্থীদের বর্তমান ঠিকানায় ডাকযোগে যথাসময়ে প্রবেশপত্র প্রেরণ করা হবে। লিখিত পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ প্রার্থীদের মৌখিক পরীক্ষা গ্রহণ করা হবে এবং পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের জন্য কোন প্রকার চিএ/জিএ প্রদান করা হবে না।  
১১. নিয়োগকৃত প্রকল্প পরিচালক, কপিরাইট ভবন নির্মাণ প্রকল্প, জাতীয় আরকাইভস ভবন, আগারগাঁও, শেরেবাংলা নগর, ঢাকা-১২০৭ এ যোগদান করতে হবে।  
১২. আগ্রহী প্রার্থীকে সরকার নির্ধারিত চাকুরী আবেদন ফর্ম স্বহস্তে পূর্ণ/কম্পিউটারে মুদ্রণ পূর্বক আবেদন দাখিল করতে হবে।

GD- 1204



## INCREASING FOREIGN RESERVES

## Ensuring welfare of migrants is key

Experts say

PORIMOL PALMA

The government has to ensure the welfare and security of migrant workers to increase remittance flow, a key factor for foreign currency, experts have said.

Like the global economy, Bangladesh is experiencing weak growth, high inflation, and supply disruptions in the aftermath of the Covid pandemic as well as in the wake of the Russia-Ukraine war.

With the import cost going up and commodity prices rising globally, increasing foreign currency and maintaining macroeconomic stability have become major tasks in hand for Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal.

Experts say, besides increasing export, remittance will be a key factor.

In the first eleven months of the current fiscal year, export earnings were \$47.17 billion, which is 34.09 percent higher than that of the same period of the previous fiscal year. If this trend continues, by the end of the fiscal year, the export revenue will exceed \$ 50 billion.

Mustafa Kamal said in parliament yesterday that there is a plan to ensure overseas employment of 8.10 lakh Bangladeshi workers and provide skill development training to 5.20 lakh workers in different trades.

Common sense would suggest greater numbers of migrants going abroad to work will result in higher remittance inflow. However, more migrant workers have not always translated into higher remittance flow.

At the peak of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, when hundreds of thousands of migrants were jobless and unpaid and only 2.17 lakh new Bangladeshis went abroad to work, the remittance went up to \$21.75 billion – a significant rise from the \$18.35 billion in 2019 when more than seven lakh migrants went abroad.

However, remittance in 2015 was \$15.27 billion when 5.55 lakh Bangladeshis went abroad, but in 2016, remittance came down to \$13.60

billion. 7.57 lakh migrants went abroad during that time.

Recruitment industry insiders say more people going abroad means more hundi, an illegal way of money transaction that can have an adverse effect on foreign currency reserve.

Experts say high recruitment costs and the way migrant workers are treated are two factors behind the hundi problem.

Recruitment cost for Bangladeshi migrants is the highest in the world. According to an ILO study, on average recruitment cost of a Bangladeshi is

**Experts say high recruitment costs and the way migrant workers are treated are two factors behind the hundi problem.**

\$4903 or Tk 4.16 lakh. The average monthly salary of a Bangladeshi migrant worker is Tk 23,093. And that worker needs to work 17.6 months to recover the amount he had to spend to get the job.

A recruiting agent says a major portion of the recruitment cost is laundered abroad as payment to the brokers there. So, the portion of the foreign currency that would have otherwise been remitted to Bangladesh through official channels remains in that country. An equivalent amount of Taka is paid to the migrants' relatives back home through hundiwalas (hundi traders).

Anisur Rahman Khan, director of migration programme at Awaj Foundation, said high migration cost gives birth to a number of other problems. Layers of illegal brokers get engaged just to make money at the cost of migrants' vulnerability.

"Brokers even arrange job visas against fake or unspecified jobs. Once the migrants arrive abroad, many of them find themselves jobless and clueless," he said.

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PHOTO: PMO

**Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal entering the House yesterday to join the budget session for fiscal 2022-23.**

## Govt to invest \$80b for climate resilience

MOSTAFA YOUSUF

The government is planning to invest \$80 billion to shift the country from climate-vulnerable to a sustainable climate-resilient country under Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan (MCPP) by 2030, Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal said yesterday while unveiling the national budget for the fiscal year 2022-2023.

In his budget speech, the minister termed the MCPP a strategic investment framework saying the

investment being planned will be funded from both national and external sources.

During his speech, he informed the parliament about the government actions and plans taken for the conservation of the environment.

"Considering the immense importance of environmental protection, the government has made it mandatory to follow a pragmatic and inclusive environment-friendly plan in all development activities", he said.

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## Approach not a good fit

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he recommended allocating Tk 113,576 crore, up from the outgoing fiscal year's Tk 107,614 crore, for social safety net programmes in 2022-23 FY. The amount is 16.83 percent of the total budget outlay and 2.55 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP).

Economists, however, stressed the need for revamping the safety net in tandem with the needs of the people, but also making it more efficient.

"We have to be more realistic," said noted economist Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad.

In terms of inflation, the country is still in a better position than many others. However, there is a possibility that things could take a bad turn in the coming days, he said.

Kholiquzzaman, also the chairman of Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF), said the country was making a decent recovery from the pandemic when the war in Ukraine began. It took global commodity and oil prices to higher levels. There will be an adverse effect on Bangladesh's economy as well.

"We have to take measures keeping these factors in mind," he said, suggesting that the government should double the number of beneficiaries from 50 lakh who can buy rice for Tk 10 each kg to relieve the pain of soaring commodity prices.

Binayak Sen, director general of the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), suggested introducing a rationing system for the affected people rather than giving cash support to them.

