

BUDGET REACTION



It's practical and pro-people. Issues like controlling price, employment opportunities and social safety nets have been prioritised.

OBABDUL QUADER
AL General Secretary



This budget is designed for looting. I would not call this budget anti-people; it is an anti-Bangladesh budget.

MIRZA FAKHRUL
BNP Secretary General



Indirect taxation will increase the tax burden on people. Bangladesh will face a major economic crisis after this budget.

GM QUADER
Leader of Opposition



Taxes and prices have been increased in various ways. The low-income people will bear the brunt of corruption and looting of the rich because of the budget.

MD SHAH ALAM
CPB President

PROPOSED BUDGET FOR EDUCATION

Lowest in 16 years in terms of GDP

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

Despite repeated calls from educationists to increase the budget for education sector, the proposed allocation this fiscal year is still far behind the expected level. The allocation of Tk 94,710 crore for education is only 1.69 percent of GDP (gross domestic product), which is the lowest in the last 16 years.

Table with 4 columns: FISCAL YEAR, EDUCATION BUDGET IN CRORE TK, ALLOCATION IN % OF GDP, ALLOCATION IN % OF BUDGET. Rows for years 2020-21 to 2024-25.

The allocation is 11.88 percent of the total outlay. However, in terms of amount, the allocation rose by 7.42 percent from the outgoing year. But when it comes to the share of GDP, which is Tk 55,97,414 crore, the allocation stands at 1.69 percent. In the fiscal year of 2009-10, the maiden year for the Awami League's four consecutive terms, the education sector's allocation was 2.04 percent of GDP.

An inconsistency between planning and implementation -- such a gap upsets the total planning. Educationists expected that the government would emphasise downsizing the large classroom size, reducing the student-teacher ratio and enhancing teachers' capacity. "But we don't see any significant moves regarding the matter," he added. The Centre for Policy Dialogue, in an analysis of the national budget for FY2023-24, said on average, at least 35 LDCs (least-developed countries) spent two percent or more of their GDP on education from 2016 to 2022.

It is way less than Unesco's recommendation of four to six percent allocation of the GDP for the sector. Countries like Nepal and Myanmar are ahead of Bangladesh in terms of spending on education. Nepal spent 3.6 percent and Myanmar 2.1 percent of their GDP on education in 2022, according to World Bank data. "It's nothing but a usual budget. I'm frustrated," Manzoor Ahmed, emeritus professor at BRAC University, told The Daily Star. While placing the budget yesterday, Finance Minister Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali set aside Tk 44,108 crore for Secondary and Higher Education Division, Tk 10,602 crore for Technical and Madrasa Education Division, and Tk 38,819 crore for Primary and Mass Education Ministry.

Share of the poor dwarfed by others

FROM PAGE 4 The poor signed up with the National Pension Authority were allocated another Tk 150 crore. In comparison, government retiree pensions were allocated Tk 36,580 crore and savings scheme interest payments were allocated a further Tk 8,828.32 crore. This year, the allocation for the social safety net programme rose to Tk 1,36,026 crore from Tk 1,26,272 crore in FY 2023-24. The Tk 9,754 crore increase makes the social safety net account for 17.06 percent of the national budget, as per the finance minister's speech. However, if pensions and savings scheme interests

are excluded from the programme's budget, its share in the national budget gets yanked down to roughly 11 percent. "This increment reflects a substantial commitment to enhancing social protection programmes across various vulnerable groups," said Finance Minister Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali in his inaugural budget speech in parliament yesterday. Another 2 lakh more senior citizens will be given Tk 600 per month this year, raising the number of beneficiaries from 58.01 lakh to 60.01 lakh. In addition, the number of widows and abandoned women beneficiaries will rise from 25.75 lakh to 27.75 lakh. However, the Centre for

Policy Dialogue in a research last year found that an estimated 33 lakh old people and 25 lakh widows eligible for assistance were not covered by the programme, showing just how many more beneficiaries require coverage not afforded by the paltry rise this year. According to the FY24-25 budget, the number of disability allowance recipients will increase from 29 lakh to 32.34 lakh, while the stipend for students with disabilities will rise from Tk 950 to Tk 1,050 at the higher secondary level. Meanwhile, the number of beneficiaries under the mother and child support programme increased by over a lakh this year to 16.55 lakh.

