



BUDGET FY26
Tk 790,000cr
(1% Down)

Revenue
Tk 564,000cr

Foreign loans, grants
Tk 101,000cr

Local loans
Tk 125,000cr

EXPENDITURE

Non-development:
Tk 560,000cr

Development:
Tk 230,000cr

GDP at current market price:
Tk 6,244,578 crore

Budget as a percentage of GDP:
12.65%



A GLIMPSE OF THE ACTUAL EXPENDITURE

WHERE WILL PUBLIC MONEY BE SPENT IN FY26?



LDC GRADUATION

Govt proposes duty cut, change in trade rules

Experts think measures insufficient

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

In the budget for FY26, the government has proposed reducing import duties on certain goods and amending trade rules to enhance competitiveness in preparation for the country's impending graduation from the list of least developed countries (LDCs).

However, economists and industry leaders argue that the measures are insufficient to tackle the multifaceted challenges that lie ahead.

Beyond the implications of LDC graduation, global disruptions such as the Russia-Ukraine war, instability in the Middle East, and retaliatory tariffs from the US, demand a thorough reassessment of Bangladesh's existing tariff structure.

To this end, the government has proposed reorganising the current six-tier customs duty system by introducing a new 3 percent tier and adding a 40 percent supplementary duty slab to the existing twelve-tier structure.

As part of broader trade reforms and in preparation for tariff negotiations with the US, import duties on 110 products are proposed to be eliminated, while duties on 65 products are to be reduced.

Additionally, supplementary duties on nine products will be fully withdrawn and those on 442 others will be reduced. These measures aim to ease the tax burden and minimise anti-export bias.

Essential goods will remain unaffected, with zero tariff rates retained for 52 items, including food staples, fertilisers, seeds, life-saving medicines, cotton, and key industrial raw materials.

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Education, health outlays see slight rise

Experts slam meagre increases, call for efficient spending

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY and ARAFAT RAHAMAN

Despite pledging special attention to education and health, the government has proposed only slight increases in allocations for both sectors in the national budget for fiscal year (FY) 2025-26.

While presenting the budget yesterday, Finance Adviser Dr Salehuddin Ahmed said the government was prioritising people over physical infrastructure.

Yet, education and health — two key social sectors — saw only marginal budget hikes, leaving both educators and public health experts frustrated.

Speaking on the proposed budget, educationists expressed disappointment not just over the low allocation but also over the lack of strategic planning for execution.

Meanwhile, health experts called for fully utilising the funds, citing the health ministry's consistently poor record in spending its allocated budget.

In the FY26 budget, Salehuddin announced some tax relief on the import of pharmaceutical raw materials and medical equipment.

Public health specialists believe this could eventually lead to reduced medicine prices.

"We have prioritised people over

traditional infrastructure in this year's budget," said Salehuddin. "Special emphasis has been laid on education, health, good governance, civic facilities, and employment."

EDUCATION

For FY 2025-26, the adviser proposed Tk 95,644 crore for the Ministry of Education's two divisions and the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education.

Educationists expressed disappointment not just over the low allocation but also over the lack of strategic planning for execution

This amounts to 12.1 percent of the total budget — which is only 0.23 percentage points higher than FY25 — and just 1.72 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP). The figure falls well below the Unesco recommendation of allocating 4 to 6 percent of the GDP, or 15 to 20 percent of the national budget, to education.

In the next fiscal year, the Primary and Mass Education Ministry will receive Tk 35,403 crore, down from Tk 38,819 crore in

the current fiscal year.

The Secondary and Higher Education Division will see a slight increase, with Tk 47,563 crore allocated in FY26 compared to Tk 44,108 crore in FY25.

The Technical and Madrasa Education Division's allocation has also risen slightly, from Tk 11,783 crore to Tk 12,678 crore.

In the budget speech, Salehuddin said steps would be taken to raise enrolment in technical education from the current 19 percent. For madrasa students, Tk 728 crore has been proposed in stipends.

A new school feeding programme is set to launch in 150 upazilas with a proposed budget of Tk 2,164 crore.

Rasheda K Choudhury, executive director of Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) and a former adviser to the caretaker government, said, "The interim government is caught in a tangle, overwhelmed by challenges."

"While there seems to be political will, the government lacks a roadmap. It is difficult to see how this will translate into results," she added.

Prof Manzoor Ahmed, professor emeritus at BRAC University, echoed similar concerns.

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BUDGET SNIPPETS

- TAX-FREE INCOME LIMIT TO GO UP**

Individual taxpayers will see their tax-free income limit go up to Tk 375,000 from the fiscal year 2026-27. However, the rates in the corresponding slabs will be higher. And for the assessment year 2025-26, the tax-exempted threshold has been kept at Tk 350,000 of annual income.
- MINIMUM TAX FOR NEWBIES IS TK 1,000**

Individuals who will file a tax return for the first time in the assessment year 2025-26 will get a discount in the payment of minimum tax. New taxpayers will pay Tk 1,000 tax if their annual taxable income falls below Tk 450,000. Minimum tax for regular taxpayers will be Tk 3,000-Tk 5,000, depending on the area.
- AGRI INCOME UP TO TK 5 LAKH TAX-FREE**

In order to encourage farming and meet the growing demand for food for an increasing population, the interim government has kept up to Tk 500,000 annual income from agricultural activities tax-free. The benefit will be available from the fiscal year 2025-26.
- NO SURCHARGE ON ELECTRIC CARS**

A taxpayer having more than one car has to pay an environmental surcharge for the second car. From the fiscal year 2025-26, the surcharge will not be applicable for owners who possess electric vehicles.
- DUTY-FREE IMPORT OF CEREALS, VITAL DRUGS TO STAY**

The government is going to continue allowing duty-free import of essential foods, agricultural inputs, and life-saving drugs for the next fiscal year. Imports of fertiliser, seed, and cotton will also get zero-duty benefit next year.
- JULY WARRIORS' TAX-FREE LIMIT TK 5.25 LAKH FROM FY27**

The government has introduced a new category, July Warriors, under personal income tax and offers tax relief on incomes up to Tk 525,000 for two years, beginning from the 2026-27 fiscal year. The tax-free income limit for war-wounded freedom fighters has been increased to Tk 525,000 from FY27 from Tk 500,000 at present.
- ADVANCE TAX ON INDUSTRIAL RAW MATERIALS LOWERED**

The government has cut advance tax, a kind of value-added tax, to 2 percent from FY26 on the import of raw materials by manufacturers. However, commercial importers will face 2.5 percent to 7.5 percent.

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The efforts to combat inflation are inadequate, somewhat on an ad hoc basis. The measures taken so far are mostly on the demand side. The government is concentrating only on policy measures, not on institutional issues.

Selim Jahan
Former director at UNDP USA

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We have not seen any significant initiative to reform the education sector from this government so far. The education sector has remained stagnant for long. This budget offers no real way out. I must say we are deeply disappointed.

Manzoor Ahmed
Professor emeritus at BRAC University

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Budget does not offer steps to ensure a conducive environment for investment and lacks direction to drive industrial growth. It can't be considered investment-friendly. Revenue measures rely on increasing both corporate and individual taxes.

Anwar-Ul-Alam Chowdhury (Parvez)
President of BCI

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Despite cuts in import duty for some goods and few other measures, the budget lacks preparation to face LDC graduation challenges. An uncertainty is noticed in investment climate and business environment which needs to be addressed.

Selim Raihan
Executive director of Sanem

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Health ministry must focus on spending its entire allocation. They should identify the reasons behind underutilisation and make efforts to ensure that 100 percent of the fund is spent. Not a single taka should be slashed from original outlay.

Syed Abdul Hamid
Professor of DU



Budget targets ex-citizens' laundered assets

Black money in real estate prevails

ZYMA ISLAM

One of the main targets of this government is the recovery of stolen assets, or assets that have been pilfered abroad through capital flight. Investigations by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) into capital flight have uncovered the use of citizenships from other countries, often referred to as golden passports, to transfer and stash wealth abroad.

To this end, the finance adviser in his budget speech declared that Bangladeshi-origin taxpayers who have later renounced their Bangladeshi citizenship but have transferred income earned in Bangladesh abroad will be penalised.

"Persons who were originally Bangladeshi by birth but later renounced their Bangladeshi citizenship and have not properly paid taxes on income earned in Bangladesh, and have instead transferred such funds abroad by various means, will now be subject to applicable taxes and penalties on such laundered assets," Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed said in his speech while delivering the proposed budget for FY26.

The speech also referred to the



existing high-level task force formed by the government to implement initiatives to recover stolen or laundered assets and added that millions of crores from bank deposits have been siphoned off.

"The question arises whether this step was taken to enforce penalties on money-launderers like Mohammed

Saiful Alam and others," mulled the chairperson of the ACC, Mohammad Abdul Momen.

The ACC has approved and filed multiple cases against Saiful Alam, chairperson of S Alam Group, and his wife, Farzana Parveen, accusing them of amassing approximately Tk 1,540

crore in undisclosed wealth, including properties and investments in countries such as Singapore, Cyprus, and the British Virgin Islands.

Alam acquired Singaporean citizenship in 2021 and subsequently renounced his Bangladeshi citizenship. He has threatened legal action against the state of Bangladesh because he is now legally a "foreign investor."

This move can also be perceived as a precautionary step geared towards others who have allegedly pilfered and stashed wealth abroad.

The UK's National Crime Agency has recently frozen nine properties worth £86 million belonging to Salman F Rahman's son Ahmed Shayan Fazlur Rahman and his nephew, Ahmed Shahryar Rahman, both of whom are British.

"One of the goals of this year's budget is to ensure equitable distribution of wealth and to build a discrimination-free Bangladesh," the adviser said during the budget speech, while also pledging to root out corruption.

Real estate amnesty draws criticism

Yet, despite these pledges, the newly unveiled Finance Bill 2025 still includes provisions for whitewashing black

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No clear roadmap for investment

Say business leaders

JAGARAN CHAKMA

The budget for FY26 has drawn strong criticism from business leaders who say it lacks a clear roadmap for improving the investment climate, bolstering industrial competitiveness, and implementing overdue reforms in the banking sector.

While the budget aims to stabilise the economy through increased revenue collection, industry leaders argue that this approach may backfire, especially as businesses continue to face high production and operational costs, elevated energy prices, rising interest rates, and the removal of export incentives.

"Revenue is being prioritised over recovery, and it's the private sector that will bear the cost," said Anwar Ul-Alam Chowdhury (Parvez), president of the Bangladesh Chamber of Industries (BCI).

Sharp increases in VAT and import duties on essential raw materials, including construction inputs such as cement and rods, along with a proposed 2.5 percentage point hike in corporate tax for unlisted firms, have raised concern across sectors.

The proposed tax measures, Parvez warned, would further dampen industrial activity and job creation.

"This IMF-influenced budget lacks an investment-friendly outlook and undermines industrial growth. It does not address the survival needs of domestic industries, which will be forced to take a defensive stance," he said.

He also criticised the budget for increasing turnover tax and imposing higher duties on sectors that are still emerging. Parvez warned that rising costs in energy,

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Few steps to cut inflation-induced poverty

AHSAN HABIB

High inflation has become the bane of low-income people's existence for the better part of the past two years as spiralling prices have dramatically eaten away at their purchasing power.

The interim government tried to appease them through the budget for fiscal year 2025-26 by proposing to increase the food subsidy allocation by about 20 percent to Tk 9,663 crore. Alongside this, the allocation for social safety net schemes has been proposed to be increased by 0.9 percent to Tk 91,297 crore.

Additionally, as many as 55 lakh poor to low-income families will get food aid, up from 50 lakh this fiscal year.

Moreover, each family will receive 30 kilogrammes of rice per month at Tk 15 per kg for six months, up from five months at present, according to the budget proposal.

"But this is not enough," said Selim Jahan, former director of the Human Development Report Office and Poverty Division at the United Nations Development Programme.

The government has aimed to bring down inflation to 6.5 percent in the upcoming fiscal year.

"The government's entire premise is based on the assumption that it will be able to bring down the inflation rate to that level. I do not think that is a realisable target," he said.

Inflation has stayed above 9 percent since March 2023, the longest streak in 40 years, according to data from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.

Inflation has stayed above 9 percent since March 2023, the longest streak in 40 years, according to BBS data

But the problem is that if the actual inflation rate remains higher than 6.5 percent, the suggested quantities of food subsidy measures will not be enough to provide the intended relief to the targeted people, Jahan said.

The World Bank recently warned that the national poverty rate is projected to rise to 22.9 percent in 2025, up from 18.7 percent in 2022. Extreme poverty is expected to rise to 9.3 percent from 7.7 percent mainly due to high inflation.

The data indicates an additional 3 million people in Bangladesh are likely to fall into extreme poverty this year.

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EC outlay lower than last election year

AHMED DEEPTO

Although the national parliamentary election is slated to be held within June next year, the allocation for the Election Commission (EC) in the proposed budget for fiscal year 2025-26 has been set at Tk 2,956 crore — significantly lower than what was spent in the previous election year.

In the 2023-24 fiscal year, when the 12th parliamentary election was held, actual expenditure stood at Tk 4,190 crore — Tk 1,234 crore more than the newly proposed budget.

The original allocation for the EC that fiscal year was Tk 2,406 crore, but it was later revised upwards to accommodate poll-related expenses.

EC officials said the interim government may need to revise its budget again if it goes ahead with plans to hold a national parliamentary election by June.

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BUDGET SNIPPETS



COST OF FLATS TO GO UP

Home and commercial space buyers are expected to face higher costs as the government seeks to hike value-added tax on the services provided by construction firms. The VAT rate will be 10 percent in FY26, up from 7.5 percent during this outgoing fiscal year. Besides, an increase in specific VAT on rods is expected to fuel construction costs.



ONLINE SHOPPING GETS COSTLIER

From the next fiscal year, shoppers who want to buy from online platforms may face higher prices. Because the National Board of Revenue seeks to increase VAT on the commissions from product sales through e-platforms to 15 percent from 5 percent this fiscal year.



OTT SERVICES FACE 10% SD

The interim government has imposed a 10 percent supplementary duty (SD) on over-the-top (OTT) platform services for the fiscal year 2025-26 — a move that is expected to increase costs at the users' end. The move comes as the popularity of OTT platforms is growing, driven by increased smartphone penetration, availability of internet, and rising demand for localised content.



