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B1
**War dashes
Russian dream
of exporters**



P11
**Alcaraz
reclaims No. 1
ranking**



P5
**Wagner revolt
makes Putin
look weakened**



P3
**Cattle sales
yet to gain
momentum**

Keep AL in power to level up from LDC

Says Hasina in JS, announces 5pc special increment for govt employees

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said government employees will get an additional 5 percent of their basic pay from July to compensate for the runaway inflation.

Addressing parliament yesterday on the proposed budget for fiscal 2023-24, she requested the finance minister to consider paying the special increment “during this emergency”.

“I hope the finance minister will accept this,” she said.

Government officials have been demanding a raise amid rising prices of essentials, and the move is expected to cost the government Tk 4,000 crore, said finance ministry sources.

Government officials usually get a 5 percent increment each year. The new raise will be in addition to the usual increment.

Whether the increment would continue once inflation subsidies was not said.

In her address yesterday, Hasina also told parliament that the people need to keep Awami League in power so that Bangladesh becomes a developing country by 2026.

“Who will be able to implement it if we don't come [to power again]? Show me a person who will be able to do it. Show me a person who will work selflessly for the country. If you can show me such leadership, I have no objection,” she said.

Since the people voted the AL to power time and again, the government has been able to serve the country and bring it on track of development, she said.

The prime minister said this budget was the 15th budget in a row for AL governments and the last for the current government's tenure. “But the people of Bangladesh will decide whether it is the final budget or not. I am giving the responsibility of that decision to the people,” she added.

The PM said her government is taking necessary measures to keep the wheels of the economy rolling despite various obstacles, resistances, and criticism.

“Hadn't there been the Covid-19 and Russia-Ukraine war, Bangladesh could have gone far on its development journey.

“Do not get upset seeing problems,” she said, adding that it is normal that problems come from time to time.

“When the economies of many developed countries are struggling, we've been able to give a record budget,” she said. She highlighted various steps taken for economic development and to rein in inflation.

Hasina said her government was able to reduce poverty significantly. “Today the unemployment rate is only three percent,” she said.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

- Salary hike to cost govt Tk 4,000cr extra a year
- Tk 2,000 tax on non-taxable income withdrawn
- About 4.5cr people to benefit from safety net initiatives



The Jamuna devouring the Chituliapara village in Tangail's Bhuanpur upazila yesterday while a bulk carrier pumps silt onto the shore in the background. Experts say illegal dredging is often to blame for erosion.

PHOTO: STAR

Heart stents to be less expensive from Sept

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Cardiac patients in need of stenting are likely to get some relief as two major producers and suppliers of the stents yesterday agreed to reduce the base prices of their products from September 1.

The cost of at least three types of cardiac stents, which are frequently used in Bangladesh, may get price drops between Tk 10,000 and Tk 20,000.

Officials of Abbott Laboratories and Boston Scientific — two world-leading producers and suppliers of cardiac stents — agreed to the price reduction at a meeting with the Directorate General of Drug Administration (DGDA).

“We will now take steps to revise the pricing formula and reduce the taxes. So, the price will drop further,” Maj Gen Mohammad Yousuf, director general of the

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

FARIDPUR RACKET LAUNDERING TK 2,000CR CID presses charges against 37 more

CHAITANYA CHANDRA HALDER and SHARIFUL ISLAM

The Criminal Investigation Department has found involvement of 37 more people in the much-talked about Tk 2,000 crore money laundering racket of Faridpur.

The newly identified suspects include current and former leaders of the ruling Awami League in the district.

The case was originally filed by the CID with Kafirul Police Station in June 2020 against Sajjad Hossain Barkat and his brother Imtiaz Hasan Rubel, both leaders of Faridpur district AL at the time.

The CID later pressed charges against 10 men. Officers got the names of the 37 new suspects from the confessional statements of six of them.

The new suspects are members of a powerful syndicate led by former minister Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain's brother Khandaker Mohtesam Hossain Babar, according to the confessions.

