

"I strongly condemn this wanton violence, in which both sides have humanitarian law, notably the principles of distinction..."

UN rights chief Volker Turk



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Designer pearls hold bright prospects



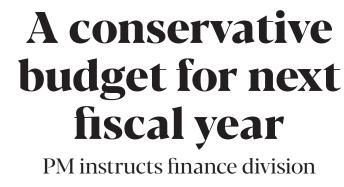
The Zahangir model of navigating



**Asean will** not give up on Myanmar peace



Traders resist **DNCC** move to seal risky market



REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has called for a conservative budget for the next fiscal year, discounting the impact of the forthcoming national elections on the pre-budget exercise.

The disclosure came during a presentation about the finance division's budget plans to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her official residence Ganabhaban on Wednesday.

The size of next fiscal year's budget would be about Tk 760,000 crore, up 12.1 percent from this fiscal year's original budget and 15.1 percent from the revised budget, The Daily Star has learnt from finance ministry officials informed on the proceedings.

The conditions placed by the International Monetary Fund's \$4.7 billion loan programme will inform the budget framework.

At the meeting, Hasina was briefed on the observations made by the IMF staff visit recently. At the meeting, the prime minister called for prioritising inflation

management and economic stability. "There should be no excess spending because of the election," she

said, according to the finance ministry officials. The message was repeated the following day at the meeting of the

National Economic Council, which she chaired. "There should be no nonessential expenditure by the government,"

Planning Minister MA Mannan told reporters after the meeting. In fact, she called for escalating the austerity measures ushered in

at the beginning of the fiscal year, he said. On the first working day of fiscal

2022-23, the government rolled out a cocktail of austerity measures for its own administration. But earlier in March, the

government rolled back most of the austerity measures. The centrepiece of the austerity stance was the ban on the purchase

of vehicles, aircraft, helicopters, ships, boats or barges. That ban was lifted. In the annual development programme, projects were classified

into A, B and C categories. The A-category projects could go on as

normal, while up to 75 percent of the allocation for the B-category projects could be spent. All C-category projects were put on hold. Now, the B-category projects can spend up to 85 percent of their allocation, while the C-category projects that are nearing the end

can proceed, as per the notification from the finance division. While the entire revenue budget can now be spent, there are certain guardrails: 75 percent of the allocation for electricity,

percent of the allocation for training and 80 percent of the allocation for petrol, oil and lubricant, gas and fuel can be used. The institutions can spend their allocations on entertainment, travel, training, stationery, electrical equipment and furniture, which

they were barred from before. Only for essential and emergency purposes could they spend under these overheads and that too 50 percent of the allotted amount. Honorariums for attending meetings of the project implementationcommittee, project steering committee, departmental project

evaluation committee and departmental special project evaluation committee -- were resumed too. Land development as well as the construction of residential and

non-residential buildings under the revenue budget, which were on pause for the austerity stance, were resumed. However, the ban on foreign tours by government officials

remains.

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With Cyclone Mocha inching forward, small ships from the Bay of Bengal have come to set anchor in the Karnaphali river yesterday as part of safety measures. Weather experts fear the cyclone, expected to hit the country on Sunday, may leave massive impacts on the coastal areas. PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

## **Coasts brace for Cyclone Mocha**

Cyclone Mocha was gaining pace in the Bay of Bengal and turned into a severe cyclone before midnight yesterday with its eye moving further towards the Cox's Bazar-Myanmar coast at a speed of 8 kilometres per

Weathermen said the cyclone sharing characteristics of Sidr, which devastated parts of the country in 2007, is still 1,180km away from Cox's Bazar coastline. It may make landfall on Sunday.

"Cyclone Mocha is expected to intensify into a very severe cyclonic storm tomorrow [Friday]," Md Azizur Rahman, director of Bangladesh

	COX'S BAZAR	I CHATTOGRAM	NOAKHALI
Cyclone shelters	<b>576</b>	1,030	<b>463</b>
Volunteers	10,800	16,880	8,380

Meteorological Department (BMD), said in a press briefing yesterday

A very severe cyclone is projected to have wind speeds ranging from 119kmph to 219kmph, while a severe cyclone will have wind speeds between 89kmph and 117kmph.

