

Bangladesh holds a special place in my heart: Anuv Jain

ANTARA RAISA

Anuv Jain, both in person and through his enchanting music, embodies sweetness, love, and nostalgia. Yesterday marked a momentous occasion as he graced the stage for the first time in Dhaka, captivating the audience with his soul-stirring performance at the concert "Let's Vibe Dhaka with Anuv Jain" in the capital's International Convention City Bashundhara (ICCB).

Yesterday, Anuv Jain shared his heartfelt emotions with *The Daily Star*.

What has been the most memorable moment for you on this trip?

I was blown away when I heard the concert tickets were completely sold out.

The anticipation and support from my Bangladeshi fans has been overwhelming. I always believed there was a special connection waiting to happen here, and seeing tonight's sold-out show confirms that. This is my second time performing live internationally, and I am grateful for the opportunity to transcend borders and connect with fans who have embraced my music with open hearts.

Can you share any behind-the-scenes stories from the concert?

This was the first time I sang a new song in front of such a big crowd, so I have been preparing for it for a long time. The song, *Antariksh*, is a very tricky song. Thankfully, the audience loved it.

Out of your setlist, is there any particular song that has a special place in your own heart?

Absolutely! *Baarishein* holds a special place in my heart, not only because it brought me recognition, but also because it has touched the lives of so many people. It has been trending in both Bangladesh and India, and witnessing the audience's response to this song is always a humbling experience. I felt privileged performing it tonight and sharing its magic with my Bangladeshi fans.

What do you appreciate most about performing live?

Performing live is an exhilarating experience

for me. It's the only time I can witness firsthand how my music impacts the audience. The energy in the room, the collective vibe, and the emotional connection created between the audience and me—it's an extraordinary moment. It confirms that I'm on the right path and that my music is resonating with people's souls.

How do you maintain a balance between staying true to your artistic vision and meeting the expectations of your fans?

I believe that as long as I create music from an authentic place, my fans will continue to love it.

What message do you have for your fans in Bangladesh?

To my Bangladeshi fans, I want to express my deepest gratitude for the warm hospitality and overwhelming love you have shown me in such a short time. I've been here for only a few hours, and already the outpouring of love is beyond anything I could have imagined. Hopefully, I will keep coming back here, again and again, in the future.



PHOTO: THABIT AL BASHAR



PHOTO: COLLECTED



Star Cineplex to screen its first Korean movie from today

Star Cineplex has announced that they will be showcasing their first Korean movie on the silver screen which will be available from today. The movie titled *6/45* stars Go Kyung-pyo and Park Se-wan in lead roles.

6/45 is a Korean comedy film about a winning lottery ticket discovered by a South Korean soldier which accidentally flows to North Korea and gets discovered by a North Korean soldier.

Cast of 'Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani' reunite for 10th anniversary

Wednesday marked the 10th anniversary of the iconic Hindi film *Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani*, directed by Ayan Mukherji.

Earlier on Thursday, Ayan Mukherji took to his Instagram to post three photos, two of which were selfies of Ranbir Kapoor, Deepika Padukone, Aditya Roy Kapoor and Kalki Koechlin, in a reunion party of the film. The other photo has the whole team congregated, including Manish Malhotra, Ayan, Pritam, Kunal Roy Kapur, Karan Johar, Siddharth Roy Kapur and others.



NEWS

Relief for rich, burden on low-income people

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The minimum tax will be a burden for low-income people and it contradicts the concept of tax-free income, said Muntaseer Kamal, a research fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue.

People already have to spend money while submitting the income and expenditure statements because they have to hire someone to handle the complicated paperwork, he said.

He, however, welcomed the decision to raise the annual tax-free income threshold. "This will provide some much-needed comfort to the low- and limited-income people amid the soaring prices of essentials."

The government should rather raise taxes for the highest earners. "It must be remembered that this rate was lowered to 25 percent from 30 percent in 2021... Doing this will promote the cause of tax equity."