The accused individuals allegedly manipulated tenders left and right and received cuts from contracts across government offices in Faridpur, according to the confessional statements.

The first charge sheet in the case was submitted to a court on March 3, 2021. It caused quite a stir among the local politicians

who were aware of the “aggressive” tender manipulation by the syndicate.

A Dhaka court on September 1, 2022, said the charge sheet was submitted without following the proper procedure and ordered further probe.

The judge said two of the accused were not named in the charge sheet even though they confessed to their involvement in the crime.

The new suspects are members of a powerful syndicate led by former minister Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain's brother Khandaker Mohtesam Hossain Babar, according to the statements.

Besides, the investigator did not press charges against several others whose involvement was mentioned in multiple confessional statements.

The judge added that the investigating agency must not exclude those mentioned in more than one confessional statement.

After around nine months of investigation, CID's Additional Superintendent of Police Raihan Uddin Khan submitted a supplementary charge sheet to a Dhaka court on Thursday, pressing charges against the 37.
SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

Ensure the safety of UN peacekeepers

Foreign secretary urges the visiting UN top officials

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has called for addressing the safety and security concerns of the UN peacekeepers deployed in the conflict zones, especially in some African countries.

The issues were discussed when Jean-Pierre Lacroix, the UN under-secretary-general for peace operations, and Catherine Pollard, the UN under-secretary-general for management strategy, policy and compliance, called on top ministers yesterday.

They are visiting Bangladesh to attend the first preparatory meeting for the UN Peacekeeping Ministerial themed “Women in UN Peacekeeping”. The UN Peacekeeping Ministerial is scheduled to be held in Ghana on December 5 and 6.

The UN Peacekeeping must take into account the emerging concerns of
SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

US under secy Nuland to be in Dhaka early next month

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

US Under Secretary for Political Affairs Victoria Nuland will lead a high-level delegation to Bangladesh early July.

Donald Lu, US assistant secretary of state for South and Central Asian Affairs, will also be in the team.

“This is a high-level delegation to visit Dhaka possibly for political talks. The visit will likely be after Eid,” a diplomatic source in Washington told The Daily Star last night.

The details, however, are yet to be known.

The US announced a visa policy for Bangladesh saying that it would deny US visas to those involved in vote rigging or intimidation.

Earlier in 2021, the US imposed sanctions against Rab.

In the recent weeks, US Ambassador Peter Haas held a series of meetings with political parties.



RUNDOWN BUSES STILL ON ROADS

The rear end of the bus is in appalling condition. The number plate has disappeared and the indicators and tail lights don't work. The only place where the name of the bus and the number plate can be found is at the front side. The rundown bus, operated by Akash Enterprise, runs between Abdullahpur in Keraniganj and Diabari in Uttara. However, according to BRTA documents, the bus's fitness clearance and tax token expired on January 24 and May 17 this year. A police official who seized the bus in the Gulistan-Fulbaria area said that the bus had been operating even though several cases had already been filed against it. After revising several deadlines, the BRTA last month asked the transport operators to facelift all rundown buses by June 20 this year. However, as can be seen in the photo, the order has had little impact.

PHOTO: TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

BOTCHED C-SECTION

Widower seeks Tk 2cr in damages

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Yakub Ali Sumon, widower of Mahbuba Rahman Akhi, yesterday filed a complaint with Bangladesh Medical and Dental Council against Central Hospital and gynaecologist Sangjukta Saha.

He is also seeking Tk 2 crore in damages for the deaths of Akhi and his newborn due to an alleged botched C-section at the hospital.

The newborn died on June 10 afternoon, around 12 hours after the C-section, and Akhi died seven days later while on life support. Sangjukta was the consultant for Akhi.

Yakub's complaint says he seeks justice for the deaths and demands that the authorities form monitoring cells at all hospitals to prevent such deaths.

He also alleges mistreatment and deception by Sangjukta's fellow doctors and hospital employees.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