PRICES OF PLASTIC TABLEWARE TO RISE

Prices of most plastic items used in households are likely to go up next fiscal year. Because the government has doubled the rate of value-added tax on plastic tableware, kitchenware, household items, hygiene products and toiletries to 15 percent from 7.5 percent.



SOURCE TAX ON ESSENTIALS HALVED

In an effort to ease the burden on marginal farmers and suppliers, the interim government has proposed reducing the source tax on income from the supply of essential commodities — including paddy, rice, wheat, potato, jute, and tea leaf — to 0.5 percent from the next fiscal year. Previously, the source tax on these items was 1 percent.



DUTY-FREE BANK DEPOSIT THRESHOLD GOES UP

The duty-free threshold for bank deposits was hiked to Tk 3 lakh, offering relief to small savers. Currently, deposits more than Tk 1 lakh are subject to a Tk 150 duty on amounts up to Tk 5 lakh.



TK 100CR STARTUP FUND LAUNCHING

A Tk 100 crore startup fund was proposed in the national budget to support emerging entrepreneurs. The fund will focus on tapping into the potential of the information technology sector and encouraging fresh talent to venture into the field.

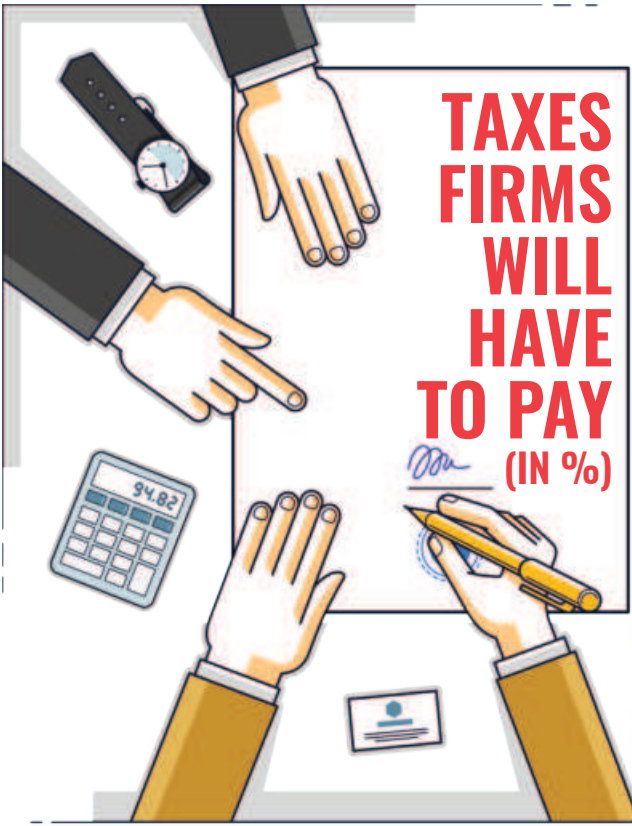


SOURCE TAX ON BROADBAND MAY BE HALVED

The source tax on broadband services has been recommended to be reduced to 5 percent from the existing 10 percent in the proposed national budget.

ANNUAL INCOME AND TAX RATE FOR FY27 & FY28 (IN%)

Up to Tk 3.75 lakh	0
Tk 3.75 lakh plus to Tk 6.75 lakh	10
Tk 6.75 lakh plus to Tk 10.75 lakh	15
Tk 10.75 lakh plus to Tk 15.75 lakh	20
Tk 15.75 lakh plus to Tk 35.75 lakh	25
Tk 35.75 lakh plus	30



	FY26		FY27 & FY28	
	Reduced rate *	Normal rate	Reduced rate	Normal rate
Listed companies that issue shares over 10% of paid-up capital	20	22.5	20	22.5
Non-listed companies	25	27.5	NA	27.5
Listed banks and financial institutions	NA	37.5	NA	37.5
Non-listed banks, financial institutions	NA	40	NA	40
Mobile phone operators	40*	45	40*	45
Cigarette and tobacco firms	NA	45**	NA	45**
Non-resident and other taxpayers	NA	30	NA	30
Trusts and associations of persons	NA	27.5	NA	27.5
Cooperatives	NA	20	NA	20
Private universities & colleges	NA	15	NA	15

*Subject to fulfilment of certain conditions ** 2.5% surcharge

WHAT IS THE TAX YOU WILL HAVE TO PAY IN FY26?

Your income	Up to Tk 3.5 lakh	Tk 3.5 lakh plus to Tk 4.5 lakh	Tk 4.5 lakh plus to Tk 8.5 lakh	Tk 8.5 lakh plus to Tk 13.5 lakh	Tk 13.5 lakh plus to Tk 18.5 lakh	Tk 18.5 lakh plus to Tk 38.5 lakh	Tk 38.5 lakh plus
FY26 tax rates (In %)	0	5	10	15	20	25	30

BUDGET FY26

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR YOU?

INCOME TAX: WILL YOUR BILL GO DOWN?

GOOD NEWS

Relief from FY27 as tax-free income threshold to rise to Tk **3.75 lakh**

If you are a new taxpayer, your tax will be only Tk **1,000** from FY27



Online tax return filing is now mandatory

No need to submit proof of return for credit card



No environmental surcharge on eco-friendly vehicles

Scope for adjusting excess tax paid in previous years

Income up to Tk **500,000** from farming remains tax-free

Gifting property to siblings is now tax-exempt

Capital gains tax on land transfer has been reduced

NOT SO PLEASANT

All income tax slabs will see higher rates from FY27

High earners will pay up to **30%** in tax

Source tax on interest income from bills and bonds has doubled

VAT AND INDIRECT TAXES: ANY RELIEF?

STRAIN ON YOUR WALLET

Buying a refrigerator or AC will cost more as VAT has doubled to **15%**

Prices of OTT content, helicopter travel services will rise

Import duty on rods has gone up; expect higher costs for construction

Plastic tableware and kitchen items will be pricier

Online shopping will be more expensive

Flat prices are likely to increase

RELIEF

No excise duty on bank balances up to Tk **300,000**

LP gas, salt, sugar and imported software may become cheaper

Sanitary napkins, packaged liquid milk and ballpoint pens may see price cuts

Ice cream to be more affordable



MINISTRY-WISE BUDGET ALLOCATION for FY26

Alongside regular operating costs, the Finance Division's allocation also covers pensions, emergency spending, subsidies, incentive-based loans, and interest on domestic borrowing.

President's Office	34
Legislative and Parliamentary Affairs Division	46
Armed Forces Division	47
Cabinet Division	116
Bangladesh Public Service Commission	149
Anti Corruption Commission	191
Implementation Monitoring & Evaluation Division	183
Supreme Court	250
Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General of Bangladesh	284
National Parliament	232
Ministry of Labour and Employment	438
Ministry of Textiles and Jute	480
Statistics and Informatics Division	467
Ministry of Cultural Affairs	824
Ministry of Commerce	607
Energy and Mineral Resources Division	2,178
Ministry of Information	1,110
Ministry of Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment	855
Election Commission Secretariat	2,956
Rural Development and Co-operatives Division	1,100
Ministry of Chattogram Hill Tracts Affairs	1,361
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	1,704
Law and Justice Division	2,075
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change	2,144
Ministry of Youth and Sports	2,423
Posts and Telecommunications Division	2,148
Ministry of Land	2,303
Ministry of Industries	1,891
Ministry of Religious Affairs	2,183
Information and Communication Technology Division	2,144
Internal Resources Division	3,126
Financial Institutions Division	3,521
Security Services Division	4,038
Ministry of Defence	40,851
Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock	3,392
Prime Minister's Office	3556
Ministry of Women and Children Affairs	5,077
Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism	2,455
Planning Division	10,905
Ministry of Food	29,541
Ministry of Housing and Public Works	5,110
Bridges Division	6,022
Ministry of Liberation War Affairs	7,330
Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief	10,362
Ministry of Public Administration	5,019
Ministry of Water Resources	11,204
Ministry of Shipping	10,279
Medical Education and Family Welfare Division	10,886
Technical and Madrasa Education Division	12,678
Ministry of Social Welfare	13,991
Ministry of Science and Technology	11,944
Ministry of Railways	18,072
Economic Relations Division	61,584
Public Security Division	27,001
Ministry of Agriculture	27,224
Power Division	20,342
Health Service Division	31,022
Road Transport and Highways Division	38,496
Ministry of Primary and Mass Education	35,403
Ministry of Defense	42,315
Secondary and Higher Education Division	47,564
Local Government Division	42,433
Finance Division	

Stability takes priority over bold reforms

FROM PAGE 3
leaving office, and here's what the next government should carry forward.' Since this is an interim government, it should offer a roadmap," he said.
When asked about initiatives targeting youth, he pointed to allocations including a Tk 100 crore self-employment programme, Tk 405 crore for start-up support, and Tk 100 crore for a "Youth Festival".
"The idea seems to be: if a young entrepreneur comes forward with a business idea – say, starting an e-commerce platform, opening a small shop, or driving for a ride-sharing service – the government will support the financing."
On social safety net measures, Hussain noted that the major programmes like allowances for elderly women and employment generation for the poor have seen some expansion. Allowances are increased by an average of Tk 50, and coverage is expected to grow. There is also Tk 4,166 crore allocated for free healthcare services and Tk 1,000 crore for vaccination programmes.
Minimum wage growth has also been raised from 5 percent annually to 9 percent. "All of these measures benefit the poor," the economist said.
He also observed that growth and inflation projections in this year's budget are more realistic, while there was a significant disconnect between macroeconomic projections and ground reality in the past.
Birupaksha Paul, economics professor at the State University of New York, also said the "brief and restrained" budget's brevity marks a departure from the verbose and often overly ambitious targets of previous years.
"This budget is economical in its outlook, which is a positive shift," he noted. "It avoids unnecessary verbosity and presents a more grounded fiscal plan."
A notable milestone, he said, is that Bangladesh's GDP is projected to cross the \$500 billion mark for the first time.
However, he expressed concern over the narrow fiscal deficit target of 3.6 percent of GDP, the lowest in recent years, arguing it could be misleading given weak revenue performance. "When revenue collection is already weak, using the fiscal deficit as a share of GDP to assess fiscal stance becomes problematic," he cautioned.
He was also critical of the outgoing fiscal year's budget execution, noting that despite ample time, the government failed to deliver efficient spending. "The government had nearly the entire fiscal year to demonstrate performance, yet it failed to show extraordinary efficiency," he said.
"What's troubling is that operational expenditures did not decrease accordingly. This reflects inefficiency

on the part of the government," he added.
Fahmida Khatun, executive director of the Centre for Policy Dialogue, told a briefing at its Dhaka office yesterday that the most concerning issue is the reduction in allocation for three crucial sectors in the Annual Development Programme: education, health, and agriculture.
The reduction in agriculture is especially critical due to its direct link to food security, she said.
The CPD official also said lower-middle-income people will have to pay higher tax rates, while high-income groups will not see an increase due to changes in the tax slabs, which reflects a form of discrimination.
A surprising issue is that the revenue-GDP ratio target was set at just 10.5 percent in the medium-term macroeconomic policy statement—for the year 2035. For the upcoming fiscal year, the target is 9 percent, the CPD official said.
"This reflects a weakening of ambition. How can we ensure development with such low expectations?"
The budget retains a provision for legalising undisclosed income, although the tax rate on such declarations has been increased.
"This provision undermines transparent and honest, regular taxpayers. It demoralises them," Khatun said.
Ashikur Rahman, principal economist at the Policy Research Institute (PRI), said the budget demonstrates accounting precision but lacks economic ambition.
"It underscores the government's intent to maintain macroeconomic stability through fiscal restraint, rather than pursue a bold developmental or counter cyclical agenda," he said.
Given the current weakness of the fiscal framework, characterised by low revenue mobilisation, rising debt servicing liabilities, and declining foreign aid disbursements, the budget takes a cautious posture.
"The emphasis is clearly on austerity and consolidation, signalling that the government is prioritising stabilisation over stimulus," Ashikur said.
Selim Raihan, executive director of the South Asian Network on Economic Modeling, said the budget shows a genuine attempt to address discrimination and investment gaps, but remains confined by structural limitations.
"I thought something new would be offered, but the effort to introduce change was made within the confines of an old structure," he said.
He warned that the flaws of the existing structure will continue to haunt this budget, while the incentives are not sufficient to revive stagnant private sector investment.

Smaller in size, larger in intent

FROM PAGE 3
The voter list has been updated, and new technology is being deployed to bolster transparency.
Ahmed's speech reflected a careful balancing act between calls for equity and stabilisation. This is a budget that tries to do more with less and do it differently. Whether it can deliver, amid bureaucratic bottlenecks, shaky institutions, and electoral uncertainty, will depend less on what is written in budget documents but more on what the government can implement in the months leading up to the national election.

No immediate tax relief

FROM PAGE 3
affect households directly as the National Board of Revenue collects nearly 65 percent of the revenue from indirect taxes like VAT.
For example, though plastic items have become an integral part of households, the government has doubled the VAT rate on plastic tableware, kitchenware, and also hygiene products and toiletries to 15 percent from 7.5 percent.
Besides, a 10 percent supplementary duty has been imposed on over-the-top (OTT) platform services for fiscal 2025-26, increasing costs at the users' end.
The move comes as the popularity of OTT platforms is growing, driven by increased smartphone penetration, availability of internet, and rising demand for localised contents.
On the other hand, source tax on broadband services will be reduced to 5 percent from 10 percent.
There will also be VAT exemptions on environment-friendly items such as plates and cutlery made of clay, and plant-based materials with biodegradable components.

