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While Bangladesh recently bought an LNG shipment from the spot market after an eight-month pause for delivery, the cost of energy in the country remains high. In fact, at the retail level, the electricity price was increased again last month – the third such hike since the

The second factor is the taxation structure that is currently more favourable towards the rich and punishing for the groups with limited income. Think tanks have advised the government to design the taxation structure for FY 2023-24 in a way that is more equitable for all. The Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) suggested that the tax-free income limit of individual taxpayers be increased to Tk 350,000 from the current Tk 300,000, and in the second slab, the amount of taxable income be increased to Tk 300,000 from the existing Tk 100,000, so that the middle-income groups get some respite from the burden of taxation and inflation. It has also been recommended that the highest tax rate be reinstated to the previous 30 percent from



Keeping the taka's value artificially high has contributed to the inflation further. While the US dollar kept gaining strength since the beginning of 2022, it was only in April that the central bank decided to act on the situation and devalued the taka, with small corrections through to August, which enabled the banks to trade dollars at a much inflated rate. In the process, the dollar price rose to Tk 113-114 in the formal market and to Tk 120 in the kerb market. This mismatch led to the sliding of the taka by about 25 percent. Businesses that had previously borrowed in dollars from local and foreign banks are now

There is another risk: the government is borrowing heavily from the Bangladesh Bank – between July 1, 2022 and March 2, 2023, the

With Ramadan coming up, people's woes will increase. Many are already forced to give up on basic necessities as they are unable to make ends meet. We cannot allow our people to live undernourished because there is a war going on thousands of miles away. Every challenge creates an opportunity, and we must capitalise on what is available to us to support our people.

RTI for transparency in parliamentary democracy

Dr Shamsul Bari and Ruhi Naz
are chairman and assistant director (RTI),
respectively, at the Research Initiatives, Bangladesh (RIB)

SHAMSUL BARI *and* RUHI NAZ


The commission determined that the public authority in terms of the RTI Act was the Parliament of Sri Lanka, and not the Secretariat or the Speaker's Office. Hence, it was the duty of the secretary-general of the parliament to provide the desired information to the applicant. The secretary-general then challenged

From all indications, RTI has thrived in Sri Lanka due largely to the efforts of many diehard activists from the civil society and a committed educated class. In addition, a few dedicated members of the Information Commission have been promoting the efficacy of the law. The ranks of such promoters in Bangladesh are still very thin. We hope that the Sri Lankan example will spur us to greater and more transformative use of the RTI Act in our country. We often hear of the government abusing some laws against the citizens, forgetting that as citizens we, too, are "abusing" a law of such great potential for public good through our indifference and neglect.


The judgment went on to underline that the MPs are “persons who are elected by the people and maintained by the people. They are expected to abide by the laws of the country at all times and provide examples for others to follow.” No wonder that the judgment received wide coverage in the Sri Lankan media. Many saw in it a glimmer of hope for transparency and accountability in the country, providing for a more solid basis for transparent and accountable governance, which may help avoid recurrence of the type of crisis the nation has faced in recent years. There was a sense of rejuvenation in the air.

Chamara Sampath, a young Sri Lankan journalist, submitted an RTI request on June 21, 2018 to the designated officer of the Secretariat of the Parliament of Sri Lanka. Sampath sought the list of MPs who had submitted their asset declarations, from 2010 onwards, under the provisions of the Declaration of the Assets and Liabilities Act No 1 of 1975 (amended by Act No 74 of 1988). The designated officer refused the request, stating that parliamentary privilege protects the “confidentiality” of the list and that declarations were submitted to the Speaker's Office, which holds the information. The applicant then made the same request to the

Our readers will find the observations of the court on the matter to be very educational. In the 17-page judgment delivered by Justice Sampath B Abeykoon (with Justice P Kumararatnam agreeing), the court held that the intention of the RTI legislation was “fostering



**Government of the People's
Republic of Bangladesh**
Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Executive Engineer
District: Thakurgaon
www.lged.gov.bd



শেখ হাসিনার মূলনীতি
স্বাধীনতা
শ্রম শ্রমের উন্নতি

Memo No. 46.02.9400.000.07.001.23-830
Date: 12.03.2023

Specific Procurement Notice

Country: Bangladesh

Name of Project: "Rangpur Division Agriculture and Rural Development Project" in Bangladesh

Procurement of Works

Sector: Agriculture and Rural Development
 Mode of Financing: Loan
 Financing No: IBD-0185


Contract Title: "Package W-15(Lot-3): Improvement of Markets in Thakurgaon District"

NCB Reference No. 01/2022-2023

- The People's Republic of Bangladesh has received financing from the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) towards the cost of **Rangpur Division Agriculture and Rural Development Project** and intends to apply part of the proceeds toward payments under the contract as mentioned in table below.
- The Executive Engineer, Local Government Engineering Department (LGED), District: Thakurgaon, Bangladesh now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the following works under the above project.

Sl. No.	Contract No.	Description of works	Price of bidding documents (in BDT)	Amount of bid security in BDT	Contract completion time (days)
1	LGED/RADARDP/ Thakurgaon/W- 15(Lot-3)	1) Improvement of Baksa Hat at Ranishankail Upazila, 2) Improvement of Dhamer Hat (Ratore UP) at Ranishankail Upazila & 3) Improvement of Chowrasta Bazar (Kashipur UP) at Ranishankail Upazila under Upazila-Ranishankail, District- Thakurgaon.	2000.00	1,55,000.00	270 days

- Bidding will be conducted through the National Competitive Bidding (NCB) procedures as specified in The IsDB's Guidelines for Procurement of Goods and Works under Islamic Development Bank Financing (Current Edition), and is open to all eligible bidders as defined in the Guidelines. In addition, please refer to paragraphs 1.18-21 setting forth IsDB's policy on conflict of interest.
- Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information and inspect the bidding documents during the office hours 09:00 to 15:30 hours on all working days upto 16 April 2023 to Md. Shaharul Alam Mondol, XEN, Office of the Executive Engineer, LGED, Gobindonagar, Thakurgaon.
- A complete set of bidding documents (in English) may be purchased by interested bidders on the submission of a written application to the office of the Executive Engineer, LGED, District: Thakurgaon, Bangladesh, Telephone: 0561-52042, Email: xen.thakurgaon@lged.gov.bd and upon payment of a non-refundable fee as mentioned in table above only during office hours on all working days until 11:00 hours on 16 April 2023. The method of payment will be in the form of Cash, Pay Order/Bank Draft from any scheduled bank in Bangladesh, drawn in favor of Executive Engineer, LGED, District: Thakurgaon. The document may be sent by air mail or courier or may be collected through authorized representatives of the bidders.
- Bid must be delivered to the address below on or before 11:30 hours on 17 April 2023. Electronic Bidding will not be permitted. Late bids will be rejected. Bids will be publicly opened at 11:30 hours on 17 April 2023 in the presence of the bidders' designated representatives and anyone who choose to attend at the address below.
- All bids must be accompanied by a Bid security of amount BDT. 1,55,000.00.
- Address referred to the above is: Office of the Executive Engineer, LGED, Gobindonagar, Thakurgaon.


Md. Shaharul Alam Mondol
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