He said the government can provide rice at a cheaper price for the next six months. For that, the government has to buy rice from the domestic market and store it. But the problem is, he said, even if the government buys the staple, it cannot stock due to its inadequate storage capacity.

"We could not make fully operational the eight silos built in the public sector in the last decade. Someone has to take the responsibility for this."

He said cash support could be given to the affected people. "Providing cash support will help enhance people's purchasing power, but there would be an inflationary trend in the overall food market," said Binayak.

The government's social safety net programmes are faced with two major challenges.

First is delivering the support to intended beneficiaries as there were examples of irregularities such as inclusion of ineligible people with political connections in the list of beneficiaries leaving many genuine ones out.

Second is the lack of accurate data. The

government does not have a central database of the people who are in need of the assistance. So, when the government started providing a cash support of Tk 2,500 to people hit by the first Covid wave in 2020, allegations of anomalies in the list of beneficiaries cropped up, forcing the authorities to halt midway.

Experts said the government must ensure that the process is fair and benefits reach the deserving people. They also emphasised on establishing a central digital database for social safety net programmes, and budget allocations have increased almost eight-fold compared to the allocation made in the budget for FY2008-2009.

He proposed increasing the number of beneficiaries for specially abled persons by 3.57 lakh to 23.65 lakh in the FY 2022-2023 in place of 20.8 lakh. The rate of monthly allowance will be increased by Tk 100, from Tk 750 to Tk 850, he said, proposing to allocate Tk 2,429 crore as disability allowances.

Kamal also proposed increasing the number of beneficiaries of maternity allowance to 12.54 lakh in FY2022-2023 from 10.45 lakh in the outgoing fiscal year.

Poor pregnant mothers in rural areas and low-income lactating working mothers in urban areas get the allowance under the "Mother and Child Support Programme".

He said the government should consider the fact that a huge number of people belonging to low-income groups could fall below the poverty line because of the rising cost of commodity prices and living.

"We need to keep this perspective in mind and take measures accordingly," he added.

by the readymade garment sector, which is now well-established.

The cash incentive for the sector should be reduced, he said, adding it should be phased out gradually.

Selim Raihan, executive director of the South Asian Network on Economic Modelling, said the budget deficit would be widened if the subsidy was increased further. In that case, the government will have to borrow the amount from the banking sources.

If the government

Around 115 social safety net programmes are currently being implemented by 24 ministries, a large number of the programmes suffer from overlapping in various forms due to a lack of coordination and proper monitoring. Besides, ensuring transparency and accountability remain major problems.

**WHAT'S IN BUDGET PROPOSAL?**

In his budget speech, the finance minister yesterday said 29 percent households have already been covered by social safety net programmes, and budget allocations have increased almost eight-fold compared to the allocation made in the budget for FY2008-2009.

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FROM PAGE 2

taxpayer, who earned up to Tk 15 lakh a year, could get 15 percent tax credit on the amount of eligible investment which is 25 percent of the taxpayer's total income. The tax credit rate was the same for an individual earning up to Tk 15 lakh.

In the next fiscal year, the tax credit rate for individuals with annual income of above Tk 15 lakh is going to increase to 15 percent from 10 percent.

Based on the changes, the amount of overall rebate will decline, increasing tax burden mainly on the middle-income taxpayers.

For example, a taxpayer who earned Tk 6 lakh a year was entitled to a tax credit of Tk 22,500 in the outgoing fiscal year.

According to the changes proposed by the NBR, the tax credit will fall to Tk 18,000. This will increase tax burden on the taxpayer, leaving him or her with less money to pay for food, education, healthcare and other necessities after tax payment.

By contrast, if an individual earns Tk 20 lakh annually, the amount of tax credit for the person will go up to Tk 60,000 in the next fiscal year from Tk 50,000 in the outgoing fiscal year, thanks to a 15 percent tax rebate benefit.

The reduction in tax

liability of such individuals has surprised many like Snehasish Barua, partner of Snehasish Mahmud & Co, a chartered accountancy firm.

He explained that the advantage of the existing slabs of investment and tax rebate (15 percent tax rebate for income up to Tk 15 lakh) is that it gives higher credit to low-income groups and lower credit to higher income groups.

"The additional tax will be an extra burden [on taxpayers in lower-income slab] given the unabated inflationary trend.

"This is unfair to the middle-income groups, especially for those who earn Tk 10 lakh annually. Moreover, the rebate is reduced... The cost of living is going up. This will lead to a reduction in disposable income of the taxpayers," he noted.

Towfiqul Islam Khan, a senior research fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue, said corporate tax has been reduced for both exporters and domestic market-oriented businesses.

"But we see no exemption or waiver for the low-income and middle-income taxpayers. I am surprised... This is a sort of betrayal with them.

"The middle-class people don't get any relief... It seems there is no one to sympathise with them for

## Budget to help draw

FROM PAGE 16

industries and 10 percent for all green factories. Till now, only the garment sector had enjoyed this tax benefit.

Currently, many sectors have to pay 20 to 25 percent tax. Implementation of the proposal will minimise discrimination, Reaz said.

The 21 percent increase in subsidies for the energy, liquefied natural gas and power sectors will boost power supply to industries and reduce the cost of doing business, he said.

Another boost is the reduction of corporate tax by 2.5 percent, irrespective of listed, non-listed and one-person companies (OPCs).

"This kind of gradual reduction will signal to foreign investors that the country is becoming ready to attract more investment," said Reaz.

Ahsan H Mansur, executive director of the Policy Research Institute (PRI), said different incentives and reductions of taxes like income and corporate tax will definitely encourage investment.

"So, this budget is business-friendly and it is a move in the right direction for attracting investment."

Moreover, more than Tk 82,000 crore subsidy in the energy, power, infrastructures and health sectors will have positive impacts on investment, he added.