Not much for youth employment

FROM PAGE 3
"But loans are just a small part of what's needed," said Ahmed, also the chief of the labour reform commission.
Capital alone would not create entrepreneurs.
"Without support for access to land, training, international market links and regulatory assistance, even Tk 5 lakh won't be enough."
No ministry has submitted a 10-year workforce plan to the national skills authority despite importing advanced machinery.
There is an urgent need to coordinate among educational institutions, skills training agencies and industries to prepare the labour force.
"Without that, budget allocations alone won't solve the employment crisis."
Ahmed stressed the need for a comprehensive, future-oriented employment strategy aligned with ongoing transformations in the industrial and labour markets.
"We are witnessing fundamental changes in the nature of work due to automation and global shifts. Isolated initiatives cannot tackle youth unemployment – what we need is an integrated national approach involving skills development, industry demand, financing, marketing and access to infrastructure," he added.
Prof Sayema Haque Bidisha, who teaches economics at Dhaka University, said the allocation for young entrepreneurs, the emphasis placed on various training programmes and the proposal to strengthen and establish training centres are commendable steps.
However, she said she is not clear

AFP, Jos

Gunmen killed 25 people in two attacks across north-central Nigeria's Benue state over the weekend, local authorities told AFP yesterday, the latest violence in a region known for deadly land disputes and reprisals.
Attackers killed 14 people on Sunday in the community of Ankpali, said Adam Ochea, chairman of the Apa local government council, warning that "there are still some threats here and there".
Muslim ethnic Fulani nomadic herders have long clashed with settled farmers, many of whom are Christian, in Benue over access to land and resources.
In a recent report, Amnesty International tallied 6,896 people killed over the last two years in Benue, part of Nigeria's so-called Middle Belt, a mixed-religious region where such disputes often take on a sectarian dimension.
A police spokeswoman confirmed

the attack but did not provide a toll.
Contacted by telephone, resident Ajija Moses said the attackers stormed the community around 6:00 pm, blaming armed Fulani men who were "shooting sporadically".
In a similar attack Sunday evening on Naka village, of Gwer West local government area, 11 people were killed by what authorities said were suspected Fulani militias.
"So far we have recovered 11 dead bodies and five people are confirmed injured," Gwer West council chairman Ormin Victor told AFP.
Last month, 44 people were killed in a span of four days in Gwer West.
Motives for the violence in that attack were not clear, but Victor blamed the "coordinated attacks" on Fulani cattle herders.
Resident Amineh Vincent said the village continued to live in fear.
"The attackers invaded our community... were shooting anyhow, they killed many people," he told AFP.

some money and initiating a programme will not address the core unemployment issues.
"What we need is a comprehensive strategy. Without this, meaningful solutions will not emerge," he added.
Each year, around 2.2 million young people enter the workforce. Of them, around 1 million go abroad for employment, said Rajekuzzaman Ratan, a labour rights activist.
"But for the remaining ones, there is no clear employment policy – not in last year's budget and not in this one either," he said, adding that many young people are being forced into jobs far below their qualifications.
The youth entrepreneur loan scheme might worsen debt burdens without real job creation, he said.
"In a fragile and vulnerable economy like ours, giving someone a Tk 5 lakh loan and expecting them to become an entrepreneur is unrealistic. It could simply increase their debt burden," he said.

Bangladesh in the future and fundamental reforms to the governance system. Once the proclamation is finalised, we will provide our party's opinion on when we want the election," he said.
Ganosamhati Andolon Chief Coordinator Zonayed Saki demanded a roadmap to reforms, the election and trial for the July atrocities.
Several political parties including Communist Party of Bangladesh, Socialist Party of Bangladesh, Biplobi Workers Party, urged the government to not allow a humanitarian corridor to provide aid to the people in Rakhine State and hand over the operations of the Chattogram port to a foreign organisation.
Consensus Commission Vice President Prof Ali Riaz said that from now on the consensus commission will hold joint meetings with all political parties.
He said that the commission will hold a discussion on recommendations on Article 70 of the constitution, women's representation and parliamentary standing committee.

Govt proposes duty cut, change in trade rules

“In effect, the government is incentivising citizens to accumulate illegal and undisclosed wealth throughout the year with the assurance that such black money will be legitimised at year-end. The justification being offered – favouring the real estate sector – is deeply problematic, especially since that sector has been identified as one of the most corruption-prone in the country,” he said.

A celebratory graphic for Jamuna Bank's 25th anniversary. The background is a light blue gradient with faint, stylized upward-pointing arrows and plus signs. On the left, a large, bold, blue number '25' is prominently displayed. To the right of the '25', the Jamuna Bank logo (a stylized 'J' inside a square) is followed by the text 'Jamuna Bank' in a blue sans-serif font. Below this, the words 'YEARS OF TRUST & TRANSFORMATION' are written in a bold, blue, all-caps sans-serif font. Further down, a block of Bengali text is centered: 'পথ চলার প্রতিটি ধাপে আমরা একসাথে ছিলাম আছি এবং থাকবো।' followed by 'যমুনা ব্যাংক, ভালো ব্যাংক।' and 'সাফল্যের এই অগ্রযাত্রায় সাথে থাকার জন্য সবাইকে জানাই আন্তরিক শুভেচ্ছা ও অভিনন্দন।'. At the bottom, the Jamuna Bank logo is repeated, followed by the text 'যমুনা ব্যাংক' in a large, bold, blue sans-serif font.

25

Jamuna Bank

YEARS OF TRUST & TRANSFORMATION

পথ চলার প্রতিটি ধাপে
আমরা একসাথে ছিলাম
আছি এবং থাকবো।

যমুনা ব্যাংক, ভালো ব্যাংক।

সাফল্যের এই অগ্রযাত্রায়
সাথে থাকার জন্য
সবাইকে জানাই
আন্তরিক শুভেচ্ছা ও
অভিনন্দন।

Jamuna Bank

যমুনা ব্যাংক

Empower women thru skills, not just loans: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Significant strides have been made in women's empowerment through microcredit, but there is no room for complacency as much remains to be done, said speakers at an event yesterday.

They noted that many women do not personally control the loans taken out in their names, as husbands or other family members often manage the funds. This highlights the need for support beyond credit -- such as grants and community-based skills development.

Experts suggested exploring alternative funding sources -- including global climate funds, corporate social responsibility (CSR) budgets, and zakat -- to ease repayment burdens, especially for families vulnerable to climate change.

The discussion, titled "Climate Resilience and Women's Socio-Economic

Many women do not control the loans taken out in their names, as husbands or others often manage the funds. This highlights the need for support beyond credit like grants and skills development.

Empowerment and Inclusion," was organised by Gana Unnayan Kendra (GUK) and Prothom Alo, supported by Christian Aid, at Prothom Alo's office in Karwan Bazar, Dhaka.

Hossain Zillur Rahman, former adviser to a caretaker government and executive chairman of the Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC), said microcredit has empowered many women, but challenges remain.

Rahman proposed combining loans with grants for disadvantaged groups, funded through climate initiatives, CSR, and zakat. He also stressed community-level skills training.

Prof Mohammad Helal Uddin, executive vice chairman of Microcredit Regulatory Authority, shared survey findings from 68 women borrowers outside Dhaka. Only 11 used the loans themselves, while 17 said they would do so if given another chance.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4



A woman from Narail, a visually impaired man and his 11-year-old niece from Shariatpur, all of whom require urgent eye care, were turned away from the National Institute of Ophthalmology and Hospital in Dhaka yesterday, as all services remained suspended for the sixth consecutive day. Doctors and nurses began a work abstention citing security concerns following an alleged attack on hospital staffers by a group of injured July uprising victims -- who are being treated in the hospital -- and a tripartite clash involving some patients and their attendants on Wednesday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

HRSS MONTHLY REPORT

Attacks on journos, mob violence surge in May

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Attacks on journalists and incidents of mob violence increased in May compared to the previous month, while repression of women and children remained at an alarming level, according to the monthly report of Human Rights Support Society (HRSS).

In its report released yesterday, HRSS expressed concern over mob beatings, attacks on journalists, assaults on accused individuals inside court premises, and rising tensions

along the Bangladesh-India border, including reports of Indian Border Security Force personnel pushing people back into Bangladesh.

91 journos harassed, assaulted

26 incidents of mob violence

136 women, girls faced abuse

60 incidents of political violence

16 incidents of labour abuse

Based on its own findings and reports published by various media outlets, the

HRSS stated that at least 91 journalists were subjected to harassment, intimidation, or violence in 31 incidents in May -- significantly higher than April's figure of 38.

Of these, 33 journalists were physically assaulted, seven received threats, and three were arrested. Additionally, 48 journalists were accused in seven cases filed last month.

Mob violence also increased in May, with 26 incidents resulting in the deaths of 10 people and injuries to 25 others, according to the report.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

Prof Anowara gets bail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday granted bail to Prof SM Anowara Begum, a freedom fighter and retired political science teacher at Jagannath University (JnU), in an attempted murder case.

The case was filed over an attack on protesters during the anti-discrimination student movement on July 19 last year. According to the case, she is 69 years old.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Minhajur Rahman passed the order

SEE PAGE 8 COL 6



Ishraque's mayoral oath uncertain as DSCC term expires

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The tenure of the Dhaka South City Corporation council has officially ended, triggering fresh uncertainty over BNP leader Ishraque Hossain's potential swearing-in as mayor.

According to the Local Government (City Corporation) Act 2009, a mayor's five-year term begins from the date of the corporation's first general meeting. Based on that, the current DSCC council's term ended on Monday, marking five years since the inaugural session held on June 2, 2020, under the chairmanship of then-mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh.

Legal experts say this means Ishraque no longer has the legal grounds to be sworn in as mayor. However, Ishraque's legal counsel argues that until a new election is held, he is entitled to assume office and carry out mayoral duties.

Section 49(1) of the Act specifies that mayors and councillors serve a five-year term starting from the date of the first meeting of the corporation. Section 16 adds that if the mayor's position becomes vacant mid-term, a new mayor must be elected within 90 days, who would then serve the remainder of the original term.

Given the expiry of the DSCC's five-year term, SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

Another major reshuffle in judiciary Govt transfers, promotes 265 lower court judges

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 265 lower court judges has been transferred and promoted as part of a reshuffle in the judiciary.

They include 30 district judges, 38 additional district judges, 35 joint district judges, and 162 senior assistant judges.

Among them, 13 senior assistant judges have been promoted to the posts of joint district judges.

The law ministry issued seven notifications to this effect yesterday.

It said the transfers and promotions of lower court judges were done in consultation with the Supreme Court.

On September 7 last year, the government had transferred and promoted as many as 244 lower court judges.

Low-lying areas flooded in Sylhet Waterlogging, landslides in Ctg, Bandarban

STAR REPORT

Vast stretches of low-lying areas in Sylhet and Moulvibazar districts have been inundated as the Surma, Kushiara and Manu rivers are overflowing following torrential rains over the past few days.

Downpour has also disrupted livelihoods in Chattogram and Bandarban districts, causing waterlogging in urban areas and triggering landslides along hilly terrains.

In Sylhet's Zakiganj, the Kushiara swelled to 186 centimetres above the danger level in the Amolshid area due to onrush of upstream water from India's Assam, breaching embankments at several points and submerging vast areas across

multiple unions.

Parts of Kanaighat upazila were also submerged, with the Surma river flowing 89cm above the danger level in the Kanaighat area.



Zakiganj in Sylhet. PHOTO: COLLECTED

Along with low-lying areas, parts of Zakiganj and Kanaighat municipalities have also gone under water. Although the upazila

administrations have already prepared shelters, no one had moved in till yesterday afternoon.

Several low-lying areas and major roads in Moulvibazar's Barlekha, Kulaura, Sadar, Kamalganj and Juri upazilas were inundated, causing immense suffering to residents and commuters.

In Chattogram, 130mm of rainfall was recorded in 24 hours till yesterday morning, leading to waterlogging in several parts of the city. However, the water receded after the rain stopped later in the morning.

A man named Chsheinu Marma, 38, was injured in a landslide at Bazar Para in Thanchi upazila of Bandarban.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4



ESSENTIAL DRUGS COMPANY LIMITED

395-397, Tejgaon Industrial Area
Dhaka-1208

Ref.No. EDCL(KELP)/PUR/Fire Consultant/2025/209

Dated: 02.06.2025

APPOINTMENT OF AN EXPERT PROFESSIONAL FIRE CONSULTANT

Essential Drugs Company Limited, 100% share owned by the Government of the people's Republic of Bangladesh is interested to appoint an expert Fire Consultant for preparing Fire Safety Plan and Technical Specification, Design Drawing, BOQ, Tender Document & estimated cost etc for Fire Security System at KELP. Interested firms those Who are specialist (Enlisted from Fire Service Civil Defence) in this field having sufficient working back ground to prepare Fire safety Plan and design, Drawing, BOQ, Tender documents, cost estimation, work supervision etc (Details as per Tender Schedule)

Interested Consultancy firms are invited for submission of offer in two envelopes. The one envelope containing the all relevant papers (Company profile, Trade License, VAT Certificate, E-Tin certificate with current Income Tax payment confirmation certificate) reference completion certificate with Work Order of related project in last five years, Project in hand work orders (if any) and other related papers (if any) must be marked as the " TECHNICAL OFFER " The other envelope containing price offer (as per our tentative scope of works) must be marks as "FINANCIAL OFFER".

Interested firms may be requested to collect a schedule with scope of works from Procurement department of Essential Drugs Company Limited, Dhaka during office hours on all working days. (except Friday, Saturday and Govt. Holidays).

Interested firms may drop their competitive offer to the tender box kept in our Procurement department within 12.30PM at 26/06/2025.

A Pre-bid meeting will be held on 19.06.2025 to discuss different aspects of the propose Consultancy Services.

EDCL authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.