He is also of the opinion that the proposed surcharge-exempt wealth may reduce the number of taxpayers.

"The surcharge is calculated based on the purchase price of an asset, not its current market price, which tends to be significantly higher. This implies that the asset owners are already paying less in taxes than they should be. Given

the current situation, lessening the tax on the wealthy appears counterintuitive."

Jasim Uddin Rasel, a chartered accountant and lead consultant at online tax training site Taxpert, says the proposed tax changes are mainly focused on low- and lower-middle-income people who are likely to benefit from the new zero-tax threshold because of the introduction of minimum tax.

The NBR will for the first time engage TRPs to help new taxpayers file income and expenditure statements.

CORPORATE TAX

The corporate taxes will remain unchanged even though the businesses are having to spend more on raw materials and taka is losing its value against dollar, said Arif Khan, vice-chairman of Shanta Asset Management.

But since the interest rate is going to rise, the costs of running a business is going to increase, he said.

Chartered accountant Jasim said, "Ultimately the cost will be borne by the low and lower middle-income people. The minimum tax and the cost of managing tax files will increase their living cost amid high inflation."

Healthcare's slice gets smaller

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12,210 crore from Tk 15,851 crore in the outgoing fiscal.

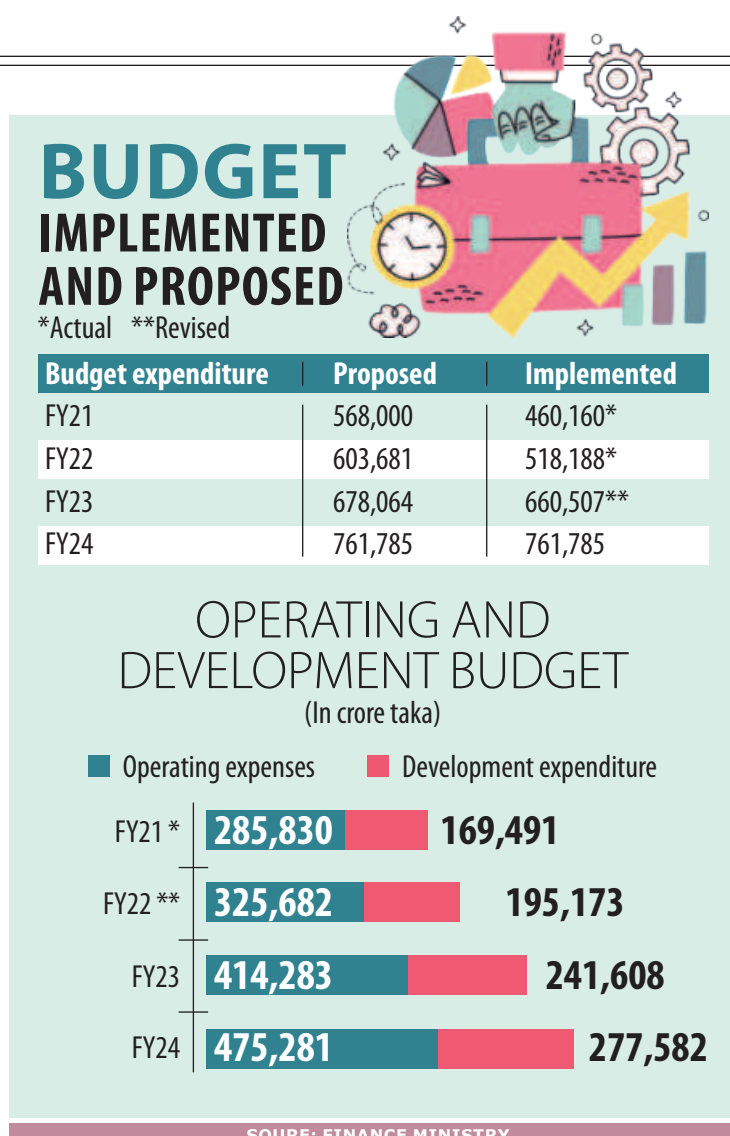
"The increase in the Health Services Division budget is too insignificant. This will hamper healthcare services and the supply of medicine to public hospitals," said Syed Abdul Hamid, a professor of health economics at Dhaka University.