Md Saiful Islam, president of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said the private sector investment will grow by 0.50 percent from the existing 23 percent thanks to various encouraging incentives and steps in the budget.

The rationalisation of corporate tax, income tax for the RMG and non-RMG sectors and the reduction of duty on the import of industrial raw materials to 4 percent from 10 percent are very encouraging, Islam said.

Md Shahidullah Azim, senior vice-president of BGMEA, said the

government's continued support in the form of incentives will attract investment in the garment sector.

Moreover, the corporate tax reduction, 5 percent VAT reduction on subcontracting factories and increasing allocation for skills development will attract investment, he said.

However, he called the source tax at 1 percent and the imposition of 1 percent duty on the import of solar panels discouraging.

Mohammad Hatem, executive president of Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA), said although the proposed budget has a lot of positives, the increase of source tax to 1.0 percent from the existing 0.5 percent is discouraging.

If government agencies disconnect utilities like electricity, water and gas, businesses will not grow, he said. "However, the cut in the corporate tax rate and the uniform tax rates will definitely encourage investment."

Mohammad Ali Khokon, president of Bangladesh Textile Mills Association, welcomed the aspects of the budget like the reducing corporate tax and the reduction of VAT on the sales of man-made fibre (MMF) to Tk 3 per kg from Tk 6 per kg.

"The VAT reduction on the sales of MMF will encourage investment in the non-cotton sector."

The cut in VAT on the sale of finished fabrics to 2 percent from 5 percent and the continuation of tax at 15 percent for the textile sector will encourage investment, Khokon said.

However, higher revenue collection targets in the proposed budget will put pressure on the private sector, according to the entrepreneur.

"The government's continued incentives for the economic zones will also help attract investment."

## Relief for the rich, burden

the ordeals they are going through now," he added.

The CPD had earlier suggested increasing the tax-free income threshold for individuals to Tk 3.50 lakh in view of the added pressure of rising food inflation and the pandemic-induced erosion of income.

The next slab for individual income tax, which is 5 percent for an additional Tk 1 lakh, should be raised to Tk 3 lakh to provide a cushion to the middle-income earners, it said.

The suggestions, however, remain unheeded.

The CPD also said the NBR should reinstate the highest tax rate of 30 percent to promote tax justice. In fiscal 2020-21, the NBR reduced the rate to 25 percent.

For the next fiscal year, the tax authority has not sought any changes in wealth tax surcharge. This means wealthy taxpayers will not have to pay any increased amount of wealth surcharge as the NBR has kept the ceiling of net wealth and the corresponding rate of tax surcharge unchanged for the second consecutive year.

The tax authority introduced the surcharge in 2011-12 as an alternative to wealth tax to collect more taxes from the affluent section of society.

**TAX RULES TIGHTENED**

Professor Mustafizur Rahman, a distinguished fellow of the Centre for Policy Dialogue, said the budget did not meet the demand of the hour. He, however, applauded the initiative aimed at reducing the corporate tax rates.

The reform initiatives in the financial sector should be implemented properly, he said.

Binayak Sen, director-general of the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, voiced concerns about the decrease in the tax-to-GDP ratio.

"It's alarming,"

The NBR has tightened tax rules to expand tax net and improve compliance by individuals and businesses in the next fiscal year. For instance, contractors will have to submit proof of submission of income tax return to avoid paying 50 percent higher tax on the payable amount.

During receipt of payment, service providers will also have to pay 50 percent higher tax for failing to show proof of tax return submission.

Snehasish said such a move will push up the cost of business.

Until now, savers in banks and financial institutions have to submit Taxpayers Identification Number (TINs) to avoid paying 15 percent tax on interest income from deposits. In the next fiscal year, they will have to show proof of tax return submission.

To recover unpaid tax, the NBR wants inclusion of a provision in the law to ask utility providers to disconnect gas, electricity and water supply in case of failure to pay undisputed tax.

It also seeks to widen the scope for spot assessment to bring more people under the tax net. Firms will also face higher scrutiny by tax offices that will see whether source tax has been collected properly.

## Budget doesn't reflect reality

FROM PAGE 16

Selim Raihan, a professor of economics at the University of Dhaka, said, "Although the budget acknowledges the global context, the domestic context is not well-analysed and addressed."

He said they did not find adequate initiatives in the budget to protect the marginalised groups from the onslaught of inflationary pressure.

"The budget acknowledges the rising inflationary pressure. However, the expectation of containing the average inflation to 5.6 percent in

the next fiscal year is quite ambitious, given the current situation and shifting global economic factors."

The budget did not reflect the challenges facing micro and small enterprises, he said.

Prof Selim, however, called the plan related to the sales through the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh to mitigate the effect of inflation on the low-income people commendable.

"The budget also promises to continue taking actions against hoarders, but does not offer a detailed plan."





LAW VISION

# The need for institutional ADR to uplift country’s dispute resolution system

ADR is a tested mechanism and its role in building up an efficient dispute resolution system is undisputed. Thus, the presence of independent ADR centers in Bangladesh with right support and personnel can guarantee the taking place of a meaningful ADR mandated by different statutes as well as the Arbitration Act, 2001.

KAMAL HOSSAIN MEAHZI

The legal framework for dispute resolution through alternative methods has reached a level of maturity in Bangladesh. In the last three decades, the government has introduced many legislative reforms for the progress of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) system in the country. The enactment of the Arbitration Act, 2001 may be cited as one of the examples. It is a comprehensive legislation in the field, which recognisesd mediation during arbitration and consolidated the laws to govern domestic and international commercial arbitration.