General Manager (CC).
Procurement Deptt.
For: Managing Director

(6" X 4)

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার			
অধিনায়কের কার্যালয়			
র‍্যাপিড এ্যাকশন ব্যাটালিয়ন-৭			
পতেঙ্গা, চট্টগ্রাম			
দরপত্র আহবান বিজ্ঞপ্তি			
এতদ্বারা ২০২৫-২০২৬ অর্থ বৎসরে (জুলাই/২৫ হতে জুন/২৬ পর্যন্ত) চট্টগ্রামস্থ র‍্যাপিড এ্যাকশন ব্যাটালিয়ন-৭ এর ব্যবহারি বিভিন্ন মালামাল সরবরাহ/পরিবহন ভাড়া/পোষাক সেলাই এর নিমিত্তে পিপিআর-২০০৮ অনুযায়ী যোগ্যতা সম্পন্ন এবং পেশের কোন আইন দ্বারা আযোগ্য নন এমন ব্যবসায়ী/ প্রকৃতকারী/ সরবরাহকারী/টিকাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হতে সীলমোহরকৃত খামে প্রতিযোগিতামূলক উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র আহবান করা যাচ্ছে :			
১।	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	২।	সরাসরি মন্ত্রণালয় (পুলিশ বিভাগ)।
২।	সাহা	৩।	র‍্যাপিড এ্যাকশন ব্যাটালিয়ন (র‍্যাব)।
৩।	দরপত্র সম্পাদনকারী প্রধান	৪।	অধিনায়ক, র‍্যাব-৭, পতেঙ্গা, চট্টগ্রাম।
৪।	দরপত্র ক্রয়মানকৃত (ফেরত যোগ্য)	৫।	ক। ৩২২১১০৬-পনোর ভাড়া ও পরিবহন ব্যয়-১,০০,০০০/- (এক লক্ষ) টাকা। খ। ৩২৫২১০৫-চিকিৎসা ও শৈল চিকিৎসা সামগ্রী সরবরাহ-৪০,০০০/- (চল্লিশ হাজার) টাকা। গ। ৩২৫২১০৮-সাহা বিধান সামগ্রী সরবরাহ-৬০,০০০/- (ষাট হাজার) টাকা। ঘ। ৩২৫২১০১-কম্পিউটার সামগ্রী সরবরাহ-২০,০০০/- (বিশ হাজার) টাকা। ঙ। ৩২৫২১০৫-অন্যান্য মনিহারী সরবরাহ-৪০,০০০/- (চল্লিশ হাজার) টাকা। চ। ৩২৫৬১০৫-মোটরযানের খুচরা যন্ত্রাংশ সরবরাহ-২,২০,০০০/- (দুই লক্ষ বিশ হাজার) টাকা। ছ। ৩২৫৬১০৬-পোষাক সেলাই (দর্জি টিকাদার নিয়োগ)- ১০,০০০/- (দশ হাজার) টাকা। জ। ৩২৫৮১০১-মোটরযান মেরামত ও সংরক্ষণ-১৭,০০০/- (সতের হাজার) টাকা। ঝ। ৩২৫৮১০৩-কম্পিউটার মেরামত-১২,০০০/- (বার হাজার) টাকা। ঞ। ৩২৫৮১০৫-অন্যান্য যন্ত্রপাতি মেরামত-১২,০০০/- (বার হাজার) টাকা। ট। ৩২৫৮১২৮-জলযান মেরামত-২২,০০০/- (বাইশ হাজার) টাকা। ঠ। ৪১১২২০২- কম্পিউটার ও আনুষঙ্গিক সরবরাহ-২২,০০০/- (বাইশ হাজার) টাকা। ড। ৪১১২০১৪-আসবাবপত্র সরবরাহ- ৬৬,০০০/- (ষেছাট হাজার) টাকা।
৫।	দরপত্রের বিষয়/কাজের নাম ও সিডিউলের মূল্য (অফেরত যোগ্য)	৬।	ক। ৩২২১১০৬-বাতে পনোর ভাড়া ও পরিবহন ব্যয়-৭৫০/- (সাতশত পঞ্চাশ) টাকা। খ। ৩২৫২১০৫-বাতে চিকিৎসা ও শৈল চিকিৎসা সামগ্রী সরবরাহ-৭৫০/- (সাতশত পঞ্চাশ) টাকা। গ। ৩২৫২১০৮-বাতে সাহা বিধান সামগ্রী সরবরাহ-৭৫০/- (সাতশত পঞ্চাশ) টাকা। ঘ। ৩২৫২১০১-বাতে কম্পিউটার সামগ্রী সরবরাহ-৭৫০/- (সাতশত পঞ্চাশ) টাকা। ঙ। ৩২৫২১০৫-বাতে অন্যান্য মনিহারী সরবরাহ-৭৫০/- (সাতশত পঞ্চাশ) টাকা। চ। ৩২৫৬১০৫-বাতে মোটরযানের খুচরা যন্ত্রাংশ সরবরাহ-৭৫০/- (সাতশত পঞ্চাশ) টাকা। ছ। ৩২৫৬১০৬-বাতে পোষাক সেলাই (দর্জি টিকাদার নিয়োগ)-৪০০/- (চারশত) টাকা। জ। ৩২৫৮১০১-বাতে মোটরযান মেরামত ও সংরক্ষণ-৭৫০/- (সাতশত পঞ্চাশ) টাকা। ঝ। ৩২৫৮১০৩-বাতে কম্পিউটার মেরামত-৭৫০/- (সাতশত পঞ্চাশ) টাকা। ঞ। ৩২৫৮১০৫-বাতে অন্যান্য যন্ত্রপাতি মেরামত-৪০০/- (চারশত) টাকা। ট। ৩২৫৮১২৮-বাতে জলযান মেরামত- ৭৫০/- (সাতশত পঞ্চাশ) টাকা। ঠ। ৪১১২২০২-বাতে কম্পিউটার ও আনুষঙ্গিক সরবরাহ-৭৫০/- (সাতশত পঞ্চাশ) টাকা। ড। ৪১১২০১৪-বাতে আসবাবপত্র সরবরাহ- ৭৫০/- (সাতশত পঞ্চাশ) টাকা।
৬।	খরচের উপস ও অর্থনৈতিক বাত	৭।	২০২৫-২০২৬ অর্থ বৎসরে র‍্যাব এর বিভিন্ন কোডে বাজেট প্রাপ্তি সাপেক্ষে।
৭।	দরপত্রের সূত্র নং ও তারিখ	৮।	র‍্যাব-৭ খারক নং-৭৭৬২/হিসাব/বিজ্ঞপ্তি/র‍্যাব-৭ তারিখ ২৬ মে ২০২৫ ইং।
৮।	সিডিউল প্রক্রির তারিখ ও সময়	৯।	০৩ জুন ২০২৫ তারিখ হতে ৩০ জুন ২০২৫ তারিখ (অফিস চলাকালীন সময়) পর্যন্ত।
৯।	দরপত্র জমা প্রদানের সর্বশেষ তারিখ ও সময়	১০।	০৩ জুলাই ২০২৫ তারিখ ১২০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
১০।	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	১১।	০৩ জুলাই ২০২৫ তারিখ ১২০০ ঘটিকায় দরপত্র দাতা বা মনোনীত প্রতিদ্বন্দ্বিতাদের উপস্থিতিতে (যদি কেহ উপস্থিত থাকেন)।
১১।	দরপত্র মূল্যায়নের তারিখ ও সময়	১২।	০৭ জুলাই ২০২৫ তারিখ ১২০০ ঘটিকায় দরপত্র দাতা বা মনোনীত প্রতিদ্বন্দ্বিতাদের উপস্থিতিতে (যদি কেহ উপস্থিত থাকেন)।
১২।	দরপত্র প্রাপ্তি/দাখিলের স্থান	১৩।	র‍্যাব-৭, পতেঙ্গা, চট্টগ্রাম (হিসাব শাখা)।
১৩।	দরপত্র দাখিলের শর্ত	১৪।	দরপত্র দাখিলের শর্তাবলী প্রত্যেকটি সিডিউলে পৃথকভাবে উল্লেখ করা হবে।
১৪।	দরপত্র দাতার যোগ্যতা	১৫।	পিপিআর-২০০৮ অনুযায়ী ট্রেন্ড লাইসেন্স, ভাট ও আয়করের কাগজ, নাগরিক সনদপত্র, বাহকের প্রত্যয়নপত্র এবং অভিজ্ঞতার সনদপত্র (১ম শ্রেণীর কর্মকর্তা দ্বারা সত্যায়িত)।
১৫।	বিশেষ নির্দেশাবলী	১৬।	কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকেই সর্বনিম্ন দরপত্রসহ যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন। অনুমোদিত বরাদ্দের আলোকে কার্যাদেশ প্রদান করা হবে। এতদসংক্রান্ত কোন আপত্তি গ্রহণযোগ্য হবে না।

মোঃ হাফিজুর রহমান, পিএসসি
সে. কর্নেল
পরিচালক
র‍্যাব-৭, পতেঙ্গা, চট্টগ্রাম

GD-1342

The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

Budget aims to send encouraging signals

But can the government deliver on its reform visions?

As planned, the finance adviser to the interim government presented the national budget for FY2025-26 on Monday afternoon. And as anticipated, from the outset he highlighted the significant challenges his government has faced in stabilising the economy post uprising, following widespread corruption and mismanagement under the now-ousted Awami League government.

Although it is impractical to expect too much from a budget proposed by an interim government that may not be in place to see it through to the end, a few aspects of it are quite notable. For starters, the proposed outlay is nearly 1 percent lower than the Tk 797,000 crore allocated in the outgoing fiscal year—a clear departure from the trend of previous years. While the decrease in budget size is not particularly large, it signals the government’s intent to tighten its belt in an effort to curb inflation.

The finance adviser has expressed the government’s intention to shift from a growth-centric approach to a concept of holistic development. Accordingly, instead of focusing solely on traditional physical infrastructure, the budget prioritises the well-being of the people. This includes placing special emphasis on education, health, good governance, civic facilities, and employment.

In line with this approach, the government has proposed expanding import duty exemptions on pharmaceutical raw materials and medical equipment in the upcoming national budget. The allocation for the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has also been slightly increased, from Tk 41,407 crore in the outgoing budget to Tk 41,902 crore in the proposed one.

However, the allocation for the education sector remains below 1.6 percent of GDP, similar to what the outgoing budget formed under the Awami League government had provided, while being significantly short of the 4-6 percent of GDP recommended by the UNESCO. The interim government, being a non-political administration, had a rare opportunity to reset national priorities, but health and education—the two cornerstones of human development—have once again received inadequate attention.

The government has proposed an increase in both the number of beneficiaries and the per capita allocations under social safety net programmes in the proposed budget. However, when viewed in terms of GDP, spending on safety nets has actually decreased. What is positive, though, is the government’s expressed intention to streamline social safety net spending—an encouraging development, as this could help reduce much of the wastage that occurred under various such schemes in the past.

It has been evident for some time that the government’s fiscal space is shrinking, primarily due to low revenue collection. Acknowledging this, the government has outlined various revenue reforms that, if successfully implemented, could make a significant difference. Similarly, it has recognised the need for banking sector reforms and the recovery of a large portion of the stolen wealth. However, it has yet to provide details on how it plans to achieve such a monumental task.

The government has also allocated a Tk 405 crore fund for the rehabilitation of July warriors and the families of July victims, along with various other benefits for them. It goes without saying that the July uprising was at least partly driven by economic hardships, particularly those faced by the youth. With this in mind, the government has placed significant emphasis on young people and on generating employment opportunities. For example, the finance adviser has proposed a Tk 100 crore start-up fund in the budget to support emerging entrepreneurs. In addition, a substantial allocation has been set aside for women entrepreneurs, who will have easier access to loans without any collateral.

Moreover, the government is set to launch a new initiative titled “Tarunner Utshob,” aiming to harness the power and potential of the country’s young population by involving them more deeply in national development. Tk 100 crore has been allocated to celebrate this festival across the country. It is important to mention, however, that the government has not yet specified how this fund will be utilised, and we hope it will be transparent in this regard.

The agricultural sector has also been a focus of the budget, which is encouraging. To promote farming and meet the growing demand for food, the government has exempted up to Tk 5 lakh of annual income from agricultural activities from tax. In an effort to ease the burden on marginal farmers and suppliers, the government has proposed reducing the source tax on income from the supply of essential commodities—including paddy, rice, wheat, potato, jute, and tea leaves—to 0.5 percent from the next fiscal year. While this may not provide massive relief, it signals that the government is placing increased importance on the sector.

Aside from these, there have been three other notable proposals, including changes for the stock market such as widening the gap in corporate tax paid by listed and non-listed firms from 5 percentage points to 7.5 percentage points in order to encourage companies with good performance records to go public. The other proposals include raising the corporate tax rate for non-listed companies to 27.5 percent for the next two fiscal years, FY27 and FY28, thereby eliminating the existing concessionary rate of 25 percent; and incorporating homemakers’ contributions in GDP.

While the budget may not be regarded as particularly radical, it contains several encouraging indicators. Nevertheless, the government must remain cognisant that achieving its revenue collection target could be challenging without significant reforms. And failure to meet this target may render the ambitiously low deficit goal of 3.6 percent unattainable.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Tiananmen Square protest crushed



On this day in 1989, the Chinese government called in the military to put down a pro-democracy demonstration carried out by more than 100,000 people in Tiananmen Square in Beijing, resulting in hundreds of deaths.

A conservative budget for FY2025-26



MACRO MIRROR
Dr Fahmida Khatun
is executive director at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD).
Views expressed in this article are the author’s own.

FAHMIDA KHATUN

The proposed budget for the 2025-26 fiscal year, worth Tk 7.9 lakh crore, was presented by the finance adviser yesterday, at a time when the country is passing through unusual circumstances—both politically and economically. A non-political, unelected government, the result of the political changeover last year, formulated the budget amid several economic challenges.

On the economic front, despite the fact that several economic indicators show stability returning in nearly 10 months of the interim government, the outlook for investment and employment remains bleak. While some areas of the economy have shown progress to an extent, many other sectors have yet to see positive outcomes. Inflation, which remained over nine percent for 27 consecutive months, is showing a downward trend, reaching 9.05 percent in May 2025. However, there is a silver lining in the external sector. Strong remittance inflows have bolstered the foreign exchange reserves. Export income is also impressive. In the banking sector, several disciplinary measures have been undertaken, stemming the sector’s continuous deterioration and easing the widespread panic that once plagued it.

Yet, significant challenges still remain. A new ordinance has been issued to regulate the banking industry, with steps taken to safeguard depositors’ interests. The draft Banking Resolution Ordinance, 2025, which is available on the website of the Financial Institutions Division, delineates rules and regulations for improving the ailing banks. These measures are expected to help rebuild investor confidence.

In the current context, the FY2026 budget was expected to address some of the existing challenges. Controlling inflation, tackling investment hurdles, creating employment, and achieving macroeconomic stability are some of the crucial areas to which the government needs to pay attention to. The need for higher investment in human capital development and social

protection cannot be ignored either.

Some of the major features of the proposed budget sheds light on the government’s priorities.

The size of the FY2026 budget has been reduced by Tk 7,000 crore compared to its predecessor, reflecting a contractionary approach taken by the government to address the persistent economic struggles. The Annual Development Programme (ADP) allocation has been reduced by 13.2 percent compared to the original allocation in the FY2025 budget, which indicates a strategic shift towards fiscal consolidation. The budget deficit is set at 3.62 percent of GDP, which will be



VISUAL: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

financed through domestic borrowing and foreign loans. Setting a lower budget deficit is a wise move in view of high inflation and limited fiscal space.

