



"Reversing all measures that restrict women's rights to work is key to reaching the millions of people in Afghanistan that require humanitarian assistance."

UN chief Antonio Guterres

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## WB to give \$2.75b over next 5 years

Financing meant to accelerate green growth

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The World Bank is set to provide \$2.75 billion by way of six projects over the next five years to help Bangladesh achieve greener and more resilient development and greater inclusion.

Financial agreements for five of the projects took place during the celebrations of 50 years of partnership between the WB and Bangladesh at the lender's headquarters in Washington DC on May 1.

The projects are being funded by the International Development Association, the WB arm that offers concessional loans and grants to the world's poor nations.

Those loans are to be repaid in 30 years with a grace period of five years.

A yearly service charge of 0.75 percent and an interest rate of 1.25 percent needs to be paid on the withdrawn amount of

the loans. Besides, a maximum annual commitment fee of 0.50 percent is payable on the unwithdrawn financing balance.

For one of the projects involving \$500 million, a different financing structure is being used: 65 percent of the amount is being treated as a Short-term Maturity Loan. The \$324 million has to be repaid in 12 years with a grace period of six years. No service charge and interest will be applicable on the withdrawn amount of the loan.

Of the six projects, three were approved by the WB board last year but their loan agreements were not signed. The other three were approved ahead of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to Washington DC for the celebrations.

The loan agreement for one of the projects will be signed later.

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina presents a painting of the Padma Bridge to World Bank President David Malpass at his headquarters in Washington DC on Monday.

PHOTO: PTI

### PADMA BRIDGE

External pressure led WB to cancel loan Says PM

UNB, Washington DC

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has blamed external pressure for the cancellation of World Bank's \$1.2 billion credit to finance the Padma Bridge.

"I regret that the World Bank moved away from funding this most important project [Padma Multipurpose Bridge] owing to external pressure," she said on Monday while addressing an informal interaction with WB's Board of Executive Directors in Washington DC.

Hasina, however, wished to look into the future of the partnership between Bangladesh and the multilateral lender.

The PM is now in Washington DC on a week-long official visit to the US mainly to take part in the celebration of the 50 years of partnership between Bangladesh and the WB.

She also presented WB President David Malpass with a painting of the Padma Bridge, which was opened on June 25 last year, during the signing of a \$2.25 billion-dollar deal between Bangladesh and the WB to implement five projects.

"The construction of the 6.1km Padma Multipurpose Bridge with our own financial and technical resources is a sign of our economic maturity," she proudly said.

Tk 32,600 crore was spent for constructing the bridge.

## Help us graduate from LDC: Hasina to WB

AGENCIES, Washington DC

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has sought enhanced World Bank cooperation for Bangladesh's smooth transition towards a developing nation, subsequent graduation as upper-middle income country, and implementation of its Delta Plan-2100.

"Bangladesh is preparing for smooth and sustainable graduation from the UN LDC status in 2026. I request the World Bank to support our human capital and institutional capacity development programmes for a smooth transition. The critical IDA [International

Development Association] window needs to be preserved and continued," she said.

The PM was speaking at the plenary session of an event titled "Reflection on 50 years of World Bank-Bangladesh Partnership" at the WB headquarters in Washington DC on Monday, reports BSS.

"My presence here [at the WB HQ] signals that we maintain our trust in the World Bank. Our success in the next two decades would depend on our collective ability and efforts to overcome the emerging challenges in a just and sustainable manner," Hasina said.

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"My presence here [at the WB HQ] signals that we maintain our trust in the World Bank."

PM Sheikh Hasina.

"We are proud of our partnership and look forward to opening the next chapter."

WB President David Malpass

## Repeal DSA, amend all anti-free press laws

Discussion marking World Press Freedom Day told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government must either repeal the Digital Security Act-2018 or amend it in such a manner that it does not hamper free media or freedom of expression.

While presiding over a discussion observing World Press Day, the editor and publisher of The Daily Star, Mahfuz Anam, placed the demand.

Anam said that when the DSA was at its drafting stage, journalists identified different anti-free media provisions and raised their objections first to the government and then to the parliamentary standing committee. Nothing was done. "Later we were assured by the law minister and the information minister that the law would not be used against journalists or to suppress freedom of expression.

PHOTO ON PAGE 3

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THE KILLING CONTINUES ... The Dhaleshwari wears a black, foamy look as the dumping of liquid waste from the Savar Tannery Industrial Estate continues unabated. While estate officials have claimed that the liquid seeping into the river is "treated", the environmental department has found the situation to be otherwise. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

### BUSINESS

#### Export, remittance plunge

Exports and remittances, two major sources of foreign currencies, plunged in April, a bad omen for the economy as it deals with multiple challenges, including a dollar crisis, soaring import costs and falling forex reserves.

Export earnings slumped 16.5 percent year-on-year to \$3.95 billion last month, while remittances nosedived 16.2 percent to \$1.68 billion, according to EPB and BB data.

STORY ON B1

## ANTI-GOVT MOVEMENT BNP weighing options for 'final phase'

Most senior leaders favour road marches, some suggest rallies

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The BNP is planning to hold road marches or rallies as the final phase of the anti-government simultaneous movement.

Most of the senior leaders and the parties participating in the movement opined for starting the movement through road marches, while some suggested road marches after holding rallies in 19 major districts to gain momentum for the movement, said party sources.

They said the BNP wants to go to the final phase of the movement with fresh programmes. And to make it inclusive, the top leadership is taking opinions from leaders of party's different tiers and the parties taking part in the movement.

"We are discussing the final phase of the movement. We will announce the programmes shortly after finalising them," Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, BNP secretary general, told The

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## Stalker stabs schoolgirl to death in Netrakona

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

An alleged stalker stabbed a schoolgirl to death in Barhatta upazila of Netrakona yesterday.

The victim was Mukti Rani Barman, 15, daughter of Nikhil Barman of Premnagar Chhalipura village in Barhatta.

She was a class-X student at a high school, said police.

Quoting family members, Khokon Kumar Saha, officer-in-charge of Barhatta Police station, said Kawser Mia, 19, used to stalk Mukti on the way to school.

She on multiple occasions fended off his advances and Kawser threatened her with dire consequences.

When the girl was returning home from school

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



We thank you all for your kind words, love and support for our mother and grandmother, **Rokia Afzal Rahman**. She meant the world to us.

Please keep her in your prayers.

With Love:

Erum, Kaiser, Imran, Sanjida, Faiza, Nehal, Imaan, Omar, Ayaana, Amaya and Marium