Currently, 6,880 individuals from the Hijra community receive allowances and this will increase to 12,629 beneficiaries. However, in spite of these rises, the proportion of the social safety net programme as a percentage of the gross domestic product dipped from last year's 2.55 percent to 2.43 percent in FY24-25. If government employee pensions and savings scheme interest payments are discounted from the programme, the share further dips down to being 1.62 percent of the GDP. This falls short of the National Social Security strategy's aim to have the programme's budget be three percent of the GDP.

Breakdown of money spent over 13 years

FROM PAGE 4 In fiscal year 2009-2010, its actual expenditure was Tk 23 crore, and in FY21 this went up to Tk 32 crore, leaving it only Tk 9 crore richer. It got a significant bump in FY23, spending Tk 121 crore. The civil aviation and tourism ministry's expenditure saw a 15,527.27 percent rise between 2009 and 2022. This 150-fold increase made it the government body whose spending rose the fastest in 13 years. In 2009, it spent only Tk 33 crore, while in 2022 its expenditure saw a sharp rise to Tk 5,157 crore. Over the past 13 years, the ministry has expanded airport services, built runways and invested in the

third terminal of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport. The second fastest growth was in the science and technology ministry's spending, courtesy of the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant. Between 2009 and 2022, its expenditure grew nearly 5,000 percent. The Liberation War ministry's share of the national budgetary expenditure increased 10 times in 13 years, making it the ministry whose slice of the pie fattened the highest number of times. Between 2009 and 2022, the ministry's expenditure grew by 4,713 percent, from Tk 163 crore to Tk 7,845 crore. This is followed by the

religious affairs ministry, whose share of the nation's pie increased nine times in 13 years. The health ministry, the food division and the Election Commission saw their share of total national expenditures rise only four times in this period. The sector with the lowest expenditure in FY23 as a proportion of the GDP was the industry and economic services, which includes the labour and expatriate welfare ministries. The sector had the lowest spending compared to the GDP in FY10 as well -- being only 0.11 percent, and in FY23 it went further down to 0.08 percent. The expenditure for the sector of social security

and welfare as a proportion of the GDP also went down in 13 years, from one percent in 2009-2010 to 0.84 percent in FY23. As a share of the GDP, expenditure in the public services saw the highest growth -- from 0.87 percent in 2009-2010 to more than double of that in FY23 (2.02 percent). This sector includes departments like the prime minister and president's offices; the parliament; Election Commission secretariat; the public administration and foreign ministries; the divisions of finance, economic relations, planning, internal resources, statistics, implementation, monitoring and evaluation; and the cabinet.

Historic Six-point Day today

BSS, Dhaka The historic Six-point Day, marking the demand for autonomy for the then East Pakistan, will be observed today across the country. On June 7 in 1966, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman launched a massive movement against the misrule of the Pakistanis on the basis of the 6-point demand, the Magna Carta of the Bangalees, demanding autonomy for the then East Pakistan. Eleven people, including Manu Mian, Shafique and Shamsul Haque, were gunned down by the police and paramilitary EPR on June 7, 1966 in Dhaka and Narayanjanj during a hartal called for the release of Bangabandhu and other leaders detained for launching the six-point movement against the then barbaric ruling clique. President Mohammed Shahabuddin and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina paid rich tributes to the memories of Bangabandhu and all who embraced martyrdom for implementing the demand. Different socio-political organisations have taken elaborate programmes to mark the day.