The revenue collection target for the incoming fiscal year is set at Tk 5.64 lakh crore, a 4.25 percent increase from the outgoing year’s original target of Tk 5.41 lakh crore. The National Board of Revenue (NBR) is expected to collect Tk 4.99 lakh crore of this target. However, the revenue authority has historically struggled to meet such targets. Given the trend of revenue collection till March 2025, the deficit could exceed Tk 1 lakh crore by the end of the outgoing fiscal year. A practical and achievable target could improve tax collection predictability.

of doing business. These tax proposals aim to boost market access and trade competitiveness. The budget highlights creating a business-friendly environment to stimulate private investment, which has been sluggish due to high inflation, rising interest rates, and a weak law and order situation. The political upheavals of the July-August mass uprising, and the subsequent disruptions, resulted in further deterioration of the business environment and the overall economic stability. The uncertain political future is discouraging investors. Therefore, success of the economic measures will depend on how effective the political measures are in stabilising the country.

Despite the interim government’s

Can we ensure road safety this Eid?



Tamanna Mizan
is senior communications officer of Road Safety Programme at BRAC.

TAMANNA MIZAN

As Bangladesh prepares for Eid-ul-Azha, millions of people will soon begin their journey home, eager to reunite with family and celebrate together. However, such journeys often turned tragic in the past. Year after year, the Eid travel rush brings with it an alarming spike in road accidents, injuries, and deaths.

This year’s Eid-ul-Fitr holiday was no different. According to data from the Road Safety Foundation, at least 257 accidents occurred between March 26 and April 5, resulting in 249 deaths and more than 2,000 injuries. These are not just statistics—they are shattered families, stolen futures, and preventable tragedies. It is time we stopped accepting this loss of life as a normal part of our festive seasons.

According to the World Health Organization, over half of global road traffic deaths involve pedestrians, cyclists, and motorcyclists. In Bangladesh, this rings painfully true. The most vulnerable road users pay the highest price for a system riddled with weak enforcement, outdated infrastructure, and public indifference. The problem becomes even more pronounced during national holidays, when roads are flooded with vehicles, and reckless behaviour among riders becomes commonplace.

Safety gear, dedicated lanes, awareness campaigns

A simple yet lifesaving step is enforcing the use of standard helmets for both motorcycle riders and passengers. Too often, passengers—especially women and children—ride unprotected. It is not just illegal; it is deadly. Authorities must implement a directive requiring certified helmets, while awareness campaigns should reinforce the importance of compliance.

At the same time, highways and major roads must have dedicated lanes for motorcycles to reduce collisions. These structural changes can save lives by separating vulnerable road users from high-speed traffic. Meanwhile within cities, walking or cycling could be practical alternatives—but only if they are safe. We must invest in pedestrian- and cyclist-friendly infrastructure, such as footpaths, protected bike lanes, zebra crossings, and footbridges. This year’s UN Global Road Safety Week theme “Roads for Life: Making Walking and Cycling Safe” reminds us that the solution is not only about better driving but also about better design.

During Eid, the urgency to reach home often leads to speeding and reckless overtaking. These behaviours are among the top causes of fatal accidents. Authorities must introduce and enforce strict speed limits, particularly on highways, during

holiday periods. Law enforcement agencies need clear directives, supported by mobile courts and highway patrols, to monitor driver behaviour more closely.

Driver fatigue is another hidden killer on our roads. Long-distance drivers often work without rest, risking not only their lives but also those

During Eid, the urgency to reach home often leads to speeding and reckless overtaking. These behaviours are among the top causes of fatal accidents. Authorities must introduce and enforce strict speed limits, particularly on highways, during holiday periods. Law enforcement agencies need clear directives, supported by mobile courts and highway patrols, to monitor driver behaviour more closely.

of their passengers and others. We must introduce regulations that limit driver’s working hours and ensure that rest periods are enforced.

Similarly, outdated vehicles and those without fitness certificates should be removed from the roads. Battery-powered vehicles like Nosimon and Korimon must be barred from operating on highways during peak travel times. On other roads, clear lanes for slow- and fast-moving vehicles

commitment to improving human development indicators, the FY2026 budget has reduced ADP allocation for the health sector by Tk 2,535 crore and for the education sector by Tk 2,971 crore compared to the outgoing fiscal year. This raises concerns about the government’s ability to improve the quality of education and healthcare services, which are crucial for reducing poverty and enhancing human capital. It is undeniable that investing in people—teachers, students, doctors, nurses—is critical. Allocation for the agriculture sector in the ADP has also been decreased by Tk 2,424 crore, which is concerning from the food security perspective.

During high inflation, social safety net programmes play an important role. However, the efficiency of these programmes has been undermined due to the exclusion of genuinely poor citizens and inclusion of non-poor people. Besides, there are several common programmes that various institutions of the government implement. The budget has proposed reducing the number of such programmes to 95 from about 140 previously, which is a good move.

In the Mid Term Macroeconomic Policy Statement (MTMPS) for FY2026-FY2028, the government has set the GDP growth target to be 5.5 percent for FY2026 and expects the inflation rate to decline to 6.5 percent. Achieving these targets will depend on addressing the current economic and political challenges and implementing some essential reforms. For example, the institutional reform of the NBR will be critical for meeting the revenue target. The government attempted to undertake such a reform through dissolving the NBR and establishing two new divisions under the finance ministry. However, the initiative has been stalled in the face of protests by NBR employees on administrative issues. It is crucial that this reform is implemented sooner rather than later through broader consultations with the relevant stakeholders to enhance efficiency and transparency in revenue collection.

Since a budget is designed only for a year, there is a limited scope for undertaking deep reforms. However, structural bottlenecks, including fiscal discipline and efficiency through institutional reform, are necessary to deliver budget commitments. Here’s to hoping that the interim government will initiate a few targeted and critical reforms in FY2026 to improve budget implementation.

should be established to prevent dangerous interactions.

However, road safety measures must extend beyond drivers. All passengers should be required to wear seat belts. For cars, jeeps, and minibuses, laws must mandate child safety seats. Children are among the most vulnerable passengers, and protecting them is non-negotiable.

Pedestrians, too, deserve better. Public campaigns should promote the use of footpaths, discourage the use of mobile phones while crossing roads, and increase awareness about zebra crossings. These small behavioural shifts, when supported by proper infrastructure, can dramatically reduce accidents.

To coordinate these efforts effectively, Bangladesh needs a centralised body dedicated solely to road safety. A National Road Safety Authority would streamline enforcement, infrastructure planning, public education, and policy development under one roof.

We cannot rely on scattered departments and uncoordinated efforts. Road safety requires unified action, sustained funding, and political will.

Every death on the road is a failure of planning, enforcement, and accountability. And every Eid that ends in mourning is a reminder of how urgently we need change.

The solutions are known. The data is clear. The tools exist. What’s missing is the collective resolve to act.

Let this Eid be remembered not as another chapter in a long line of preventable tragedies—but as a turning point. Let it mark the beginning of a national commitment to making our roads safe for everyone, every day of the year.

ISTANBUL TALKS

Russia, Ukraine
swap peace
roadmaps

AFP, Istanbul

Russia and Ukraine yesterday swapped plans for ending their three-year war during talks in Istanbul aiming to find a way out of Europe's largest conflict since World War II. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said any deal must not "reward" Russian leader Vladimir Putin, but said Kyiv was willing to take the "necessary steps for peace".

Urged on by US President Donald Trump, Moscow and Kyiv have opened direct negotiations for the first time since the early weeks of Russia's invasion, but have yet to make progress towards an agreement.

Yesterday's talks come a day after Ukraine carried out one of its most brazen and successful attacks ever on Russian soil – using drones to hit dozens of strategic bombers parked at airbases thousands of kilometres behind the front line.

A first round of meetings in Istanbul last month yielded a large-scale prisoner exchange but no pause in the fighting.

IRANIAN LIQUEFIED GAS

Adani under new
scrutiny from US
prosecutors
WSJ reports

REUTERS

US prosecutors are investigating whether Indian billionaire Gautam Adani's companies imported Iranian liquefied petroleum gas into India through their Mundra port, the Wall Street Journal reported yesterday.

A WSJ investigation found tankers traveling between Mundra in the western Indian state of Gujarat and the Persian Gulf exhibited traits experts say are common for ships evading sanctions, the report said.

The US Justice Department is reviewing activities of several LPG tankers used to ship cargoes to Adani Enterprises, the WSJ said, citing people familiar with the matter. Reuters could not immediately confirm the report.

"Adani categorically denies any deliberate engagement in sanctions evasion or trade involving Iranian-origin LPG," a company spokesman told the WSJ in a statement. "Further, we are not aware of any investigation by US authorities on this subject."

Adani, the US Department of Justice and the US Attorney's Office in Brooklyn did not immediately respond to Reuters request for comment.

US President Donald Trump said in May that all purchases of Iranian oil or petrochemical products must stop and any country or person buying any from the country would be immediately subject to secondary sanctions.



Palestinian children wait alongside others for food at a distribution point in Nuseirat, central Gaza Strip, yesterday. UN chief Antonio Guterres called for an independent investigation into the killing of dozens of Palestinians near a US-backed aid centre in Gaza after rescuers blamed the deaths on Israeli fire and the military denied any involvement.

PHOTO: AFP

Hospital in southern
Gaza overwhelmed

Says medical NGO, blames new US aid group for
chaos; multiple burn injuries in attack at Israeli
hostage protest in US

AGENCIES

Medical charity Doctors Without Borders yesterday said the staff at Nasser Hospital in Gaza's Khan Younis are working in dire conditions, facing severe shortages of medical supplies.

"There is no room for all of the patients. We have patients in corridors... and more come in today, dead and wounded," Claire Menara, an emergency coordinator with Doctors Without Borders, told Al Jazeera.

The NGO, known by its French name MSF, blamed the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation's aid distribution system for chaos at the scene in the southern Gaza town of Rafah on Sunday that killed 31 Palestinians.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres yesterday called for an independent investigation into the deaths of Palestinians near the aid distribution site.

Meanwhile, a man yelling "Free Palestine" used a makeshift flamethrower to torch protesters rallying in support of Israeli hostages, injuring at least eight people in the US state of Colorado on Sunday evening.

The FBI said it was investigating the incident as a "targeted terror attack" and identified the suspect as 45-year-old Mohamed Sabry Soliman, reports AFP.

In Gaza, civil defence agency said an Israeli strike on a home in the northern town of Jabalia killed 14 people yesterday.

Israeli forces destroyed the only facility for kidney dialysis patients in the north of the enclave. The troops also demolished the wall of the European Gaza Hospital in Khan Younis, while also carrying out bulldozing activities in the vicinity of the hospital.

On Sunday evening, Qatar and Egypt announced plans to step up efforts for truce negotiations, as the Palestinian group Hamas said it was prepared to "immediately" hold a fresh round of talks.

Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan said that Israel's blocking of a visit by Arab diplomats to the occupied West Bank showed its "rejection of... a diplomatic path to peace".

Speaking at a joint press conference in Amman with his Jordanian on Sunday evening, Egyptian and Bahraini counterparts, Prince Faisal said Israel's move "illustrates and confirms its extremism and its rejection of any serious attempt to engage in a diplomatic path toward peace... it is clear that they only want violence."



Hajj pilgrims
gather in
Makkah under
desert sun

AFP, Makkah

More than a million Muslim pilgrims poured into the holy city of Makkah ahead of the annual hajj, with authorities vowing to hold a safer pilgrimage amid searing desert heat and a massive crackdown on illegal visitors.

Officials have beefed up heat mitigation measures hoping to avoid a repeat of last year's hajj, which saw 1,301 pilgrims die as temperatures reached 51.8 degrees Celsius (125.2 Fahrenheit).

Temperatures were forecast to exceed 40 degrees Celsius this week as one of the world's largest annual religious gatherings starts tomorrow.

The hajj, one of the five pillars of Islam, must be performed at least once by all Muslims with the means. As of Friday, more than 1.3 million pilgrims had arrived in Saudi Arabia for the multi-day pilgrimage, according to officials.

This year, authorities have mobilised more than 40 government agencies and 250,000 officials, doubling their efforts against heat-related illness following the heatwave of 2024.

Macron's figure
stolen from
Paris waxwork
museum

AFP, Paris

President Emmanuel Macron's wax figure was stolen yesterday from a Paris waxwork museum by several people claiming to be Greenpeace environmental activists, a police source told AFP.

According to the source, two women and a man entered the Grevin Museum in central Paris posing as tourists, and left the museum through an emergency exit.

Last week, with a wave of his hand, Macron has taken a different tack to diffuse the controversy over his wife appearing to hit him, this time by making light of it, reports Independent.

On Monday, cameras caught the moment Brigitte Macron pushed her husband in the face as their plane arrived in Hanoi, Vietnam, for the start of their southeast Asian tour. The French leader, who was standing in the doorway of the plane, looked momentarily stunned after the then-unidentified hand hit him in the face.

But after playing down headlines of the pair appearing to have been caught in the middle of a heated argument, the French president on Tuesday instead made fun of it.



No nuclear deal
if deprived of
'peaceful activities'
Says Iran's foreign minister

AFP, Cairo

Iran said yesterday it will not accept a nuclear agreement that deprives it of what it calls "peaceful activities", a reference to uranium enrichment, as it pressed the United States for guarantees it will drop sanctions.

Uranium enrichment has remained a key point of contention between the foes, in talks to seal a nuclear deal since April, with Iran defending what it says is its pursuit of a civil nuclear programme but with the US side calling it a "red line".

Speaking in Cairo, where he met the UN nuclear watchdog's chief Rafael Grossi, Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said: "If the goal is to deprive Iran of its peaceful activities, then certainly no agreement will be reached."

Araghchi insisted that Iran has "nothing to hide" on its nuclear programme. "Iran has a peaceful nuclear programme... we are prepared to provide this assurance to any party or entity," he said.