In addition to the above law, ADR provisions have also been inserted in two significant pieces of legislation, namely the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 (section 89A) and the Money Loan Courts Act, 2003. Since 2001, Bangladesh has also enacted and/ or amended some laws to promote dispute resolutions through ADR mechanism in the fields of energy, labour, taxation, insurance, real estate and so on.

However, this article attempts to argue that a mere legal framework is not enough to improve the justice system through ADR. With the enactment and amendment of laws, Bangladesh needs to establish accredited ADR centers to progress the ADR regime in the country and encourage people to adopt the alternative methods for resolution of their disputes.

The main advantages of ADR under an institutional set-up are that it provides for a framework based on the institutional rules. It has trained staff and a pool of both arbitrators and mediators ready to offer services using their expertise in the relevant fields. It ensures transparency and brings

predictability to the entire process. The disputing parties know it with certainty as to how their dispute will be dealt with, how long it will take to complete the proceedings and how much expenses will be required for the purpose, etc.

Since the use of ADR under institutional framework is useful, the private institutions have been established and promoted with government supports in many countries where ADR is a success story.

For instance, the Australian Centre for International Commercial Arbitration (ACICA) is Australia’s international arbitration institution. The ACICA has been prescribed under Sections 18(1) and (2) of the International Arbitration Act, 1974 (Cth) (Australia) as the authority competent to perform the arbitrator appointment functions under the Act.

In Switzerland, there are two sets of arbitration laws, namely (i) Chapter 12 of the Swiss Private International Law Act (PILA) which deals with international arbitration, and (ii) Part 3 of the Civil Procedure Code which regulates domestic arbitration. The Swiss Arbitration Center, as an independent institution, provides for ADR services to satisfy the need of ADR users. Similar institutions have been established in many parts of the world including Singapore, UK and Hongkong. These institutions offer ADR services and administer the entire process based on their own rules which provide for faster and more efficient resolution of disputes.

In the UK a number of successful bodies supporting and promoting the use of ADR have been established. The Civil Mediation Council is one such, set up in 2003, which sets standards for training and practice.

There also exists a standard guideline for fees to avail ADR services.

Similar ADR centers or institutions should have been established in Bangladesh to promote and encourage ADR practice. It may be mentioned that an ADR institution is currently providing for ADR services with facilities based in Dhaka. Bangladesh International Arbitration Center (BIAC), which was launched in Bangladesh on April 9, 2011 as a private institute for ADR. It started functioning with the main objective of facilitating ADR, more precisely arbitration and mediation, for resolution of domestic and international commercial disputes. The other objective is to promote Bangladesh as an attractive venue for both arbitration and mediation. BIAC has its own institutional mediation and arbitration rules, known as the BIAC Mediation Rules and BIAC Arbitration Rules. It offers ADR services and functions as an administrating body under those rules.

However, if compared, in terms of its power and legal status, BIAC is not similar to ACICA in Australia. BIAC has not received any legal recognition to function as a default appointing authority to offer ADR services to the users.

ADR is a tested mechanism and its role in building up an efficient dispute resolution system is undisputed. Thus, the presence of independent ADR centers in Bangladesh with right support and personnel can guarantee the taking place of a meaningful ADR mandated by different statutes as well as the Arbitration Act, 2001.

The writer is a Student of Advanced Masters in Compliance, University of Fribourg, Switzerland, and an Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh.

PEOPLE’S VOICE

# On the efficacy of the competition law

KAIUM AHMED

The government of Bangladesh passed the Competition Act in 2012. The primary purpose of enacting this law is to promote, ensure, and sustain a congenial atmosphere for the competition in trade and prevent, control, and eradicate collusion, monopoly, oligopoly, combination or abuse of powerful positions or activities adverse to the competition.

We have recently witnessed the artificial crisis of edible oil in the market. It is not something new. Some business houses frequently orchestrate such crises. Last year’s crisis of onion is a prime example. For the first time, the Bangladesh Competition Commission (BCC) has recently filed a case against eight companies importing edible oil to control the market price by creating cartel and oligopoly under section 15 of the 2012 Act.

According to section 8 of the Act, the BCC may, either on its motion or any allegation, inquire into any complaint made under this Act and issue summon to any person to present before the BCC. In this regard, the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 will be applied. After sending a notice to any persons or associations, the BCC may, after giving a reasonable opportunity to be heard to the concerned parties, dispose of or settle the issue with necessary directions before conducting an inquiry under this Act (section 17). Section 18 states that if this is not disposed of, the BCC may inquire about any agreement or misuse of powerful/ dominant position which is harmful



to the relevant market. The BCC may inquire about this matter by *suo motu* or by taking any complaint from anyone. Section 19 states that the BCC, if it is satisfied after conducting an inquiry, shall take proper interim action to restrain such person from carrying on such activities which violate the provision of sections 15-16. After inquiry under section 18, if the BCC finds the legality of the complaint, it may impose a financial penalty which may not exceed 10% of the average of his turnover for the last three preceding years. If any cartels occur then up to 3 times of its profit for each year of the continuance of such agreement or 10% of the average of his turnover for the last three preceding financial years, whichever is higher. Section 21 states that if any anti-competition agreement is entered into outside of Bangladesh by any person or enterprise, the BCC may inquire into the matter by laws of both countries. The BCC’s judgment has the same effect as any judgment given by the trial court. If anyone violates this, he/she shall be punished with imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year with fine of one lac taka.

However, our present legislation relating to competition law is not complete. Unlike India, there is no separate court to try the offences under this Act. Another shortcoming is that the BCC lacks enough experts by whom such trial may be properly conducted. An appeal against the judgment given by the BCC has to be filed before the government. We know that the businesses have a strong influence over the government. This is also a ground which raises concerns about the efficacy of the BCC.

