



# IMF downsizes growth forecast

Economy to grow at 6pc this fiscal

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The International Monetary Fund yesterday trimmed Bangladesh's growth forecast for this fiscal year to 6 percent, following in the lead of its sister organisation, the World Bank.

In the previous edition of its flagship publication 'World Economic Outlook' that came out in April, the IMF had projected that the Bangladesh economy would grow at 6.5 percent in fiscal 2023-24 and at 5.5 percent in fiscal 2022-23.

In the latest edition of the flagship publication themed 'Navigating Global Divergences' that was released yesterday at the annual meetings of the World Bank-IMF in Marrakech, it is said that Bangladesh's economy grew at 6 percent in the immediate past fiscal year.

The downsized growth forecast for this fiscal year comes a week after the WB lowered Bangladesh's growth projection to 5.6 percent amid sustained high inflation and external payment challenges.

"This is normal -- this should have been done," said Ahsan H Mansur, a former economist of the IMF.

The government has targeted a 7.5 percent GDP growth for this fiscal year.

"If we get 5 percent [GDP growth], we should be lucky. There is no investment. Even if we disregard investment, imports, consumption demand and macro indicators, they are all collapsing. We are going backwards. Without imports there won't be any growth," said Mansur, the executive director of the Policy Research Institute.

Global growth is forecast to slow from 3.5 percent in



Four-year-old Yamin feels he needs to be there for his mother Sohana Begum, who was admitted to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital with dengue on Monday. Yesterday, the child was seen feeding his mother.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

## AIRBUS FOR BIMAN

### Plane maker keen on MoU this month

Wants it signed during PM's Brussels visit

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

For selling 10 planes to Biman, Airbus wants to have a memorandum of understanding signed during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to Brussels later this month.

Hasina is expected to visit Brussels between October 24 and October 27.

The French embassy in a note verbale to the foreign ministry on October 8 said, "In order to finalise an agreement by then, the support of Bangladesh government is required to expedite the negotiations between Airbus and Biman Bangladesh Airlines."

The Daily Star has a copy of the note.

The issue will be discussed today in a meeting between Biman, a team from Airbus, and the ambassadors from the

**"If the world economy goes bad, there would be impact on our economy. But our domestic problems are the main challenge here."**

Ahsan H Mansur  
Executive Director  
Policy Research Institute

2022 to 3 percent in 2023 and 2.9 percent in 2024, the IMF said. The projections remain below the historical (2000-19) average of 3.8 percent, and the forecast for 2024 is down by 0.1 percentage points from the July 2023 Update to the World Economic Outlook.

"If the world economy goes bad, there would be impact on our economy. But our domestic problems are the main challenge here," said Mansur, while citing the uncertainty surrounding the election as a major drawback.

Bangladesh though will be logging in the second-highest GDP growth in South Asia, behind only India (6.3 percent).

The report also said inflation would average 7.2 percent this fiscal year, way above the government's target of 6 percent. This would be the second-highest inflation in the South Asia region, bested by Pakistan, where inflation is projected to hit 17.5 percent.

Inflation averaged 9.75 percent in the first three months of the fiscal year, according to data from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.

Last fiscal year, inflation averaged 9.7 percent, according to the IMF report.

The deficit in the current account balance is expected to widen to 0.8 percent of GDP this fiscal year, up from 0.7 percent last fiscal year.

In the first two months of the fiscal year, the current account balance returned to the positive territory at \$1.1 billion from a negative of \$1.46 billion a year earlier, according to data from the Bangladesh Bank.

## POST-COUP MYANMAR

### 29 killed in army strike on camp for displaced

AFP, Bangkok

Twenty-nine people were killed and dozens wounded in a military strike on a camp for displaced people in northern Myanmar, a spokesman for an ethnic rebel group that controls the area told AFP yesterday.

Myanmar's junta has been accused of carrying out multiple bloody attacks on civilian targets as it struggles to quell resistance to its 2021 coup.

The latest attack happened around 11:30 pm on Monday (1700 GMT), Colonel Naw Bu of the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) told AFP.

"We found 29 dead bodies including children and older people... 56 people were wounded," he said, adding they were investigating what kind of strike had hit the camp.