The remarks came after Grossi of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) yesterday called for more transparency from Iran following a leaked report that showed Tehran had stepped up uranium enrichment.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer
Education Engineering Department
Bhola
E-mail: eedbhola.govbd@gmail.com

Invitation for e-Tender

Tender Notice No. e-GP/EED/BH/6821 Furniture SHED & TMED/2024-25/23

Date: 01/06/2025

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, who have registered in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents of following Packages from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks' branches up to the following date & Time.

Invitation Reference No.	Tender ID	Package description	Method	Last date & time of downloading tender documents	Tender closing
37.07.0000.001.002. 24/3/522 Date:10/09/2024	1122044	Manufacturing and Supplying of Furniture at Daulatkhan Govt. High School, Daulatkhan, Bhola.	NCT, LTM	18-June-2025 17:00:00	19-June-2025 11:00:00
37.07.0000.001.002. 24/3/522 Date:10/09/2024	1122725	Manufacturing and Supplying of Furniture at Fazilatunnesa Mohila College, Sadar, Bhola.	NCT, LTM	18-June-2025 17:00:00	19-June-2025 11:00:00
37.07.0000.001.002. 24/3/522 Date:10/09/2024	1122769	Manufacturing and Supplying of Furniture at Fazilatunnesa Mohila College, Sadar, Bhola.	NCT, LTM	18-June-2025 17:00:00	19-June-2025 11:00:00
37.07.0000.001.002. 20.SE./1/70 Date: 23.02.2022	1122812	Manufacturing and Supplying of Furniture at Bhola Polytechnic Institute, Borhanuddin, Bhola.	NCT, LTM	18-June-2025 17:00:00	19-June-2025 11:00:00

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

-Sd-
Md. Zahadul Karim
Executive Engineer
Education Engineering Department
Bhola

GD-1344

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
Chattogram Division Upazila and Union Road
Widening and Strengthening Project (1st Revision)
62, West Agargaon, Shere Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207
www.lged.gov.bd

Memo No: 46.02.0000.695.07.049.2025-481

Date: 02/06/2025

e-Tender Notice No : 3/2024-25.

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP system portal in OTM (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of Road Roller;

Tender ID	Name of Scheme	Last Selling Date & Time	Closing Date & Time	Opening Date & Time
1123047 Re-Tender ID 1101226	Purchase of 3 (Three) nos. Three Wheel Static Road Roller (8-10 Ton)	25-June-2025 12:00 hr	25-June -2025 14:00 hr	30-June-2025 14:00 hr

These are online Tender, where only e-Tender be accepted in the National e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP system portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP System portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branches. Further information and guideline are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Aminur Rashid Chowdhury
Project Director
Chattogram Division Upazila and Union Road
Widening and Strengthening Project (1st Revision)
Phone: 02-22242141
e-mail: pd.cdwp@lged.gov.bd

02/06/2025

GD-1345



Co-funded by
the European Union

The Daily Star



A new Bangladesh for children

A stronger social budget to bring childhood back on track

UNICEF, supported by the European Union and in partnership with The Daily Star, organised a roundtable on May 13, 2025, titled “A New Bangladesh for Children: A Stronger Social Budget to Bring Childhood Back on Track.” The following is a summary of the discussion.



Rana Flowers, UNICEF Representative in Bangladesh

UNICEF works for children's rights across Bangladesh. Since arriving last August, I have been concerned by the focus on tax and bank reform while children's rights and social services remain neglected.

Bangladesh has one of the world's weakest education, health, and social welfare systems. Social protection is not just about cash transfers—it includes functioning social sectors. Yet in Bangladesh, both are neglected.

Investments in early childhood development yield long-term benefits in economic growth, yet remain underfunded. Health spending is only 0.7%, lower than in many African countries, with 40% of health centers lacking vaccinators.

Teacher quality is poor, and families pay out-of-pocket for ineffective tutoring. Last week alone, 27 children died as a result of domestic violence. Education is marked by poor outcomes and high dropout rates. Health, nutrition, and WASH are fragmented—seven government departments manage water alone. We urge integration and efficiency.

Budget processes are ad hoc, with no tracking of social sector spending, causing delays and inefficiencies.

Separate ministries for health/family planning and primary/secondary education reduce efficiency. Donor-driven projects often lack long-term planning. We need clear targets, strategic planning, and gender responsive budgeting.



Dr Michal KREJZA, Head of Development Cooperation, Delegation of the European Union to Bangladesh

The EU remains a key partner in Bangladesh's social sector, supporting two major budget operations: €285M for social protection and €245M for education and TVET, tied to reforms under the National Social Security Strategy (NSSS).

The education budget has stagnated at 12%



Md Ashiq Iqbal, Social Policy & Economic Specialist, UNICEF (Keynote Presentation)

With the upcoming budget, it's crucial to reflect on recent trends in social sector investments and future priorities. Investing in human capital is vital now, as we navigate a shrinking demographic window, which will close around 2033. After that, general population growth will outpace workforce population growth, meaning we will be moving towards an ageing society.

For instance, in 2020, 13 working-age people supported one elderly person; by 2040, only six will. Today's children will bear this burden, needing to be twice as productive. Hence, urgent investment in their development is essential. Let us now examine our recent investments in this area, starting with education.

Enrolment has improved at both primary and secondary levels, with gender parity achieved and dropout rates reduced—especially for girls. However, many adolescents remain excluded, and quality is a growing concern.

In Grade Five, 70% failed to meet expected grade-level competencies in Bangla and mathematics. While global goals recommend allocating 4–6% of GDP (approximately 20% of the budget), we allocate only 1.7%, and spend just 1.4%.

When resource constraints arose in the past, education was still prioritised during implementation. However, in recent years, this trend has reversed—education is now deprioritised both in allocation and in spending. Alarmingly, only 4.5% of the education budget goes to quality areas such as teacher training, ICT, and innovation. Around 50% of the development budget

reasonable at 2.4% of GDP.

However, this allocation includes pensions, interest on savings certificates, and agricultural subsidies—many argue these are not true social protection. Excluding them, the figure is just 1.3%. Children, who make up 33% of the population, receive only 8% of the support.

It is also a major accountability issue that no social protection expenditure data is published.

Turning to other sectors, emergency preparedness requires an estimated \$8.5 billion annually; however, only \$3.6 billion is allocated, despite Bangladesh's considerable vulnerability to disasters.

We propose key investment priorities for the upcoming budget. In health, we must progressively move towards 2% of GDP, focusing on primary health care. Budget codes should enable tracking, and vaccine stock-outs by June 2025 must be averted.

The education budget needs to prioritise quality through foundational learning, teacher development, and climate-resilient infrastructure. In social protection, the MCBP should expand to cover 50% of pregnant women, including adolescent mothers. The monthly benefit should be adjusted from BDT 800 to BDT 1,200 to counter the impact of inflation.



Prof Mustafizur Rahman, Distinguished Fellow, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)

To raise education and health spending from 2% to 5% and from 1% to 3% of GDP respectively, we must ask: where will the additional 5–6% come from? Since the total GDP allocation is fixed at 100%, increasing one sector's share means reducing another's—a political trade-off often overlooked. An alternative is to expand the overall budget by increasing the revenue-to-GDP ratio.

Doubling it from 8% to 16% of GDP would increase actual education spending even if the GDP share remains at 2%. Thus, the challenge lies in restructuring the budget and boosting domestic resource mobilisation.

Social safety nets also show imbalance: 34% coverage in rural areas versus just 9% among the urban poor. Initiatives like midday meals, with their positive effects on nutrition, school attendance, and gender outcomes, should be scaled up to address such gaps.



Towfiqul Islam Khan, Senior Research Fellow, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)

Resource constraint is often cited as the primary reason for not allocating incremental resources to the social sectors. The social sectors received only half of the planned ADP allocation compared to the planned ADP allocation in the 8FYP. In contrast, infrastructure related sectors received 20,000 crore taka more.

So why does this happen? It often comes down to who benefits from these services. Marginalised communities rely on public schools and hospitals, while the wealthier, ruling class typically do not. They tend to send their children to private schools and seek healthcare from private providers. However, everyone, regardless of wealth, uses public infrastructure like roads and bridges. This creates a bias in the allocation of funds towards physical infrastructure instead of social services. Unfortunately, discussions about how public resources are distributed often overlook this issue, especially when it comes to elite capture of budget decisions.



Prof Dr Rumana Huque, Department of Economics, Faculty of Social Sciences, Dhaka University

I want to emphasise the efficient use of resources in health, education, and social safety nets. Currently, our budgeting follows an incremental, cost-centre-based model without considering population or catchment area needs. This must shift to a needs-based approach, such as district budgeting and increased coordination between the operating and development budgets.

We should adopt a life-course perspective—investing early through integrated school health programmes, including screenings, meals, and mental health services. Coordination must move beyond paper, with joint budgeting across ministries.

Lastly, public expenditure tracking is crucial

across all sectors. Linking inputs to outputs through integrated budgeting can enhance efficiency and help monitor real impact.



Nishath Sultana, Director – Influencing, Campaign and Communication, Plan International, Bangladesh

It was noted earlier that children are the future, but I believe they are also the present, and we must act now.

Despite progress in girls' primary and secondary education, nearly 50% drop out before Grade 10—mainly due to child marriage, which remains at 51%. The Child Marriage Restraint Act 2017 and its National Plan of Action exist, but coordination and monitoring are weak.

We must also tackle rising violence against women and girls. Domestic violence affects nearly 70% of women in Bangladesh. In public spaces, especially on transport, the problem is even more acute: 94% of women report routine sexual harassment, and 80% of women do not feel safe in the city.



Iole Valentina Lucchese, Programme Manager, Social Protection, Delegation of the European Union to Bangladesh

While I fully agree with the need for better targeting, integration, and more efficient spending, I want to highlight one crucial aspect that has not been addressed—social insurance. If we are to identify sustainable financing mechanisms that ease pressure on the government budget, we must consider piloting and eventually institutionalising social insurance schemes.

For instance, Bangladesh currently has a pilot Employment Injury Scheme, but the government should move forward with a clear vision for social insurance, including maternity social insurance.



Kishower Amin, Programme Manager, Public Financial Management (PFM), Delegation of the European Union to Bangladesh

While increased allocation for social sectors is important, during our budget support policy dialogues, the government often raises a valid concern: what about budget utilisation? A key reason for low utilisation the lack of credible budget planning. Ministries often struggle with both data availability and analysis, limiting their ability to plan effectively. Capacity building in this area is essential.

Additionally, budget planning must better reflect sectoral policies, which currently contributes to underutilisation. We must also place greater emphasis on strengthening project preparation processes to ensure both effective allocation and utilisation of resources.



Sharmin Neelormi, Professor, Department of Economics, Jahangirnagar University

I would like to raise key points on how children are positioned within social policy. Beyond education and health, we must address rising challenges such as kishore (teen) gangs, drug abuse, and risky adolescent leisure—signs of systemic neglect.

Structural reforms are essential. Teachers' salaries remain extremely low, undermining motivation and quality. The NCTB must operate independently, free from political interference. Its content and structure should reflect long-term national priorities—not short-term political considerations.

Childcare access is dire—only 61 public and 100 private daycare centres exist in Bangladesh. Even affluent families struggle.

Public-private coordination is essential to expand access and support early development.



Stanley Gwavuya, Chief, Social Policy, UNICEF

We are observing that almost 50% of the allocated budget remains unutilised. We must investigate the causes, identify the bottlenecks, and address them—unlocking these funds could significantly enhance impact. I believe we have the means to begin this process.



Prof Dr A K Enamul Haque, Director General, Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS)

We are focusing too narrowly on budget allocations, overlooking inefficiencies and accountability

gaps that undermine impact. Simply increasing spending—on infrastructure, health, or overall—will not yield results without systemic reform.

For example, private hospitals enjoy tax exemptions from donors and the state but must also be held accountable for serving the poor.

Public education faces a similar crisis. Some Dhaka schools have virtually no students, as even slum families turn to low-cost private schools. This reflects a serious policy gap.

Notably, our family planning success was donor-led, showing that aligning priorities with effective delivery matters more than just increasing budgets.



Rasheda K. Choudhury, Executive Director, Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE)

We must begin by tracking budget flows in critical sectors, particularly in terms of how resources are actually utilised on the ground. Without this, increased funding alone will not create meaningful change.

You may be surprised to learn that Bangladesh is among the top five countries for child deaths due to drowning—most of these tragic incidents involve pre-primary-aged children. Even though we motivated the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA) to develop a project to address this, the utilisation rate is extremely low.

Similarly, the Bureau of Non-Formal Education presents a grim outlook: many interventions fail to sustain impact because, once a project ends, underprivileged children often disappear from the system entirely.



Mamta Ahmed NDC, Senior Secretary, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs

We implement decisions made by the government, and I currently oversee two major programmes: the Mother and Child Benefit Programme (MCBP) and the Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) programme—both of which require increased government funding. Under MCBP, the current benefit of BDT 800 is inadequate given inflation, necessitating a higher allocation. In the VGD programme, we distribute 30 kg of rice to women or mothers, but additional funds are needed to both expand coverage and increase support.

I would also like to highlight the ICBC project, which provides safe swimming facilities for children and is funded by Bloomberg International (New York) and the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (UK). Despite excellent outcomes, it operates in only 7 out of 64 districts and covers just 64 out of 4,945 upazilas. Scaling it up is critical.



Dr Anisuzzaman Chowdhury, Special Assistant, Economic Relations Division, Ministry of Finance

The core issues—investment in children, education, and health—are not new. We all agree they are essential. The real challenge lies in political economy: who makes decisions, and whose interests shape the system?

We discussed domestic resource mobilisation. Afghanistan is a cautionary tale: once donors left, its budget collapsed. Aid dependency is dangerous. In 1967, the late Prof. Anisur Rahman argued that aid often replaces rather than supplements domestic effort, eroding self-reliance.

Bangladesh exemplifies this. The tax-to-GDP ratio has declined from 11% in the early 2010s to 6–7% today, while aid reliance has increased. True progress demands correcting this imbalance. We are not short on financial or human capital—billions leave the country while capable professionals remain underutilised. What we lack is social capital: the trust and collective spirit that hold society together.

To move forward, we must rebuild social capital through unity, inclusive dialogue, and protection of civic spaces.



Mahfuz Anam, Editor and Publisher, The Daily Star

We are committed to prioritising the social sector, especially education and children's issues, as part of our editorial policy. We are conscious of the fact that our investment in the social sectors, in education, and on children's affairs, is far below the global standard.

