



## Age of low-priority projects?

Ecneec expected to approve 7 such projects worth Tk 21,765cr today

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and ASIFUR RAHMAN

Amid a cost of living crisis, providing cash support to the poor and endeavouring to tame inflation would be the logical actions. But the government is not toeing that line.

It appears to be taking a high-stakes gamble on inflation, taking up seven projects worth Tk 21,675 crore to prop up the rural economy ahead of the polls, due to take place in January next year.

The government's logic for taking up the seven projects, all of which are of low priority, now and not later is that those would ensure cash in hand for the rural people as they grapple with soaring inflation. The Daily Star has learnt from finance ministry officials informed of the proceedings.

In May, rural inflation stood at 9.85 percent, up from 8.92 percent in April.

The seven projects would be placed in today's meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecneec) along with 10 others.

The projects are for building rural roads, culverts and drainage systems and for expanding the rural people's scope of employment.

The tendency to take up such low-priority projects centring on the rural economy began to manifest in recent weeks.

For instance, in the first Ecneec meeting of this month, three such projects in Bagerhat, Netrokona and Narail districts involving Tk 2,585 crore.

In today's meeting, a Tk 3,384 crore project -- titled NEET (No Education, Employment and Training) -- will be placed under the directorate of youth development to create job opportunities for 9 lakh youth and women of rural areas.

A Tk 6,345 crore project will be taken up for infrastructural development at 88 Pourashovas. Under the project, 1,037 kilometres of road will be renovated and 437km of drainage system will be upgraded.

Besides, 73 backward areas will be developed under the project, the proposal wrote.

Another project will be taken in 67 upazilas of Chattogram division to extend 1,149km of roads to improve connectivity such that farmers can get a fair price for their produce. The project is worth Tk 3,110 crore.

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Police obstruct leaders and activists of Gonotontro Moncho with a barbed wire barricade at the Zero Point intersection on Abdul Gani Road yesterday afternoon as they tried to march towards the Secretariat to demand a solution to the power crisis and protest high prices of essentials.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## Eight sued under DSA for 'defaming' info minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A Jubo League leader from Chattogram's Rangunia upazila filed a case against eight people under the Digital Security Act (DSA) for creating and circulating "fake, baseless, and defamatory information" against Information Minister Dr

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## Rain, flood may lead to low voter turnout

Electioneering hampered on last day

DWOHA CHOWDHURY

Candidates fear a low voter turnout in tomorrow's Sylhet City Corporation polls as there could be flooding in the city with the Surma flowing just below the danger level.

The Met office yesterday also forecast heavy rainfall in the Sylhet region in next 48 hours. Due to heavy rain since June 15,



many low-lying areas in the city are waterlogged while newly extended areas of the city, which are mostly villages, are affected.

Rain also hampered campaigning, including rallies, yesterday, the last day for electioneering.

Mayor and councillor candidates had huge plans for the last day, but

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LITON EXPECTED TO CRUISE TO VICTORY - PAGE 2

## NADIM'S MURDER Police ignored his pleas for security two months ago

SAHIDUL ISLAM NIRAB, Jamalpur

Slain journalist Golam Rabbani Nadim made a complaint to Bakshiganj Police Station in Jamalpur over two months ago mentioning that he was in constant fear of attack.

But police neither recorded the complaint nor did anything to ensure his safety, his fellow journalists said.

The matter came to the fore after Nadim was killed last week allegedly by a union parishad chairman's men.

In his complaint, Nadim said Bakshiganj upazila Awami League President Shahina Begum, 50, had been angry at him after he wrote reports about her "misdeeds".

The complaint submitted to the officer-in-charge of the police station on April 12 added that Shahina and her followers were threatening to kill him and that he was assaulted the night before in Bakshiganj Modhya Bazar area.

He named four of his attackers as Akhtaruzzaman Helal, 45, Ismail Hossain Shwapon, 35, Shamim Khandaker, 40, and Sheikh Farid, 32, and added that they were Shahina's followers.

"They might cause severe harm to me anytime. I am living in panic because of them. That's why legal steps should be taken," read the complaint.

Several local journalists accompanied Nadim when he submitted the complaint to Sohail Rana, officer-in-charge of the police station.

A journalist, seeking anonymity, said, SEE PAGE 2 COL 2



Golam Rabbani Nadim

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