Meanwhile, the allocation for the health ministry's Medical Education and Family Welfare Division has increased by Tk 1,039 crore to Tk

8,621 crore. It was Tk 7,582 crore in the outgoing fiscal.

According to the budget speech, this allocation will contribute to the establishment of new medical universities and medical colleges in addition to health education and family planning services.

Meanwhile, 100 raw materials to produce medicine for tuberculosis, malaria, cancer and diabetes will get VAT exemption facility at production level. So, prices of these medicine may decrease.



Global swoop nets more than 200 suspected traffickers

AFP, The Hague

A huge operation targeting human traffickers across 44 countries has netted 212 suspects and identified almost 1,500 victims, many of them children, EU policing agency Europol said yesterday.

The Austrian and Romanian-led Operation Global Chain took place between May 8 and 15 and included police, immigration, and border authorities as well as child and social protection services, Europol said.

The operation focused on "organised crime groups involved in trafficking in human beings, in particular child trafficking, sexual exploitation, forced criminality and forced begging," it said in a statement.

The swoop, in which some 1.6 million people were checked, 25,400 locations and 153,500 vehicles were searched, looked at traffickers exploiting victims from South America, Asia, Africa, the western Balkans and Ukraine.

President of ex-Pak PM's party arrested

REUTERS, Lahore

The president of former Pakistani prime minister Imran Khan's party was arrested in the eastern city of Lahore yesterday on charges of corruption, a government official said.

Pakistan is beset by political turmoil as Khan's party has faced a countrywide crackdown since his own arrest on May 9 for suspected graft sparked widespread protests that saw mobs ransacking state installations, including military assets.

Pervez Elahi, president of Khan's Tehreek-e-Insaf party, joins a long list of key PTI leaders arrested in the security swoop to halt turmoil that has threatened to worsen instability in a country reeling from a crippling financial crisis.

"Pervez Elahi is wanted in several corruption cases," Amir Mir, caretaker information minister in the eastern province of Punjab, told

Reuters. He added that Punjab's anti-corruption department had been looking for Elahi for several days.

Elahi previously denied accusations of corruption.

Khan was freed on bail on May 12 for an initial two weeks, obtained a three-day bail extension from a high court and later a further extension from the trial court until June 19.

Dozens of top and mid-tier leaders in the PTI have been arrested alongside hundreds of Khan supporters since the violent protests of May 9. Many have quit the party after being released while other leaders remain on the run to avoid arrest.

Khan, who denies wrongdoing, says the arrests are part of a campaign to dismantle his party and that the state is using pressure tactics to force out his aides. The government denies this and says his aides were leaving of their own volition.

Rise far from enough

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Echoing Sen, economist Rizwanul Islam, said the coverage, even after the proposed increase of its size, is small considering the total number of eligible beneficiaries.

"The amounts allocated per beneficiary are woefully inadequate," said Islam, former special advisor, Employment Sector, International Labour Office, Geneva.

The approach proposed in the budget will not create any sustainable solution to the problems faced by the poor and the destitute, said Prof Selim Raihan, executive director of the South Asian Network on Economic Modeling, adding that it's not desirable for inclusive growth.

Raihan went on to say that the government or policy makers have a wrong perception about the

country's number of poor and ultra-poor people.

"They think that the poor people have been reduced to a great extent and ultra-poor people have almost not existed in the country," he said adding that the budgetary allocation for social security programmes has usually been made from this wrong perception, which should be changed.

Bazlul Haque Khondker, former professor of economics at the University of Dhaka, said that the government should make specific allocations for the urban poor.

The government should specifically allocate funds for improving databases, digital payment system and beneficiary selection, he said.