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\$500m at best from WB this fiscal

Govt fails to implement reforms to unlock more funds

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The government can expect budget support of \$500 million at best from the World Bank this fiscal year after it failed to implement key reforms that would have unlocked the entire \$1 billion it was seeking.

As per the original plan, \$250 million was supposed to come from the Green, Resilient Inclusive Development (GRID) programme and another \$250 million from the Development Policy Credit (DPC) scheme.

Further amount would have been mobilised were the government able to meet more conditions, which would have been tangential to DPC's.

CONDITIONS FULFILLED FOR \$500M

- ➡ Set up a cell to coordinate the Delta Plan 2100
- ➡ Policies for energy efficiency, renewable energy and green procurement
- ➡ Lay foundational steps for establishing carbon pricing
- ➡ Adoption of the Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan

The government has more or less met the conditions for the GRID but is yet to meet any of the 12 conditions for DPCs, which encompass reforms in fiscal policy and the financial sector and setting guardrails to future shocks.

The conditions for GRID include setting up a cell in the planning ministry to coordinate the Delta Plan 2100, policies for energy efficiency, renewable energy and green procurement and so on, foundational steps for establishing carbon pricing.

Adoption of the Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan figures high, too.

This plan, which was recently passed in the parliament, includes retrofitting the built environment, following the National Building Code 2020, to ensure sustainability and

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The remains of Seema oxygen plant in Sitakunda next to the Dhaka-Chattogram highway after an explosion. The blast sent shards of metal hurtling across hundreds of metres. *Inset*, oxygen cylinders kept at the plant.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

6 killed as blast rips thru oxygen plant

At least 30 injured; many nearby buildings, parked vehicles damaged

FM MIZANUR RAHAMAN, SIFAYET ULLAH, and MD SUMAN

Six people were killed and at least 30 others injured in an explosion at an industrial oxygen plant in Sitakunda, Chattogram, yesterday afternoon.

The explosion at Seema Oxygen Plant in the Keshabpur area rocked nearby neighbourhoods around 4:40pm. The roof of the building of the main plant was blown off and large chunks of

steel and iron flew in all directions, damaging numerous buildings and vehicles.

A projectile from the plant killed a 60-year-old man at a market nearly a kilometre away from the facility, said Shahadat Hossain, upazila nirbahi officer of Sitakunda.

Residents of the area said there was no electricity in the area after the blast, and gas cylinders were seen strewn everywhere around the facility.

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A km away, yet a victim of the blast

SIFAYET ULLAH, *Ctg*

Sixty-year-old Shamsul Alam was at a firewood shop in Kadamarsul Bazar near his home in Sitakunda, Chattogram.

The unemployed man woke up late and went to the market just to hang out with people his age because he has nothing else to do.

The blast at Seema Oxygen Plant, almost a

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PM in Qatar for country's last LDC summit

Meets UN chief Guterres, UNGA president Korosi



STAR REPORT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday reached Doha to attend Bangladesh's last summit of the Least Developed Countries that begins today.

Bangladesh will graduate out of LDC by 2026.

Reaching Qatar, Hasina urged the United Nations to take special and effective measures to stop the Ukraine-Russia war as soon as possible.

"We are suffering a lot as a result of the war. Inflation has increased, especially due to non-arrival of goods for sanctions. People are suffering a lot because of this [war], people are suffering all over the world. The war needs to stop as soon as possible," she said.

She made the call during a meeting with UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres at Qatar National Convention Centre yesterday afternoon.

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'Today's special 8-page tabloid focuses on country's accelerated journey towards a Smarter Bangladesh by utilising digital technology to enhance various sectors such as commerce, agriculture, transportation, healthcare, and many more.'



Veteran Freedom Fighter Mohammad Ali standing by the ruins of his fire-ravaged home. He was one of the victims of the attack launched by some Islamist parties on the Ahmadiyya community in at least three villages of Panchagarh Sadar on Friday.

PHOTO: STAR

Panic grips Panchagarh Ahmadiyya villages

Homes, businesses burnt to ground; tension still high as fresh rumours being spread

QUAMRUL ISLAM RUBAIYAT, *Thakurgaon*

He spent his entire life savings to build a house for his family, and then he had to watch that house go up in flames in a matter of minutes.

It's all because he belongs to the Ahmadiyya community.

Around 11:00am yesterday, 80-year-old Shahid Ahmed was seen sitting speechless in front of his fire-ravaged home.

He was one of the many from his community that came under attack by supporters of some Islamist outfits in Panchagarh Sadar on Friday.

A resident of Ahmednagar village, Shahid said, "My family and I were at the Jalsa Salana venue after Jum'a prayers when we suddenly heard that our house was torched. We rushed there and found our home set ablaze."

Akhi, Shahid's daughter, said, "We were lucky that we were not in the house at that time. I think the attackers would have killed us if we were."

Veteran freedom fighter Mohammad Ali's house too wasn't spared. "We fought for the country in 1971. And this is how we are being rewarded at the end stage of our lives..."

"I was alone in the house as the others went to the Jalsa in the afternoon. A group of people suddenly attacked our house with sticks, iron rods and machetes. While I ran to safety, my house, including the furniture and everything else inside, was burnt to ashes."

His neighbour Md Hanif, also a freedom fighter, said, "The attackers first looted valuables and then torched my house."

Tanzila Akter, 32, another victim, said, "We used to earn living by

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TEESTA BARRAGE PROJECT West Bengal pushes for two more canals

If implemented, Bangladesh will get even less water

STAR REPORT

In a move that may raise more concerns in Dhaka, the Mamata Banerjee government in West Bengal on Friday took possession of about 1,000 acres of land proposing to dig two canals to channel water from the Teesta Barrage Project for irrigation.

Bangladesh is waiting for the Teesta water-sharing deal with India for more than a decade to solve the water scarcity in the northern parts of the country. New Delhi and Dhaka couldn't clinch a pact to share the Teesta waters because of objections raised by West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee in 2011.

The move, ahead of panchayat polls and parliamentary elections in West

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