



\$1b in budget support arrives next week

ADB, AIIB and Jica teamed up for the financing arrangement

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

About \$1 billion in budget support is set to arrive in the next few days from three development partners to help the government meet its deficit financing for this fiscal year.

Of the sum, \$400 million is coming from the Asian Development Bank, another \$400 million from the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and \$216 million from the Japan International Cooperation Agency.

Yesterday, the boards of the AIIB and the ADB approved the loan. The approval for the loan from Jica is expected by next week.

The amounts would enter the Bangladesh Bank's vault as soon as the loans are approved by the boards as Bangladesh has been able to meet more or less all the conditions. The Daily Star has learnt from finance ministry officials involved with the proceedings.

However, the inflow would not be enough to prop up the country's net international reserves enough to meet the \$24.46 billion floor set by the International Monetary Fund to get the second tranche of the \$4.7 billion sanctioned.

All three loans' conditions are synchronised and drawn upon by the ADB, which is serving as the lead financier.

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Two students waded through ankle-deep water on the playground adjacent to Char Chaktai City Corporation High School in Chattogram city's Dakshin Bakalia area. Children cannot play on this ground, the only one in the area, as it has been under water for over four months. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RATHAN

Finish probe into Sultana's death within two months

HC asks govt-formed body

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the government-formed committee to complete in two months the enquiry into the detention and death of Sultana Jesmineof Naogaon.

The HC bench of Justice Farah Mahbub and Justice Mohammad Mahbub Ul Islam passed the order following a petition filed by Deputy Attorney General Samarendranath Biswas on behalf of the state, seeking time to complete the probe.

"It is a sensitive matter. Don't cross the two-month time limit. Two months

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Child mortality rate rises

The child mortality rate in Bangladesh has increased significantly to 31 per thousand in 2022 compared to 28 per thousand in 2021, according to "Bangladesh Sample Vital Statistics (BSVS) 2022", launched by BBS yesterday. Deaths of children under one increased to 25 per thousand from 22 per thousand during the same period. Diarrhoea, malnutrition, acute respiratory infection and drowning were among the other reasons behind the rise. According to experts, this significant rise highlights the gap in child healthcare services in the country.

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Tax bill proposes clipping ACC wings

Investigators to require court's permission to get graft suspect's tax return info from NBR

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

Although tax returns are a key document for investigating illegal wealth, the Income Tax Bill 2023 proposes making it impossible for Anti-Corruption Commission officials to access a suspect's tax files without a court order.

ACC officers fear that if the bill passes, investigations will become unnecessarily complicated and lengthy.

"Investigation officers use the tax return as an authentic document while filing cases. But the power is curtailed in the proposed act," said an ACC officer, requesting anonymity.

"Many corrupt individuals may get away. We don't know for whose benefit the power is curtailed," the officer added.

A parliamentary body was asked on June 8 to examine the bill and come up with a report in five working days.

The provision curtailing ACC investigators' power is clearly contradictory to article 20(2) of the Constitution which criminalises unearned income, said Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh.

Currently, the ACC launches an investigation after receiving a complaint of illegal wealth and asks the individual concerned for their wealth statement.

Officers then cross-check the statement in light of the tax return they obtain from the National Board of Revenue. Officers also verify the information of moveable and immovable properties with records from banks and other organisations.

If the officers detect irregularities, they file cases with the ACC's approval.

But section 309 (2) of the proposed income tax bill says the ACC cannot seek income tax return unless there is a court order.

One of the mandates of the ACC is to dig out illegal wealth and it often says it will not let owners of illegal wealth sleep peacefully, said an officer.

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Vendor beaten to death for 'skipping rally'

Family points finger at ruling party activists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A street vendor has been beaten to death in the capital's Mirpur for not attending a rally organised by the Jubo League in the area, alleged family members and locals.

Several people beat Hafizur Rahman, 27, indiscriminately around 6:30pm on Monday in front of his cart, said witnesses.

As he fell unconscious, locals rushed him to a local hospital and then to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College, where doctors declared him dead.

Hafizur used to sell chicken fries from his cart on Folpatty Road near Mirpur-10 roundabout.

"Some Awami League men beat my brother to death as he did not join a rally as per their instruction. Hafizur assured them that he would join the rally but instead opened his cart for business," the victim's elder brother Shafiqul Islam told The Daily Star.

Shafiqul also claimed that most who run makeshift shops or carts on the pavement are forced to attend

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Jamaat regrouping by stealth

Police documents show the party is swelling its ranks fast

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Contrary to the widespread perception that Jamaat-e-Islami has been on the wane for over the past 15 years, the Islamist party that actively opposed the birth of the nation is actually growing, according to intelligence and party documents.