The BCC has started its journey with limited resource but having mountainous burden. Our government should update the existing laws relating to competition and appoint enough officials so that the Commission can perform its duties skillfully.

The writer is an Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh.

LAW EVENT

# National Moot Court Competition held at BUP

Department of Law at Bangladesh University of Professionals (BUP) and BUP Law and Moot Court Club (BUPLMCC) jointly organised a National Moot Court Competition on 26-29 May 2022. A total of 12 universities, namely American International University Bangladesh (AIUB), Bangladesh University of Professionals (BUP), BGC Trust University Bangladesh, BRAC University, Comilla University, East West University, Jahangirnagar University, North South University, State University of Bangladesh, University of Chittagong, University of Information Technology and Sciences, and University of Asia Pacific, participated in the competition.

In the semi-final rounds, Jahangirnagar University, BRAC University, East West University, and BUP competed against one-another. The semi-final rounds were adjudicated by Mr. Justice Farid Ahmed, the Hon’ble Judge at the High Court Division, Supreme Court of Bangladesh; Mr. Justice Ashraful

Kamal, the Hon’ble Judge at the High Court Division, Supreme Court of Bangladesh; Professor Christine Richardson, Former Dean, Faculty of Law, Jagannath University; Professor, Dr. Md Rizwanul Islam, Chairman, Department of Law, North South University; Nasreen Begum, Member (Law), Bangladesh Competition Commission; and Barrister Karishma Jahan, Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh. From among the four universities, BRAC University and BUP qualified to the final rounds of the competition which was adjudicated by Mr. Justice Md. Abdul Matin, Former Judge at the Appellate Division, Supreme Court of Bangladesh, and Dr. Muhammad Ekramul Haque, Professor of Law, University of Dhaka. At the end, BUP emerged as the Champion of the competition, while BRAC University became the runner-up.

The Best Memorial Award went to Jahangirnagar University. The Best Researcher Award was given to Meghomala Meghosree Rahma from

Jahangirnagar University. Nafiz Absar Mahmood from State University of Bangladesh won the Best Mooter Award (Overall), while Tanjila Akter Mim from BUP was awarded with the Best Mooter Award based on her performance in the Final Rounds.

Mr. Justice Hasan Foez Siddique, the Hon’ble Chief Justice of Bangladesh, graced the closing ceremony of the competition as the Chief Guest and handed over the awards and prizes to the participants. In his speech, he said that a career in law often provides situations in which professionals are required to use their research and advocacy skills to navigate complexities of the legal challenges they face. A moot court competition sets the groundwork for that process from the beginning. Therefore, the law students are entitled to this unique experience, i.e. learning how courtroom proceedings do play out in real life.

By BUP Law and Moot Court Club (BUPLMCC).





What to WATCH

TEN 1  
UEFA Nations League  
Austria vs France  
Live from 12:45 am (Saturday)  
TEN 2

England vs New Zealand  
2nd Test, Day 1  
Live from 04:00 pm  
UEFA Nations League  
Denmark vs Croatia

Live from 12:45 am (Saturday)  
SONY SIX  
Pakistan vs West Indies  
2nd ODI  
Live from 05:00 pm

‘An opportunity to fare better in next match’

SPORTS REPORTER

Following a creditable performance against mighty Bahrain, Bangladesh are due for another major challenge in their next match against Turkmenistan in the Asian Cup Qualifiers on Saturday.

Although Bangladesh suffered a 2-0 defeat to Bahrain – who are 99 places ahead of Bangladesh in FIFA rankings – in their opening Group E match, the charges of Javier Cabrera earned a fair bit of praise after executing their game plan without many errors in the highly intense encounter on June 08.

Assistant coach Masud Parvez Kaiser believes that the high-voltage matches of late in the AFC Cup and the FIFA friendlies elevated the self-belief of the men in red and green to fight against the better teams till the dying minutes instead of surrendering before the final whistle.

Bangladesh's backline, composed of makeshift defenders, did well to maintain their shape throughout the game against a side who had beaten Iran, a World Cup playing nation, in the recent past.

Defender Yeasin Arafat believes there is room for improvement against Turkmenistan.

"As a defender, we had a lot more expectations than how we ended up performing against Bahrain. However, I think we have an opportunity to fare better in the next match compared to the first match," said the promising left-back of Bashundhara Kings.

Assistant coach Hasan Al Mamun informed that Bangladesh would stick to their existing game plan against Turkmenistan as well.

"We know the strength of opponents, so we are working on it. We want to play as a unit and keep working on the low-block defence and counter fast like we did against Bahrain," said Mamun.



A rejuvenated England will aim to carry on from the five-wicket victory at Lord's when they face New Zealand in the second Test in Nottingham, starting today. Meanwhile, the Black Caps would dearly love a big score from captain and star batter Kane Williamson at Trent Bridge.

PHOTO: REUTERS

# Focus on performance, not past failures

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's batters struggled immensely against the Windies pace attack against the new ball during their last tour of the West Indies. There are a few more changes in the batting line-up this time around, with Mahmudullah Riyad having retired from Tests while Mushfiqur Rahim decided to opt out of the series.

On their last tour, Liton Das had opened with Tamim Iqbal. But since then, Liton has staked his claim further down the order and struck a rich vein of form in Tests. This time, Tamim and Mahmudul Hasan Joy will have to face the early music. How hopeful are the team management that the top order, which recently failed at home against Sri Lanka, will find the right approach and get back into the runs in West Indies?

The hope is that the experienced players can finally get back amongst the runs so that the Tigers do not produce dismal Test scores such as the 53 and 80 they managed on the tour of South Africa. Or the 43 all-out they produced during that last tour to the West Indies in 2018. After the recent Sri Lanka series, even coach Russell Domingo said there may be changes to the batting order to overcome such disastrous collapses.

