

## No point in fretting over visas, sanctions

Says PM about US measures

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said it doesn't matter if no one takes a 20-hour flight across the Atlantic to go to the US.

"There are many other oceans and continents in the world. We will make friends with those continents across the other oceans. Our economy will be stronger, more developed and vibrant," she said.

Bangladesh will stand on its feet and the government will build this country, she said while inaugurating a new office building for the Dhaka District Awami League in the capital's Tejgaon.

"We will not be dependent on others. There is no point in fretting over who will not give us visas or who will impose sanctions."

She then advised the USA to look at the party that "rigged votes" and "played with people's fate".

The PM mentioned that the Canadian High Court had declared the BNP "a terrorist party".

"The USA did not issue a visa to Tarique Zia over terrorism and corruption."

The Awami League knows what benefits the people of Bangladesh, she said. "We always keep that in our mind. The country will be a developed one by 2041. We have also formulated the Delta Plan 2100 for the future generations."

People know that their fate will change only if they vote for 'boat', the AL's electoral symbol.

About the criticisms of the proposed budget for 2023-24 fiscal, Hasina said the government was confident of implementing it.

"They [critics] are singing the same old songs again, which is something they usually do during the presentation of each budget."

The government has been able to achieve remarkable development in Bangladesh. "This happened as the people of the country voted Awami League to power through the elections in 2008, 2014 and 2018."



A drone view shows derailed coaches after two passenger trains collided in Balasore district in the eastern state of Odisha, India, June 3, 2023.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## SAFETY NET BUDGET FY 2023-24 Spending just 1.01pc of GDP, not 2.52pc

REJAUL KARIM BYRON  
and WASIM BIN HABIB

On paper, Tk 126,272 crore, the amount earmarked for social safety net programmes, looks to be a hefty sum. But the sum flatters to deceive: as much as 60 percent would be going towards those not in dire need.

For instance, about 22 percent of the sum is meant to be pension for the 8 lakh

### HOW THE SOCIAL SAFETY NET FUNDS WILL BE USED



government employees from grade 10 to 20. Then another Tk 11,217 crore is going as interest payment for national savings certificates.

If the agriculture subsidy and the interest subsidy for loans to small and medium enterprises, including cottage industries, are taken out, the pot becomes even smaller.

In reality, just 1.01 percent of the GDP is

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6 Congressmen  
write to Biden  
over issues in  
Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Six US Congressmen have written to US President Joe Biden, calling for urgent actions to stop the "human rights abuses" by the Bangladesh government and "give the people of Bangladesh the best possible chance for free and fair parliamentary elections".

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SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



This is one of six dredgers that illegally extract several lakh cubic feet of sand every day from the Meghna river between Brahmanbaria's Sarail and Kishoreganj's Bhairab. Environmentalists say that such activities lead to erosions, flooding, and loss of fish resources.

PHOTO: MASUK HRIDOY

## Over 18,000 non-govt primary schools close doors in 2 years

Officials say pandemic to blame

MOHUDDIN ALAMGIR

At least 18,465 non-government primary schools closed their doors for good in 2021 and 2022 due to what officials said were the impacts of Covid-19 pandemic.

Most of these schools were closed in 2021 because the owners could not bear the cost of running them.

The final draft of Annual Primary School Census (APSC) 2022 shows 4,352 private primary schools faced closure last year.

In 2022, the number of teachers in non-government primary schools was 6,26,042, which indicates that 1,14,429 had left the profession since 2020, shows data from the Department of Primary Education (DPE).

"We have been talking about the possibility of private primary schools closing down because of the lingering impact of Covid-19 pandemic. Now the government data has shown the reality," Rasheda

### PRIMARY SCHOOL GRAPH

YEAR	NO OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS	TEACHERS	STUDENTS
2020	1,33,002	7,40,471	2,15,51,691
2021	1,18,891	6,57,203	2,00,90,057
2022	1,14,539	6,26,042	2,05,46,091

SOURCE DIRECTORATE OF PRIMARY EDUCATION

groups and they played a role in ensuring education for all, she said.

Since it has a clear picture now, the government should come up with plans to effectively bring the students of those institutions back to the classrooms.

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Days after the first few cases of coronavirus were detected in Bangladesh, the government on March 17, 2020, ordered the schools to close their classrooms and impart

lessons online. The classrooms reopened 18 months later.

Amid rising number of coronavirus cases, schools again remained closed for almost a month in early 2022.

## HONOURING OUR BUSINESS LEADERS

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The categories are:

ENTERPRISE OF THE  
YEAR 2022

BEST FINANCIAL INSTITUTION  
OF THE YEAR 2022

BUSINESS PERSON OF  
THE YEAR 2022

OUTSTANDING WOMAN IN  
BUSINESS OF THE YEAR 2022

Last date for submitting nominations is June 20, 2023.

For the 21<sup>st</sup> time, we are going to honour individuals and organizations for their outstanding contributions to business and the economic growth of Bangladesh. Your valuable nomination will help us select the right nominees.

For further details regarding the information required in the submission, visit our website:

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