



“Greenhouse gas concentrations are at record levels – in fact higher than at any time over the last 800,000 years.”

WMO chief Petteri Taalas



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## A bleak time to draw up budget

Govt up against stiffer challenges to tame inflation, restore macroeconomic stability

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and MD FAZLUR RAHMAN

In June last year when Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal placed the budget in parliament, inflation had already been creeping up and the foreign currency reserves were on the decline. These two had derailed the full economic recovery from a two-year crisis wrought by the Covid pandemic.

The government mapped out strategies to avoid the impending macroeconomic instability, tackle the cost-of-living crisis and maintain stability in the exchange rate of the taka.

Now, a year later, things have gone from bad to worse. Bangladesh is now facing stiffer challenges owing to both external factors and internal weaknesses.

The reserves have fallen by about 30 percent, inflation is three percentage points higher than a year ago, and the taka has lost its value

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**There have not been serious tax reforms for nearly a decade, and automation didn't gather pace either. Thus, the government is set to miss the revenue collection target for the 11th consecutive year in FY23.**



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

A nurse attends to eight-year-old Rifat, a dengue patient from Jurain, while his younger sister looks on at the Mugda Medical College Hospital yesterday. City hospitals have been getting an increasing number of dengue patients over the last few days.

## MOODY'S CREDIT RATING Bangladesh downgraded

Foreign loans for businesses likely to get dearer

AKM ZAMIR UDDIN

The US-based global credit rating agency Moody's Investors Service yesterday downgraded Bangladesh's sovereign rating by one notch to B1 from Ba3.

This is the first time the country's rating has been downgraded since the agency started rating the nation in 2010.

Bangladesh's long-term rating remained unchanged at Ba3 from 2010 to 2022, according to a report issued by the

agency yesterday.

Moody's rating scale, which ranges from a maximum Aaa to a minimum C, consists of 21 notches.

Economists say that the downgrade will take a heavy toll on the economy as it taints the country's image abroad.

They think it is “one of the worst incidents” in the recent history of Bangladesh's economy.

The downgrading means local

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Moody's

GOVT TEAMS GOING TO KSA

## To perform hajj or assist hajis?

RASHIDUL HASAN

At least 200 of the 218 officials the government is sending to Saudi Arabia to assist the Bangladeshi medical and technical team during hajj do not have any technical training or background in medicine.

Yet, the religious affairs ministry is spending taxpayers' money to send them.

The ministry is sending another “hajj technical delegation” to Saudi Arabia. But 23 of its 31 members have no technical or IT background. This delegation is supposed to assist a “hajj administrative team”.

Many have said a large group of officials and employees were given the opportunity to visit Saudi Arabia in the name of technical and administrative support.

Most members of the delegations

are office assistants, personal assistants, administrative officials, chauffeurs, gunmen, cops, security guards, cooks, cleaners, photocopy machine operators, typists, record keepers and support staff.

Stakeholders in the sector also raised questions about the rationale of sending a 75 member “administrative team” and a 15-member high-profile team led by

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