Cyclone Mocha is likely to hit coastal areas including Chattogram, Cox's Bazar, Noakhali, Bhola, and Myanmar coasts on Sunday, according to the BMD director.

Coastal people can expect rainfall and gusty winds from tomorrow. In a special bulletin issued around noon yesterday, the BMD said the cyclone was centred about 1,205km south-southwest of the Chattogram Port, 1,130km south-southwest of Cox's Bazar Port, 1,165km south-

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#### Shelters being readied for Rohingyas

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In addition to the cyclone shelters already for the Rohingyas living in Cox's Bazar, other establishments are being readied to be temporarily used if needed when Cyclone Mocha hits the country, speakers at a coordination meeting said.

Conducted Relief Refugee Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC) in its office vesterday, the discussed the meeting measures taken to ensure the safety of the Rohingyas in the Ukhiya and Teknaf refugee camps.

chaired by It was Mohammad Mizanur Rahman, joint secretary of RRRC in Cox's Bazar.

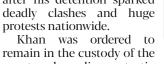
Hasanul Amin, deputy director of the Cyclone Preparedness Programme, said they have around 3,400 volunteers at the ready. They, along with other organisations, will work on safe evacuation. SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

### Imran Khan's arrest 'illegal'

### Declares Pakistan SC, directs him to appear before it today

**AGENCIES** 

Pakistan's Supreme Court yesterday declared the arrest of former prime minister Imran Khan "invalid", in a ruling that came two days after his detention sparked deadly clashes and huge



court under police protection for his own safety until his appearance at another court hearing today. Your arrest was invalid so the whole process needs

to be backtracked," Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial

told Khan at the hearing in the capital Islamabad. "What we propose is that Islamabad police need to provide security, and he (Khan) will provide a list of his

immediate family members and lawyers that should meet him at police lines headquarters," said Bandial. He added that the headquarters, where Khan was

taken into custody following his arrest, should instead be treated as a "residence". Bandial denied Khan's request to return to his farm

house on the outskirts of Islamabad. "The court has ordered that he will remain in the

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# Even one of their own had to buy his release

DB men picked up CID officer, 6 others on robbery charges, then freed him, another after Tk 1.42cr bribe

MUNTAKIM SAAD

Detectives detained a police officer and six others on charges of robbery and took Tk 1.42 crore in bribes from them in 2020, found a home ministry probe.

The detainees were kept in custody at the Detective Branch (DB) office on the capital's Minto Road for a few days and made to pay the bribe, the probe adds.

The ministry probe found seven DB men involved and recommended departmental action against them more than five months ago, but it had not been done

A team of DB officers detained sub-inspector Aksadud Zaman of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and six others on November 26, 2020, on charges of robbing a migrant worker of foreign currencies and valuables worth Tk 4.78 lakh on the Airport Road on October 19, 2020.

Migrant worker Roman filed a case with the Airport Police Station in this connection accusing unnamed criminals the next day.

At the DB office on November 26, DB Additional Deputy Commissioner (Airport zone) Kaysar Rizvi Korayshi told the detainees that if they could pay Tk 2 crore, he would talk to senior officers and let them off the hook, the report

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A part of Hatirjheel is being filled up to make room for the Dhaka Elevated Expressway, which will link Shahjalal International Airport and the Dhaka-Chattogram highway. The project authorities are claiming that filling up is temporary and it would be cleared off after the expressway is constructed. The photo was taken from behind the Pan Pacific Sonargaon Dhaka hotel on Wednesday. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

#### **BUSINESS**

There should be

no nonessential

expenditure

government.'

Planning Minister

by the

**MA Mannan** 

#### GDP growth slows to 6.03% in **FY23**

The economy is estimated to have expanded at a slower-thanexpected pace in 2022-23, said the Bangladesh **Bureau of Statistics** yesterday, a figure that analysts describe as good in view of the ongoing volatile economic scenario.

The gross domestic product grew by 6.03 per cent in the fiscal year, said the national statistical agency based on its provisional data.

STORY ON B1