Even that inadequate level of investment is plagued by two persistent issues: corruption and misallocation. After 54 years as an independent nation, it is imperative that we reassess our priorities and enhance the efficiency of resource use.



Tanjim Ferdous, In-Charge, NGOs & Foreign Missions, The Daily Star

Despite progress, investment in education, health, and social protection remains far below global standards—threatening the future of an entire generation. Our goal is simple yet powerful: to listen, exchange ideas, and build consciousness around a stronger, more equitable social budget—one that truly brings childhood back on track.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- » The education budget should prioritise quality through foundational learning, teacher development, and climate-resilient infrastructure.
- » Health allocation must progressively move towards 2% of GDP, focusing on primary health care.
- » Public expenditure tracking is a must across all sectors.
- » Instead of an incremental, cost-centre-based model, budgeting should shift to a needs-based approach, prioritising public needs.
- » Social protection expenditure data needs to be published publicly to ensure accountability.
- » Budget allocation should be increased for the Mother and Child Benefit Programme (MCBP) and the Vulnerable Group

- Development (VGD) Programme. The MCBP should target to progressively cover 50% of pregnant women, including adolescent mothers, while increasing the monthly benefit from BDT 800 to BDT 1,200 to offset inflation.
- » The NCTB must operate independently, designing curricula that reflect long-term national priorities—not short-term political interests.
 - » Domestic financing needs to be strengthened, shifting reliance away from foreign aid.
 - » Allocation for emergency preparedness should be expanded, prioritising children in disaster responses.
 - » Establishment of separate courts with virtual trial facilities for children should be targeted.

for a decade and dropped to 1.69% of GDP in FY2025—below UNESCO's recommended 4–6%—despite education's role in economic growth. Focus must now shift to quality and digital integration, preparing students for both domestic and international job markets.

Budget transparency also needs improvement; for instance, investments in the Rooppur nuclear plant are categorised under education and technology in the budget, whereas in EU countries this would fall under energy.

According to initial newspaper reports, the social protection budget is expected to drop from 1,360 to 1,200 billion BDT—not necessarily a bad sign, as it reflects a shift towards more targeted spending. The Mother and Child Benefit Programme (MCBP) will expand to 1.77 million beneficiaries with a slight allowance increase, though still far from the NSSS target of 6 million by June 2026. The old age allowance expansion—from 6 million people in FY2024 to 6.1 million in the next budget—is also commendable.

Civil servant pensions should be excluded from social protection, as they do not assist the poor and vulnerable. As LDC graduation approaches, urgent reforms in revenue mobilisation and tax systems are essential. The EU will continue to support this transition.

remains unutilised. Foreign financing often crowds out domestic investment.

In health, while progress was made in maternal and under-five mortality reduction and immunisation, challenges remain—along with HR shortages, governance and financial management issues. Out-of-pocket expenditure remains as high as 70%, indicating heavy reliance on the unregulated private sector.

Health allocation is only 0.7% of GDP and 5.2% of the budget (FY25), whereas global standards are 5% of GDP and 15% of the budget. Actual health spending (FY23) is only 0.5% of GDP and 3.9% of total public expenditure.

Despite already low allocations, almost half of the health development budget remains unspent—only 5% was utilised in the first three quarters of FY25 by the health ministry. This trend is worsening.

Additionally, with LDC graduation ahead, grant support is declining while interest payments on foreign loans—now exceeding combined health and education spending—are surging. Over the last 15 years, 41% of health and 23% of education development budgets were foreign-financed. Strengthening domestic financing is crucial to prepare for the coming challenges.

In social protection, despite improved coverage, major challenges persist—weak coordination, low transfer values, and lack of service linkages—though investment remains



Government of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh
National Housing Authority
Office of the Executive Engineers
Sylhet Division
471, Sadipur, Shibgonj, Sylhet.
Web site: www.nha.gov.bd



Memo No-25.38.9162.636.99.004.24-238

Date: 02-06-2025.

e-Tender Notice No-03/2024-2025

e-Tenderare hereby invited in the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) For the Procurement of the Works stated as below.

Sl No	Package No	Name of Works	Tender ID No	Method of Tender	Closing Date & Time	Opening Date & Time
01	01	Land Developmen, Construction of Road, Drain, Culvert, Palisading, Retaining wall, Site Office, Main Gate & Others works for site & Services Project at Sadar Upazilla, Habigonj District. Under Sylhet Division, National Housing Authority, Sylhet. (2 nd Call)	1110422	OTM	18-06-2025 14:00 PM	18-06-2025 14:00 PM

Note :

- This is an online Tender Notice, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in the National e-GP portal and on Offline /Hard copy will be accepted.
- To submit e-Tender(s), registration in the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is Required.
- The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP Portal have to be deposited online at any branch of registered banks.

Signed
(Muhammod Delwar Hossain)
Project Director
Development of Site & Services residential Plots
Project at Sadar Upazilla, Habigonj District.
&
Executive Engineer
Sylhet Division
National Housing Authority, Sylhet.
e-mail: nhasylhet@yahoo.com
Phone no: 029977700706

GD-1351

Youth and Sports Ministry to get Tk 2,423 crore

SPORTS REPORTER

The Youth and Sports Ministry received an allocation of Tk 842 crore more for the 2025–26 fiscal year compared to the ongoing fiscal year, as Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed placed a Tk 790,000 crore national budget yesterday.

Although there was anticipation that the budget for the sector would be reduced following the economic crisis, the government allocated Tk 2,423 crore to the ministry for the 2025–26 fiscal year, with an operating budget of Tk 983 crore and a development budget of Tk 1,440 crore.

The allocation is much higher than the revised outlay of Tk 1,581 crore as well as the original allocation of Tk 2,212 crore in the current fiscal year.

Bangladesh midfielder Hamza Choudhury arrived in Dhaka yesterday ahead of the Asian Cup Qualifier against Singapore on June 10 at the National Stadium. The England-based player is also expected to feature in the June 4 friendly against Bhutan as part of the team's preparations. It will mark Hamza's first appearance on home soil after debuting in March's goalless draw against India. Canada-based Shamit Shome and Italy-based Fahamedul Islam also made the squad. Tickets for the Singapore match are already sold out. "Hello, Assalamu Alaikum everyone. Just wanted to say thank you to all the fans, media and journalists for my reception again. Inshallah, we'll be successful and I'll see you all there to support us," said Hamza upon arrival.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED



Punjab stand in way of Kohli's IPL dream



AFP, AHMEDABAD

Punjab Kings stand in the way of Virat Kohli's dream of finally winning the Indian Premier League in Tuesday's final at the Narendra Modi Stadium.

No matter which team prevails at the 132,000-capacity venue in Ahmedabad, it will be a first – neither Punjab nor Kohli's Royal Challengers Bengaluru have won the IPL since it launched in 2008.

Punjab booked their place in the decider with a five-wicket victory over five-time champions Mumbai Indians on Sunday.

Shreyas Iyer played a captain's knock with an unbeaten 87.

Kohli and Bengaluru will have a psychological edge after thrashing Punjab by eight wickets at the start of the playoffs last week.

It is the fourth time that Kohli and his team have reached the final but they have never been able to take that last step. The vast majority in attendance will be cheering on the 36-year-old superstar batsman and icon to Indian cricket fans.

Kohli, who last month retired from Test cricket alongside Rohit Sharma, has again been Bengaluru's go-to batsman with 614 runs, including eight half-centuries, in 14 innings this season.

He has made no attempt to hide his desperation to win the IPL at the 18th attempt and add it to a long list of accolades that includes two World Cup crowns.

He has talked about his "heartbreak" of failing to win the IPL, and celebrated last week's win against Punjab saying: "One more to go."

Maxwell's ODI curtain falls, his 201 echoes through time

AGENCIES

Glenn Maxwell, the Australian maverick known as the "Big Show", has called time on his one-day international career, drawing the curtain on a format he often redefined with fearless brilliance.

While his ODI journey includes two World Cup titles and a reputation as one of the game's most dynamic finishers, it will be his once-in-a-lifetime knock against Afghanistan at the 2023 World Cup that immortalizes him.

Chasing 293 under the Mumbai lights, Australia were down and

singlehandedly dismantled Afghanistan's attack with a blend of ramp shots, flat sixes, and reverse sweeps – many on one leg. It wasn't just a match-winning knock; it was a

admitted. "I wasn't sure I'd be able to walk off the field, let alone win it." Australia would ride the momentum from that night to eventually clinch their sixth World Cup title in Ahmedabad, with Maxwell playing a crucial role throughout the campaign.

Announcing his ODI retirement at 36, Maxwell cited the physical toll of the 50-over format, stressing it was time for younger talent to stake their claim

Maxwell IN ODIS

- MATCHES: 149
- RUNS: 3990
- AVERAGE: 33.81
- STRIKE RATE: 126.70
- 50/100: 23/4
- BEST SCORE: 201*

almost out at 91-7. Maxwell, battling scorching heat and debilitating cramps, produced what many call the greatest ODI innings of all time – an unbeaten 201 off just 128 balls. Collapsing at times mid-pitch, grimacing in pain, and barely able to run, Maxwell turned to sheer timing, audacious shot-making, and defiance to flip the script.

With captain Pat Cummins holding one end (scoring only 12 in their 202-run stand), Maxwell

superhuman effort that defined grit, genius, and showmanship in equal measure. "That innings was something else – I've never felt anything like it," Maxwell later

ahead of the 2027 World Cup. "I didn't want to just hold on for selfish reasons," he said.

Selector George Bailey paid tribute to Maxwell's "natural talent, passion, and unmatched energy", and confirmed he remains central to Australia's T20 plans heading into next year's World Cup.

In the end, Maxwell's ODI career may be over, but his 201 not out against Afghanistan ensures the legend lives on.

KLAASEN retires from international cricket

REUTERS

South Africa batter Heinrich Klaasen has retired from all forms of international cricket, a blow for the country ahead of their co-hosting of the 2027 World Cup where he would have been a major draw card.

Klaasen, 33, is one of the world's most destructive batters in white-ball cricket and a mainstay of the South African limited-overs side in recent years. He is likely to maintain a presence on the global T20 league circuit.

"It is a sad day for me as I announce that I have decided to step away from international cricket," he said in a Cricket South Africa statement on Monday.

"It took me a long time to decide what's best for me and my family for the future. It was truly a very difficult decision but also one that I have absolute peace with."



"I look forward to spending more time with my family as this decision will allow me to do so."

Klaasen averaged 43.69 with four centuries and 11 fifties in 60 ODIs, and scored exactly 1,000 runs in 58 T20Is at a strike-rate of 141.84. He also played four test matches for South Africa.

SHORT CORNER

HC refuses to pass order on ex-BCB chief Faruque's petition

The High Court bench today refused to pass any order on a writ petition challenging the National Sports Council's (NSC) decisions to remove Faruque Ahmed from the post of Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president and appoint Aminul Islam Bulbul as his successor.

Chinkungunya threat forces Women's Emerging Asia Cup to be postponed

The Asian Cricket Council (ACC) today announced the postponement of the ACC Women's Emerging Teams Asia Cup, previously set to commence on June 6, 2025, in Sri Lanka, owing to adverse weather conditions and health concerns related to the spread of chikungunya disease in the country.

Griezmann extends Atletico Madrid contract

France's 2018 World Cup winning forward Antoine Griezmann has extended his Atletico Madrid contract until 2027, the Spanish club announced Monday.

Griezmann, 34, is Atletico's all-time top scorer with 197 goals over two spells at the club since first joining Atletico from Real Sociedad in 2014.

**Read full stories on The Daily Star website.

Women footballers eye victory against Jordan

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh women's football team are looking forward to finishing the tri-nation FIFA friendly series with a victory when they face hosts Jordan in the last match at King Abdullah II Stadium today.

The match will kick off at 10:00pm Bangladesh time.

Bangladesh, who held a superior Indonesia to a goalless draw in the first match, are optimistic about a better showing against Jordan, who are 59 places ahead of 133rd-ranked Bangladesh in FIFA rankings.

"We are hoping the girls will not disappoint and display another good show against Jordan. We are hoping for a victory," assistant coach

Mahabur Rahman Litu was quoted as saying in a video clip sent by the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) yesterday.

The charges of Peter Butler have taken the two FIFA friendly matches as part of their preparation for the upcoming AFC Women's Asian Cup Qualifiers from June 29 to July 5.

"Following the final preparation, we are ready for tomorrow's [Tuesday] match" said midfielder Maria Manda.

Meanwhile, midfielder Shopna Rani said that they have "taken good preparation for the Jordan match and want to implement the coach's plan."

After playing the final friendly match, Bangladesh are scheduled to head home tomorrow.



NABID YEASIN

Evolving and growing through every phase of life is a natural phenomenon. For most, this brings about positive changes. But for the Bangladesh cricket team, the exact opposite is the case, as in every new series and tour, the Tigers unlock new problem areas in their game.

The Litton Das-led Bangladesh suffered successive T20I series defeats – a humiliating 2-1 loss away to Associate UAE, followed by a clean sweep in a three-match tour of Pakistan.

Interestingly, Bangladesh ended these back-to-back tours with different concerns from the ones they had at the start.

When the Tigers left for the UAE in mid-May, their most pressing issue was top-order batting – a long-standing concern across all formats.

Not that the top-order conundrum has been completely solved – with consistency still being an issue – but for now, what seems more troubling is the Tigers' bowling, an area the team management considered a strong suit just a fortnight ago.

"We didn't bowl well and didn't field well in the last two games, but we batted well on this track. It's a good wicket, but we need to learn how to bowl to different batters and need to think about that," skipper Litton said on Sunday, after failing to defend 197 and losing comprehensively by seven wickets with 16 balls to spare in the third T20I against Pakistan in Lahore.

Getting starts with the bat hardly seemed to be a



PHOTO: AI GENERATED

problem for Bangladesh – they even saw openers Tanzid Tamim and Parvez Hossain Emon stitching together the highest partnership for any wicket against Pakistan for Bangladesh in T20Is, 110, in the final game.

But the bowlers seemed clueless about how to operate on flat wickets like those in Sharjah and Lahore. Slower deliveries from pacers were picked early or landed too short, offering ample time to

opposition batters. The spinners looked ineffective and erratic without any assistance from the surface, while sloppy fielding made things worse.

