



DHAKA SUNDAY APRIL 2, 2023

REGD. No. DA 781

VOL. XXXIII No. 78

CHAITRA 19, 1429 BS

www.thedailystar.net

RAMADAN 10, 1444 HJRI

16 PAGES : Tk 15.00



B4

Making clothes, caring for nature



P8

State should investigate all deaths in custody



P5

Sutang river at death's grip



P11

BCB sends clear message

IMF'S LOAN CONDITIONS

Tax collection target for June may be missed

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The government is on track to meeting the International Monetary Fund's tax collection target for March but may miss the mark in June.

As part of the \$4.7 billion loan, the Washington-based multilateral lender has stipulated a minimum tax collection goal as an indicative target.

Failure to meet an indicative target largely does not lead to any hold-up in the approval of further tranches; the IMF executive board makes exceptions if it is convinced that the programme is on course to meet the objectives.

By March, the government needs to collect at least Tk 207,380 crore in tax, as per the IMF's task sheet for Bangladesh. Come to the end of June, tax collection needs to be at least Tk 345,630 crore.

As of February, the National Board of Revenue has collected Tk 196,037.5 crore. The non-NBR tax collection stands at Tk 3,563 crore in the first half of fiscal 2022-23, according to data from the finance ministry.

Data on collections up to March is not available yet, but from the trends in NBR and non-NBR receipts, it is safe to infer that March's target would be met comfortably.

FY23 REVENUE SNAPSHOT

- Govt target Tk **387,999cr**
- IMF target Tk **345,630cr**
- Tax revenue in 1st half Tk **144,569cr**
- Tax revenue down **3.5pc** in 1st half
- Non-NBR revenue up **22pc** in 1st half
- NBR revenue down **4pc** in 1st half

"We are hopeful of getting close to June's target," said a finance ministry official on the condition of anonymity as he is not authorised to speak with the media.

This fiscal year, the government has set a tax revenue collection of Tk 387,999 crore, with the NBR tasked with bringing in Tk 370,000 crore. Another Tk 17,999 crore has been targeted from non-NBR sources.

The non-NBR revenue collection has been revised down to Tk 16,000 crore, which is the same as in fiscal 2021-22.

To achieve the NBR's target -- which was not revised -- receipts need to be 28.8 percent more than fiscal 2021-22's collection of Tk 287,223 crore.

In the past five years, NBR's average collection growth has been 12.12 percent.

Going by the trend, tax revenue collection would be in touching distance of the IMF's floor on tax revenue.

"The IMF target is very unambitious and quite achievable -- our inability to collect tax is the problem," said Ahsan H Mansur, executive director of the Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh.

Complicating matters is the drop in tax collections from November last year on the back of reduced economic activities on account of strained dollar reserves and elevated inflation.

On March 29, foreign currency reserves stood at \$31.1 billion, down 29.9 percent from a year earlier, according to data from the Bangladesh Bank. This is enough to cover up to four months' import bills.

In the first eight months of the fiscal year, inflation averaged 8.74 percent, way above the budgetary target

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



Activists of Gonotantrik Chhatra Jote, a platform of left-leaning student organisations, bring out a torchlight march at Dhaka University to demand the repeal of the Digital Security Act and justice for Prothom Alo correspondent Samsuzzaman Shams, now in jail, and Sultana Jasmine, who died in Rab custody. Both were accused in DSA cases.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Her silence a yell for justice

Shams's mother joins demonstration for his release; protests continue nationwide

STAR REPORT

Karimon Nesa, mother of Prothom Alo reporter Samsuzzaman Shams, came all the way to Dhamrai from her Manikganj home to attend a human chain demanding the release of her son and scrapping of the controversial Digital Security Act.

But she could not utter a single word. She stood there shedding tears in silence.

Shams's cousin Faruk Hossain, said, "The honesty of Shams' family is known to people in their village. People in this family made supreme sacrifices for the country."

Karimon's son Rabiul Karim, who was an assistant commissioner of police, was killed in the Holey Artisan attack in 2016.

The human chain was organised by Dhamrai Reporters' Club and Dhamrai



PHOTO: AKLAKUR RAHMAN

Karimon Nesa, mother of Prothom Alo reporter Samsuzzaman Shams, waiting for the release of her son.

Upazila Press Club in the Dautia area by Dhaka-Aricha highway.

Umme Salma, widow of Rabiul, told The Daily Star that Karimon almost stopped eating after Shams was picked up from his home on Wednesday. "She cries all the time. Shams is all she has."

Demonstrations by journalists, political parties, and cultural and social organisations continued in different parts of the country demanding release of Shams and abolition of the Digital Security Act (DSA).

While posting on social media a report written by Shams on March 26, the Independence Day, Prothom Alo made a "card" with a quote of a labourer named Zakir Hossain. Though the card contained Zakir's

SEE PAGE 7 COL 6

Shams was arrested for 'child abuse, exploitation'

Says foreign ministry

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The foreign ministry yesterday said Prothom Alo reporter Samsuzzaman Shams was arrested for "child abuse" and "child exploitation" and the claim that he was arrested for reporting on the cost of living crisis in Bangladesh was "false".

In a press release issued on Friday, it said reports by foreign media saying Samsuzzaman was arrested for his reporting were "fabricated".

He was sent to jail on Thursday in a case filed with Ramna Police Station under three sections of the Digital Security Act -- 25(2), 31 and 35.

In another DSA case, filed with Tejgaon Police Station a few hours before being picked up from his Savar home, Shams was charged under the same

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

SULTANA'S DEATH

Let a case be filed for the sake of justice

Say eminent citizens of Rajshahi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

No case has been filed yet for the death of Sultana Jasmine, which may delay justice for the victim's family, said a group of eminent citizens in Rajshahi yesterday.

Sultana Jasmine was detained in a case filed under the Digital Security Act and had been in Rab custody until her death on March 24.

At a press conference in the office of Rajshahi Union of Journalists around noon, the three-member group demanded legal action against the plaintiff of the DSA case filed against Sultana and the quick filing of a case over her death.

"If no case is filed for her death, justice will remain elusive for her family."

Led by prominent writer Mahbub

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



Forty train carriages, bought from South Korea for Bangladesh Railway, getting last minute touch-ups at the Railway Carriage and Wagon Workshop in Chattogram's Pahartali yesterday. These carriages are supposed to replace the old ones of the Subarna Express ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr. Meanwhile, the old carriages are being repaired so that they can be used again later.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

BUSINESS

Inland water cargo vessel operations in Bangladesh have declined 30 per cent over the past six to eight months as imports have fallen significantly amid global economic uncertainties stemming from the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war, according to industry insiders.

STORY ON B1