HEALTH BUDGET Utilising full allocation main challenge for govt

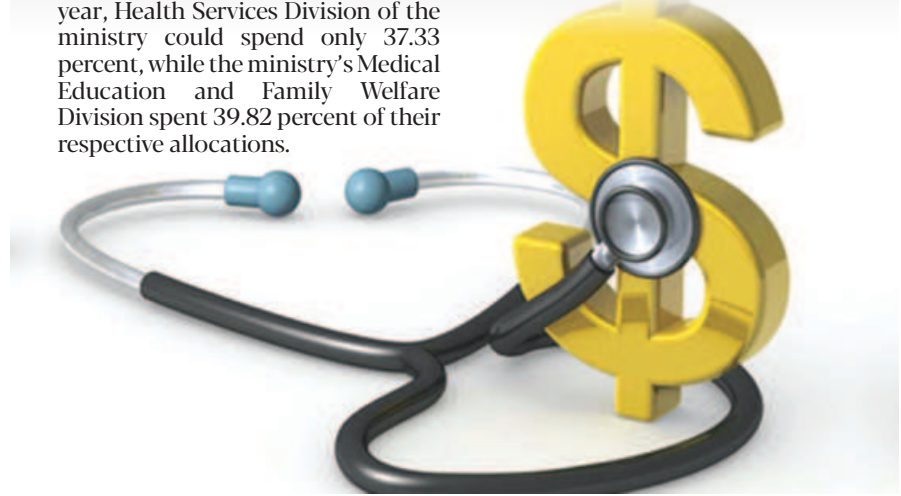
AHMED DEEPTO Although allocation for the health sector has increased in the proposed budget for the 2024-25 fiscal year, the major challenge for the government will be to ensure its proper utilisation. Notably, a significant portion of health funds remains unspent every year. The government needs to develop the capacity to spend money efficiently so that people get the benefit of the allocation, said experts. Allocation for this year Tk 41,407cr. It's 5.19pc of total budget. Last year's allocation was Tk 38,051cr.

The total allocation for health sector in the outgoing fiscal year was Tk 38,051 crore. The government raised special duty on over 200 medical devices from one percent to 10 percent in the proposed budget. This could increase medical service costs for patients. However, there will be some comfort too, as the finance minister proposed reducing tax on dengue test kits and cancer treatment equipment. In addition, the duty on filters and circuits used for kidney dialysis, alongside the duty on raw materials for cancer medicines, has been reduced. Like previous years, the minister also proposed a special allocation of Tk 2,000 crore to tackle health risks. He also proposed an allocation of Tk 100 crore for the "Integrated Health Science Research and Development Fund," considering the importance of basic and applied research in medical sciences. Prof Hamid termed these special allocations positive initiatives. "The size of this year's budget has increased, which is good. But the problem is that the health budget shrinks following revision after six to nine months. In the last fiscal year, the revised budget decreased by about 16 percent. "We hope it will not happen this time," he said, saying, the health ministry has to spend the allocated money efficiently.

Finance Minister AH Mahmood Ali yesterday proposed an allocation of Tk 41,407 crore for the health sector for FY25, which is 5.19 percent of the total budget. "We have seen in past years that the health ministry fails to spend the entire allocation. They should spend the entire budget efficiently. This will be their main challenge," said Prof Abdul Hamid of Institute of Health Economics at Dhaka University. As of April of the outgoing fiscal year, Health Services Division of the ministry could spend only 37.33 percent, while the ministry's Medical Education and Family Welfare Division spent 39.82 percent of their respective allocations.

102, the new hotline of fire service

STAFF CORRESPONDENT Fire Service and Civil Defence has introduced a new hotline number, 102, for any fire related emergency service. The hotline has been launched as it is easy to memorise than the existing land phone number and current hotline number 16163, says a press release. Users of all operators except T&T landline will be able to call at 102 to get services.



ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশন সম্পত্তি বিভাগ. আপনার পরিবেশ সুন্দর ও পরিচ্ছন্ন রাখুন. আপনার শিক্কে টিকা দিন. ইজারা বিজ্ঞপ্তি. Table with 2 columns: S.N, Description, and Remarks. Includes details about property management, rent, and bidding processes.