There is heavy presence of left-handers

in the top-order and, given the statistical evidence that lefties have been struggling against right-arm pacers for the past five years or more, the challenge will be steep for Tamim Iqbal, Nazmul Hossain Shanto, Mominul Haque and skipper Shakib Al Hasan.

"Given the tendency of right-arm pacers to now come around the wicket to left-handers, it's a different proposition. We have seen how David Warner was troubled by Stuart Broad in recent times. I think

the top-order has been struggling a bit but some have also been amongst the runs so I wouldn't say it's an overtly worrying factor," selector Habibul Bashar told The Daily Star yesterday.

"Yes, it's becoming a thing in our line-up that there are three left-handers in the top four, but if you look at Mathew Hayden and Justin Langer, both were lefties but opened the innings and dominated. At the end of the day, it's about performances. In terms of tactical or strategic changes, the management will decide how to get the best out of the players. The batting coach will be working with the lefties about the incoming deliveries and whatever can be done better before the Tests."

Bangladesh are missing a bit of

experience in the middle order but there is Yasir Ali, Liton and Shakib to provide resistance. Crisis management will be an issue. "We will definitely miss Mushy. Apart from Yasir, other batters are being watched for that position," he said about the middle order.

The West Indies announced their squad for the first Test, including a couple of young faces such as Devon Thomas and Gudakesh Motie. The Windies are still waiting on a fitness update to Kemar Roach, who has been very successful against Bangladesh over the years.

"We know that they have a good pace attack but we can't go by the opposition's strengths, we have to ensure we get the best out of our players," he added.

One of the bigger issues is whether former skipper Mominul can find his feet after a dismal run. "We know Mominul's calibre as a batter. He has the most Test centuries in the line-up. Captaincy is never easy and it might have had an impact. I am hopeful that he will be able to find his form because there was a clear gap in his average before and after captaincy," Bashar concluded.

The Tigers began skills training yesterday and will play one three-day warm-up match against CWI President's XI, starting from June 10, to acclimatise to conditions in Antigua before the first Test on June 16.

Bangladesh Test captain Shakib, who is set to join the team today, may not be part of the opening day's play in the warm-up game.

## Can Babar emulate Sangakkara's record today?

AGENCIES

After becoming the first batter to have notched three consecutive hundreds in ODIs on two separate occasions, Pakistan skipper Babar Azam has now his eyes set on yet another record.

Thanks to Babar's ton and Khushdil Shah's late cameo on Wednesday, Pakistan beat West Indies by five wickets in Multan to go 1-0 up in their ongoing three-match series.

The 27-year-old had scored two consecutive centuries in his last two ODIs against Australia at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore and followed it up with a ton against West Indies, making him the first-ever batter in history to score three consecutive ODI hundreds on two occasions.

He first scored three back-to-back ODI hundreds (120, 123 and 117) during Pakistan's ODI series against the West Indies in the UAE in 2016.

Babar's 103-run knock also saw him become the quickest player to notch 17 ODI centuries and the fastest to complete 1,000 ODI runs as captain.

Pakistan will take on the Windies in the second ODI today at the Multan Cricket Stadium, and another ton for Babar today will see him match the heights of Sri Lanka great Kumar Sangakkara.

Sangakkara is the only player to hit four consecutive ODI centuries during the 2015 World Cup in Australia-New Zealand. And not many would put achieving the feat past the 27-year-old Babar who is seemingly still on an upward trajectory in his career and recently targeted becoming the first player to be ranked number 1 in all formats.



## Youth and Sports to get Tk 1282 crore

SPORTS REPORTER

The Youth and Sports Ministry received an allocation of Tk 18 crore more for the 2022-23 fiscal year compared to the ongoing fiscal year when finance minister AHM Mustafa Kamal placed a Tk 6,78,064 crore national budget.

Although there was anticipation that the budget for the youth and sports sector would be reduced following the economic downturn, the government allocated Tk 1282 crore to the ministry for 2022-23, with an operating budget of Tk 876 crore and a development budget of Tk 406 crore.

The allocation is higher than the revised outlay of Tk 1264 crore as well as the original allocation of Tk 1122 crore in the current fiscal.

"We emphasised two things in the sports budget: to create employment for the younger generation by conducting training, increasing the amount of training, organising more competitions and participating in more overseas tournaments," State Minister for Youth and Sports Jahid Ahsan Russel told The Daily Star after the budget was placed.

"We had a Tk 32 crore budget for sports training and participating in tournaments both locally and internationally. We are expecting to get Tk 10 crore more for the same purpose," Russel said.

# What Bend It Like Beckham meant for Yasmin and UK women's football

THE GUARDIAN

When Yasmin Hussain was a child growing up in Manchester in the 1990s, she was football mad. At first she played the sport with boys, but when she turned 13 her parents told her she needed to find a women's team to continue. The problem was, there wasn't one.

At that time, women's football was a niche sport rarely depicted on screen. When Bend It Like Beckham came out in 2002 – telling the story of Jesminder and her battle to play football against the wishes of her parents – Hussain was left thinking: "She's lucky, she had a team to join. I didn't have one."

Twenty years later, fans are celebrating the anniversary of the groundbreaking film on Tuesday and looking forward to the biggest ever year for women's football in the UK as England host the Euros this summer.

When Bend It Like Beckham came out, women's football was not a professional sport and rarely appeared on television. This year, tickets for the final at Wembley sold out within an hour.

But the film ignited an early spark for many women, and especially British Asians, who saw their own experiences

of wanting to play the game but struggling to find a way to reflected for the first time.

The landscape has since changed dramatically. In 2020, the Football Association reported that 3.4 million girls and women now play football, and a 54% increase in affiliated women's and girls' teams since 2017. Football is now the most popular sport among women and girls in the UK.