In 2008, the number of the party's permanent members or Rukon was 23,863. That figure now stands at 73,046 -- a threefold rise, according to a police intelligence report.

The Islamist party also sees a threefold rise in the number of its activists, which has leapt to 6.39 lakh from 2.21 lakh during the same period, the report says.

Lately, Jamaat came into discussion again as it held a rally in the capital on Saturday after getting police permission. The party was given such permission for the first time in 10 years. Later, four ministers on Sunday tried to justify the government's decision.

About the permission, Agriculture Minister Abdur Razzak on Sunday said Jamaat has a support base and in light of this, the government gave the party permission to hold the rally.

The police intelligence report, which also contains Jamaat's strategy for the upcoming national election and funding, has recently been submitted to the home ministry.

It has been prepared based on information gathered from the party's top-secret documents, interrogation of top Jamaat leaders and interception of communication among party leaders.

The Daily Star has a copy of the report alongside party documents.

The documents show a nearly fivefold rise in the party's women Rukon, and a fourfold rise in women activists. Similarly, the number

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Mangoes galore at the Kansat mango market in Chapainawabganj's Shibganj upazila. Farmers say prices of different varieties of mangoes, including Guti, Langra, Khirsapati, Fazli and Amropali, are lower this year compared to those of last year because of good production. The popular summer fruit was sold for Tk 800 to Tk 2,400 per maund yesterday depending on variety and quality.

PHOTO: RABUL HASAN

Win fails to bring joy to AL camp

Party's campaign office found deserted after Khair's victory; unit leaders didn't greet mayor-elect

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN and SUSHANTA GHOSH, from Barishal

Voter turnout was as low as 36 percent in neighbourhoods known as strongholds of incumbent Barishal Mayor Serniabat Sadiq Abdullah in Monday's polls to the Barishal City Corporation, according to centre-wise voting results.

Voters, AL leaders, and supporters from these areas abstained from voting because of tension between Sadiq and his uncle -- mayor-elect Abul Khair Abdullah, said sources.

Sadiq, also the secretary of the Barishal city Awami League (AL), who was in Dhaka on election day, did not even go to Barishal to vote.

Prior to the election, there were reports of a rift between Khair and his nephew Sadiq after Khair received the AL ticket to run for mayor.

Even, Sadiq's father, Abul Hasanat Abdullah, and his supporters also stayed away from Sadiq's election campaign.

Khair won the polls with 87,808 votes, which is more than 62 percent of the total votes cast (1.42 lakh votes).

In spite of the victory, the AL leaders and activists in the city did not arrange any celebration.

This newspaper yesterday found the city AL office locked. Even around the AL's central campaign office, very few leaders and supporters were seen.

Leaders of the city unit AL did not even meet the mayor-elect to congratulate him.

Speaking to this newspaper yesterday, Hemayet Uddin Sumon, office secretary of city unit AL, said, "We

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'Contribute to ensuring free, fair polls in Bangladesh'

6 European Parliament members write to EU high representative for foreign affairs

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Six members of the European Parliament have asked the EU high representative for foreign affairs to contribute to ensuring free, fair, and impartial general elections, possibly under a poll-time neutral

caretaker government, in Bangladesh.

They also called for "ending the violation of human rights, release of Khaleda Zia, and engagement of the government with the BNP and other major political parties to find a sustainable and democratic

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WE DEEPLY MOURN



Jahan Ara Chowdhury, wife of Late Dr. Malik Khosru Chowdhury, died of old-age complications at Uttara Crescent Hospital in Dhaka on the 12th of June 2023, this past Monday. She was 84.

Jahan Ara Chowdhury, lovingly nick-named Dulali by her parents, and adoringly called Nanna by her grandchildren, was an indomitable spirit and an adventurous soul. She had many entrepreneurial endeavors, was ahead of her time, independent and modern when it was unthinkable. She was a force and an inspiration to her two daughters and her four loving granddaughters.

She left behind her three children, eight grand-children, her youngest sister, and a host of relatives and well-wishers to mourn her passing.

Jahan Ara Chowdhury's namaz-e-janaza will be held at Gulshan Azad Mosque on Wednesday the 14th of June, 2023, after Zuhr prayers. She will be laid to rest at the Banani graveyard afterwards.

Her relatives, friends, and her well-wishers are requested to pray for the salvation of her departed soul and to always remember her strength, her kindness and her beautiful light.