"We did not hear any aircraft," he noted, saying they were looking into whether the military had used a drone to target the camp near the town of Laiza, on the Chinese border.

Local media images purporting to show the aftermath of the strike showed rescuers working by torchlight to recover bodies from wooden debris.

At least 10 bodies were shown laid out on towels and tarpaulins on the ground.

Colonel Naw Bu said that 42 people were being treated at a hospital near Laiza, which is located in Kachin state.

## DEATH OF TWO IN ROAD CRASH

### Police clear ASI who drove seized bus

Final report says he took the wheels in 'good faith'

RAFIUL ISLAM and EMRUL HASAN BAPPI

Police cleared ASI Emadul Haque, who ran over and killed two people while driving a seized bus in Gulistan in December 2021, of any wrongdoing saying he drove the vehicle in "good faith" to ensure smooth flow of traffic.

Sub-inspector Jahangir Hossain of Paltan Police Station, the investigation officer, submitted a final report to a Dhaka court on September 24.

The IO in the report said there was no evidence that Emadul was driving recklessly and asked the court to clear him from the charges.

The accident happened due to faults in the engine and brakes, he said.

Several police officials, including from the traffic division, told The Daily Star that police officers are not supposed to drive seized vehicles and that such vehicles are supposed to be towed.

Although Paltan police cleared Emadul, Wari police on August 31 last year pressed charges against the actual driver of the bus, Roni Mia.

On December 30, 2021, Roni was driving the same bus and hit a constable near Kaptan Bazar Complex, after which police seized the bus and ASI Emadul took the steering and ploughed through a crowd, killing two men and injuring at least two others.

Emadul was arrested and suspended following the incident.

The deceased are: Shukur Mahmud, 58, a Bangladesh-born US citizen, and Raisul Kabir Tusher, an employee of a garment accessories company.

Tusher's father Kamal Uddin Chowdhury Dulal that night filed a case against Emadul with Paltan Police Station under the Road Transport Act on charge of causing the deaths by reckless driving.

The IO in the investigation report, however, claimed the complainant filed the case on the basis of a misconception and the investigation findings do not corroborate the allegations.

He also mentioned that the ASI had no ulterior motive for such injuries or deaths. He is an experienced driver and has a

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

## AGARGAON-MOTIJHEEL

### Metro to run for 3 hours after opening

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Agargaon-Motijheel section might be opened on October 29 and initially trains will run only three hours a day in the morning, Dhaka Mass Transit Company Limited Managing Director MAN Siddique has said.

He said at the beginning, the trains will operate from 8:00am to 11:00am on the Agargaon-Motijheel section and 8:00am to 8:00pm on Uttara-Agargaon section.

He said three stations -- Farmgate, Bangladesh Secretariat, and Motijheel -- would be opened to public after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurates the section. The fourth station to be opened is Dhaka University station, he said.

"We will open seven stations on Agargaon Motijheel section within three months and after the three months, metro rail

SEE PAGE 6 COL 7

## BUSINESS

### 25 banks keep NPLs below 5%

With the high rate of non-performing loans (NPLs) being a major challenge for the banking sector, just 25 of the 61 commercial banks are managing to keep their NPL rates below 5 percent. Additionally, 11 of these 25 lenders registered NPL rates of less than 3 percent by the end of June this year. Industry insiders say the banks with low NPL rates practise good governance while their board of directors avoids interfering with management activities.

STORY ON B1



A boat in the polluted water of the Karnaphuli in Patenga area of Chattogram city. Waste from homes, factories, and ships contributes to the poisoning of the river which is a breeding ground for many species of fish. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

## Nasa rover captures strange 'Blue Sunset' on Mars



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Nasa's Perseverance Mars rover has captured a rare strange "blue sunset" over the Red Planet's horizon, an image that sheds more light on the physics behind an alien sunset.

The rover took the snap on its 933rd Martian day with its navigation camera as the sky above the Red Planet began to go dark.

Perseverance's image shows the Sun setting down on the Martian horizon glowing a strange, cool blueish green.

The image captured by the rover's navigation camera, located high on the rover's mast aiding in driving, was acquired by Nasa on Thursday, the American space agency noted.

The otherworldly nature of the sunset image also sheds light on the physics of light scattering on the Red Planet, and how it contrasts with a similar phenomenon on the Earth.