Hussain's experience mirrors the trajectory of women's football: after giving up the game, she trained as a coach five years ago, aged 33, reluctant to abandon "the only thing that gives me joy". She now coaches Frenford & MSA, a team of 80 female players.

"I'd never seen a film about a young British south Asian woman, let alone one who did sport. It meant so much to me in so many ways because it was representation I've never seen before or since. It's more of a cultural moment than a film for me," journalist Miriam Walker-Khan said. Although considerable progress has been made in women's sport since the film came out, Walker-Khan said stigma and stereotypes still hold back many south Asians.

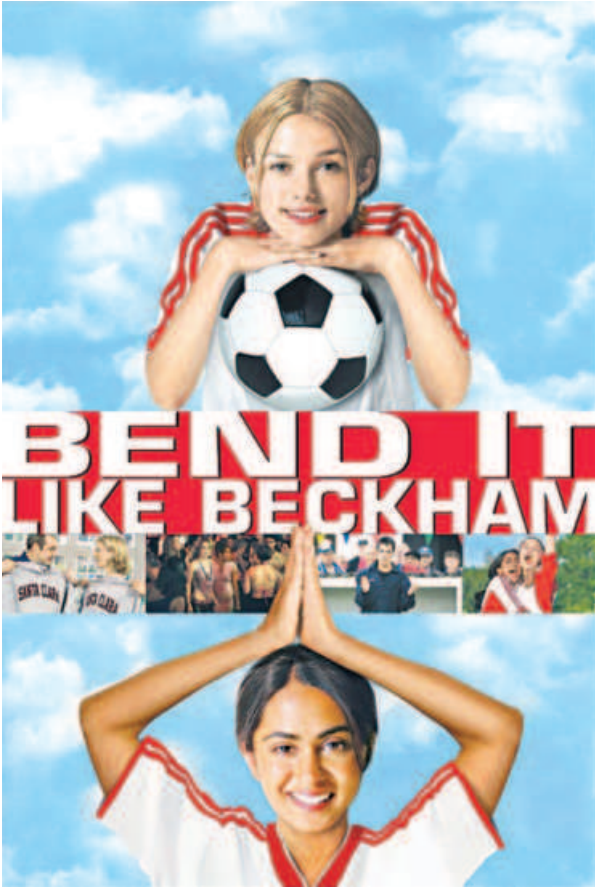
Visibility has been a key driver of

the sport's rapid growth in popularity in recent years, said Stacey Pope, an associate professor of sport at Durham University. This started in 2011, with the creation of the professional Women's Super League, and reached a turning point in 2015 when the Women's World Cup garnered widespread, serious media coverage for the first time.

This created role models and inspiration for women, and helped shed the sport's image as a "bastion of masculinity", which had been reinforced by a ban on women's football that lasted until 1971, she added.

Sophie Downey, who runs Girls On the Ball, which has promoted women's football since 2012, said that, as well as the professionalisation of the game, the biggest changes in recent years have been at grassroots level.

"It's about young girls having the knowledge they can play for fun and join in, and that access just wasn't there 20 years ago," she said. "I think we're at the tip of the iceberg, we've got the Euros this summer and that will be the biggest moment in history for the sport in this country. There's a lot of room for it to grow but it's looking really positive at the moment."







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## TIPU MURDER

# Suspect Musa brought home

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sumon Shikder Musa, a key suspect in the murders of Dhaka Awami League leader Jahidul Islam Tipu, and college student Samia Afran Jamal Prity, was brought home from Oman by police yesterday.

A three-member police team brought him back in a Biman flight that touched down at the Chattogram airport around 9:30am, said an official of the Detective Branch of police.

The flight, which was scheduled to land at the Dhaka airport, was diverted to Chattogram due to inclement weather. It reached the capital around noon.

Oman police arrested Musa on May 12 when he was returning to Dubai after offering prayers at a shrine in Salalah city, said the DB official wishing anonymity.

An accused in 11 cases, including the ones for murders and possession of illegal firearms, Musa fled to Dubai on March 12. He was a fugitive convict in one of those cases, the official added.

Investigators were hopeful of making a major progress in the probe of the double murder case through interrogating Musa.

Musa coordinated the killings, said a detective quoting the confessional statement of another arrestee Masum Mohammad alias Akash.

He said Musa supplied the firearm which was used to kill Tipu.

On March 24, Tipu, 55, former general secretary of Motijheel AL, was returning home in his microbus from his restaurant in Motijheel AGB Colony area. The vehicle was at a traffic light in Shahjahanpur when attackers arrived at the scene on a motorcycle and opened fire.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 5



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

Bangladesh Army Stadium came alive yesterday when Arnob and his crew appeared on stage, making the day-long wait worth it for the thousands of people who stayed till midnight in a colourful fiesta of music. The night saw special performances from the sensational Coke Studio Bangla crew, as well as Nemesis, Band Lalon, Tahsan, Warfaze, and the show-stopper, Nagar Baul James. Coke Studio concert, despite its many roadblocks, was a resounding success owing to the sheer passion displayed by the fans.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

## Activist Mizanur freed after 6hrs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Activist Mizanur Rahman walked out of the DB office in the capital's Minto Road yesterday, six hours after he was picked up.

Mizanur, a resident of Jurain, was released from the office around 4:45pm, said his wife Shamim Hasem Khuki. He came into the limelight after uniquely protesting the supply of murky water by Dhaka Wasa.

According to Khuki, Mizanur was picked up by a group of unidentified people, including some in police uniforms, from a place close to Jurain's Bikrampur Plaza around 11:00am.

Contacted, Mofizul Alam, officer-in-charge of Shyampur Police Station, initially denied Khuki's allegation.

Later, he said detectives detained Mizanur for interrogation over his suspected link to an attack on a traffic surgent and a police box in Jurain on Tuesday.

The Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police too were initially silent about his detention.

AKM Hafiz Akhter, additional commissioner of (detectives) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said they did not arrest him.

"He was taken to the DB office to talk over some issues."

Three police personnel, including a sergeant, were injured after a group of people attacked them in Jurain following an altercation between the sergeant and two commuters on a motorcycle.

Sergeant Ali Hossain, of Wari Traffic Division, needed 23 stitches on his hand after the attack, said police.

The mob also attacked a police box alleging harassment of a female commuter which police denied. Policemen suspected Mizanur instigated the attacks.

**He came into the limelight after uniquely protesting the supply of murky water by Dhaka Wasa.**

# Nothing to make up for learning loss

Education budget falls in percentage of GDP

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The proposed budget did not offer any new way out for the recovery of learning loss of millions of students caused by the Covid-19 pandemic through school closures.

The proposed budget for a Covid-battered education sector appeared to have also glossed over the need for capacity building of teachers for the proper implementation of new curriculums.

These two vital measures have been missed out although the theme of this year's budget is "Return to the Path of Development Leaving the Covid-19 Behind".

Moreover, ignoring longstanding appeals of educationists and Unesco recommendations for increasing the GDP's share in the budgetary allocations for education, Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal went for a reduction.

GDP'S SHARE IN EDUCATION DROPS

The finance minister allocated Tk 81,449 crore -- Tk

31,761 crore for the primary and mass education ministry, Tk 39,961 crore for the Secondary and Higher Education Division and Tk 9,727 for the Technical and Madrasa Education Division -- for the fiscal year 2022-23.

He had allocated Tk 71,954 crore for the outgoing fiscal year.

In other words, the finance minister allocated only 1.83 per cent of the GDP for the education sector for fiscal year 2022-23. It was 2.08 per cent in the current budget.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco) recommends spending 6 per cent of the GDP on the education sector.

The amount of fiscal year 2022-23 makes up 12.01 per cent of the total outlay. It was 11.91 per cent of the total outlay of the current budget.

Attending an event yesterday morning, Education Minister Dipu Moni claimed that the current size of the education budget was 3 per cent of the total gross domestic product (GDP) but it should be increased

to 6 per cent in the future.

Once the ongoing mega projects are implemented, education will be the country's largest mega project, she added.

LEARNING LOSS

The finance minister in his budget speech said the country's education programme faced disruptions since the first week of March 2020 due to the spread of coronavirus infections.

He mentioned that the authorities continued teaching online and through TV and radio. Imparting of lessons through TV continued to keep students focused on their studies even after the reopening of schools, he said.

"In addition, to ensure close monitoring of the progress of students' studies, teachers are continuing their regular teaching activities through mobile phones and personal communication with the students," he said.

Educationists said most students in urban areas have access to learning through the internet but the digital divide

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

## Budget doesn't reflect reality

### Say economists

MD ASADUZ ZAMAN

The proposed budget has not properly addressed the pressing issues -- higher inflation and the US dollar crisis -- that are causing immense macroeconomic imbalances, said economists in their immediate reaction.

"It seems to me that the proposed budget has not paid enough attention to two macroeconomic imbalances-- inflation and dollar crisis. The budget has been rather oblivious to these although there has been mention of inflation in the budget," said Zahid Hussain, a former lead economist of the World Bank's Dhaka office.

One of the main elements of inflation is increased domestic demand.

"But there is not enough measure to contain domestic demand," said Zahid.

Reducing budget deficit is one way to contain inflation.

"But we see an increase in the budget deficit from the revised budget. This will stoke inflation," he said, adding that austerity in expenditure would have helped curb prices spike and US dollar demand.

"We have not seen that in the budget."

Zahid went on to say that the duty and higher taxes on some products, also used by the middle-income groups, may fuel the inflationary pressure.

However, he welcomed the initiatives to promote exports.

"The export benefits have been unified. It will encourage other exporters to diversify the export basket."

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**HAPPY TOGETHER ...** A pair of Purple Swamphens seen soaring across the sky in Sunamganj's Tanguar Haor recently. A species of the Swamphen Occurin, these birds prefer staying in groups, in the company of their comrades. They are inhabitants of marshy, vegetated freshwater bodies such as swamps, rivers, and lakes. Even as bulky birds, they are gifted fliers and can take to the air whenever in the face of danger.

PHOTO: MOSABBER HOSSAIN RIBON

## Services will need proof of income tax payment

SOHEL PARVEZ

People will require to submit the proof of submission of their income tax returns in order to get more than 40 types of services, including loans and trade licence, as the National Board of Revenue looks to raise more taxes.

The proof could be an acknowledgement receipt of the return, a system-generated certificate containing the name and taxpayer's identification number (TIN) of the person, or a certificate issued by the office of the Deputy Commissioner of Taxes.

It will have to be furnished in the case

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## Budget to help draw investment

### Businesses, economists say

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

The budget proposed in parliament yesterday is geared toward attracting private sector investment to create employment and expand businesses, but some proposals need to be reconsidered, said economists and businesspeople.

The government has been trying to increase private sector investment to 27 percent of the GDP over the last few years, but the ratio has been stagnant at 23 percent. The budget will help boost competitiveness and ease business opportunities, they said.

"There are indications in some proposals that both domestic and foreign direct investment (FDI) will increase if the proposals are implemented," M Masrur Reaz, chairman of Policy Exchange of Bangladesh, told The Daily Star.

For instance, tax rates have been made uniform for all export-oriented factories, which will encourage local entrepreneurs.

The proposed budget has set a 12 percent corporate tax rate for non-green export

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