Rishad Hossain, the Tigers' only leg-spinner, conceded over 10 runs per over in every game. On top of it, he looked like an ordinary bowler, getting consistently targeted by opposition batters, likely due to his tendency to either bowl too full or too short.

Pacers Tanzim Sakib and Hasan Mahmud leaked runs during crucial phases that allowed Pakistan to regain momentum even after early setbacks. Both Sakib and Hasan had economy rates north of 10 in two of the three matches. In fact, captain Liton's decision to stick with spinners for three of the final four overs in the first T20I speaks volumes about the ineffectiveness of these pacers on such tracks.

Bangladesh did face setbacks in the pace department, before and during the series – pace sensation Nahid Rana withdrew from the tour, Mustafizur Rahman missed the entire series due to a finger injury, and Shoriful Islam missed the final game after getting injured in the previous match.

Still, for a team that found success on the back of their pacers not so long ago, a lack of depth in this department is an ominous sign for the future. But more importantly, what seems most concerning is that the Tigers' roulette of problem areas continues to stop on a new issue in every series. It also won't be a surprise if a new problem area emerges in their upcoming full tour of Sri Lanka later this month.



2ND ROUND OF CONSENSUS TALKS

Most parties for specific polls date

Yunus seeks to bridge gaps

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Most of the political parties that met Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday demanded a specific date for the next general election.

The BNP, seven other parties, and an alliance said the election must be in December or earlier.

Yunus inaugurated the second round of talks between political parties and the National Consensus Commission at the Foreign Service Academy in the capital yesterday. Twenty-eight parties and two alliances attended the discussions.

The Jamaat opined that the next election can take place anytime between this December and April next year while the National Citizen Party demanded that the election date be announced after the



July Proclamation is adopted.

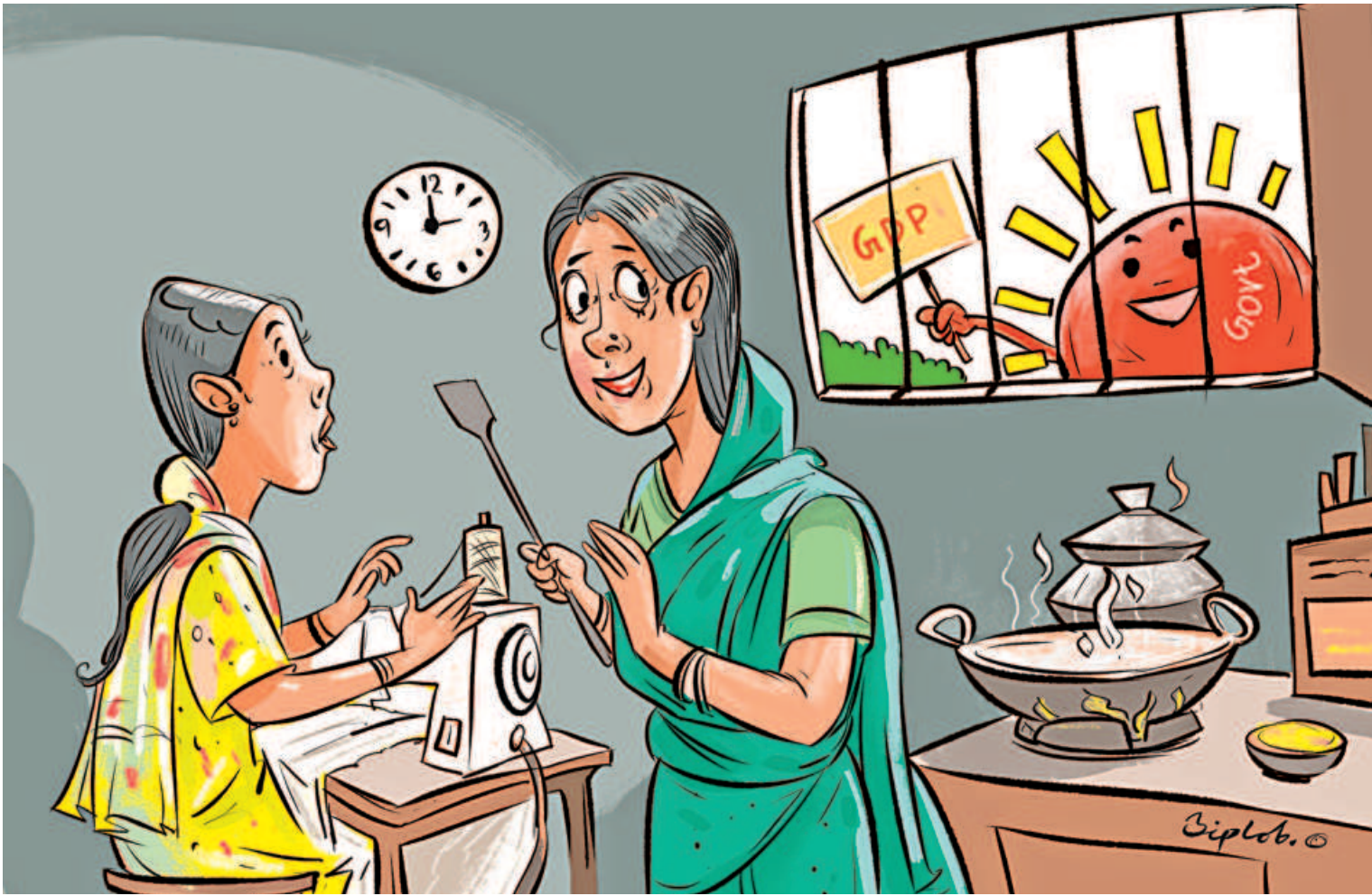
Most political parties said a specific date for the election could reduce confusion among the people and reduce the distance between political parties and the government.

According to video footage provided by the Chief Adviser's Press Wing, the 12-Party Alliance, Biplobi Workers Party, Bangladesh Jashod, Gono Odhikar Parishad, Bhashani Anushari Parishad, National Democratic Movement, Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal and Aam Janatar Dal demanded election by December.

The Jatiya Gono Front demanded that the election be held between December and February.

Prof Yunus said the aim of the discussions was to minimise differences

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3



SC clears way for the BB's administrator to run Nagad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court yesterday cleared the way for the administrator appointed by Bangladesh Bank (BB) to continue overseeing operations at mobile financial service provider Nagad.

The apex court stayed an earlier order by its chamber judge, which had paused a High Court (HC) verdict upholding the central bank's decision to appoint an administrator for Nagad.

A five-member bench of the Appellate Division, headed by Justice Md Ashfaqul Islam, passed the order following a petition filed by BB seeking to vacate the chamber judge's stay order.

The court also directed the central bank to file a leave to appeal petition against the HC verdict and fixed July 3 for hearing.

"There is no legal bar for the administrator of Nagad, appointed by the central bank, to continue his functions following the Appellate Division order,"

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1

MAJOR SINHA MURDER CASE

HC upholds all sentences

Ex-OC Pradeep, former SI Liaqat to die

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday confirmed the death sentences of Pradeep Kumar Das, former officer-in-charge of Teknaf Police Station, and former sub-inspector Liaqat Ali for killing Major (ret'd) Sinha Md Rashed Khan.

The HC also upheld the life imprisonment of six others handed down by the trial court in the same case.

The six are ex-SI Nandadulal Rakkhit, former constables Sagar Deb, and Rubel Sharma and police informants Md Nezamuddin, Nurul Amin, and Ayaz Uddin.

The eight convicts are in jail.

Yesterday, the HC bench of Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman and Justice Md Sagir Hossain delivered the verdict after hearing the death reference and the appeals filed by the convicts challenging the trial court judgment.

Details of the HC verdict will be known once its full text is released, Deputy Attorney General Md Jasim Sarkar told The Daily Star.

Sharmin Shahriar Ferdous, elder sister of Sinha, told reporters on the Supreme Court premises that they would be fully satisfied if the judgment is executed on completion of the next legal procedures at the Appellate Division.

Attorney General Md Asaduzzaman told reporters

SEE PAGE 14 COL 1



Jamaat may get back its electoral symbol

Says party after meeting EC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jamaat leader AHM Hamidur Rahman Azad yesterday said the party expected to regain its registration and its electoral symbol of daripalla, a balance scale, after a recent Supreme Court verdict.

"The court has already delivered a verdict, and the Election Commission is also positive," said the assistant secretary general and former lawmaker of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami.

Azad told this to reporters after a meeting with Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin at the EC office in the capital yesterday afternoon.

The Supreme Court in 2016 ordered cancelling Jamaat's registration with the EC.

Azad yesterday said the SC order was politically motivated.

The chief election SEE PAGE 14 COL 1

Women's unpaid work to finally get recognised

National budget makes historic pledge

NILIMA JAHAN

In a historic move, Bangladesh's national budget has, for the first time, pledged institutional recognition for women's unpaid and unacknowledged caregiving and household work.

The government plans to include the economic value of this unpaid labour in the country's GDP calculations – a major policy shift.

While announcing the national budget for 2025-26, Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed acknowledged the vital role of homemakers, saying, "Alongside

working women, many women dedicate their time and labour as homemakers. However, their significant role is often not properly acknowledged. On behalf of the government and the people, I extend my deepest respect and gratitude to them."

He further pledged that "in the future, necessary procedural steps will be taken to include these women's contributions in the GDP based on financial standards".

Globally, unpaid care work represents a vast yet invisible contribution to economies. According to a 2018 International Labour Organization estimation,

16.4 billion hours of unpaid care work are performed daily worldwide – the equivalent of 2 billion full-time jobs and nearly nine percent of the global GDP.

A recent 2024 study by the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) estimated that women's unpaid household and caregiving labour in Bangladesh amounted to Tk 5.3 trillion in 2021, or approximately 14.8 percent of the nation's GDP. In contrast, men's unpaid work accounted for just 2.8 percent.

The study revealed stark gender disparities in the division of

SEE PAGE 14 COL 1

Condolence Message



With deep mourn we inform all the stakeholders of **Modele Group** that, **Mr. Filippo Poggi**, serving as Sourcing Country Controller, South Asia at Primark, passed away on 31st of May 2025, Saturday at around 10:50 AM, in the United Hospital Ltd., Dhaka. His sudden death has deeply saddened all of us. It was a distinguished figure in the global apparel industry, notably for his significant contributions to Bangladesh's Ready-Made Garment (RMG) sector. Poggi played a pivotal role in strengthening partnerships between Primark and the all-Bangladeshi garment manufacturers. As a senior British national and a true gentleman, his absence leaves a profound void.

Mr. Filippo Poggi's was instrumental in advancing sustainable practices within the RMG industry. He actively participated in high-level discussions with the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), focusing on collaborative efforts to promote environmental sustainability, product diversification, and ethical sourcing. These initiatives aimed to enhance the competitiveness of Bangladeshi suppliers in the global market.

His commitment extended beyond business objectives; he was a strong advocate for social responsibility. His efforts were widely recognized and appreciated by industry stakeholders, also the BGMEA acknowledged his contributions, noting his role in fostering a more sustainable and socially responsible RMG sector in Bangladesh.


Mr. Filippo Poggi's legacy in the Bangladeshi RMG industry is marked by his dedication to sustainable development, ethical business practices, and the empowerment of local suppliers. His work has left an enduring impact, setting a benchmark for future collaborations in this sector.

We pray for the departed soul to rest in peace and extend our condolence to the bereaved family, colleagues and loved ones.

**Managing Director,
All Workers & Staffs**








গণবিজ্ঞপ্তি

পবিত্র ঈদ-উল-আযহা উপলক্ষ্যে নৌযানে যাতায়াতকালে একবার ব্যবহার্য প্লাস্টিক/পলিথিন পরিবহন ও ব্যবহার নিরুৎসাহিত করা হচ্ছে

- দেশের অর্থনৈতিক প্রবৃদ্ধি ও দ্রুত নগরায়নের ফলে ব্যবহৃত প্লাস্টিকের মারাত্মক দূষণ হতে পরিবেশ সংরক্ষণ, প্রতিবেশ ও জীববৈচিত্র্য রক্ষায় বাংলাদেশ সরকার ২০০২ সালে পলিথিন শপিং ব্যাগ ব্যবহার, উৎপাদন ও বাজারজাতকরণ নিষিদ্ধ করেছে। এছাড়া সিঙ্গেল ইউজ প্লাস্টিক বন্ধ করার লক্ষ্যে সরকার কর্তৃক ১৭টি বস্ত্র/সামগ্রী/পদার্থকে সিঙ্গেল ইউজ প্লাস্টিক হিসেবে নির্ধারণ করে প্রজ্ঞাপন জারি করা হয়েছে।
- জারিকৃত প্রজ্ঞাপন অনুযায়ী একবার ব্যবহারযোগ্য প্লাস্টিকের তৈষজপত্র/কাটলারি (যেমন: প্লাস্টিকের চামচ, কাঁটা চামচ, ছুরি, প্লেট, কাপ, গ্লাস ইত্যাদি), বিভিন্ন পণ্যের একবার ব্যবহারযোগ্য প্লাস্টিকের মিনি প্যাকেট/সৌখিন ধারক (যেমন: চিপসের প্যাকেট, বিস্কিটের প্যাকেট, চানাচুরের প্যাকেট ইত্যাদি), স্টাইরোফোমের খাবার মোড়ক/ধারক, পাতলা প্লাস্টিকের আবরণযুক্ত ফাস্টফুডের প্যাকেট, পানির বোতল ইত্যাদিকে সিঙ্গেল ইউজ প্লাস্টিক হিসেবে নির্ধারণ করা হয়েছে।
- পলিথিন ও প্লাস্টিকের কারণে নদী দূষণ রোধে পবিত্র ঈদ-উল-আযহা উপলক্ষ্যে নৌযানের যাত্রীদেরকে উল্লিখিত একবার ব্যবহার্য প্লাস্টিক/পলিথিনের তৈরি ব্যাগ, প্যাকেট বা পণ্য ইত্যাদি পরিবহন ও ব্যবহার না করার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো।
- এছাড়া সকল ব্যবসায়ী/ফেরি কর্তৃপক্ষ/ফেরি স্টাফ/লঞ্চ কর্তৃপক্ষ/লঞ্চ স্টাফ-কেও পবিত্র ঈদ-উল-আযহা উপলক্ষ্যে নৌযানে একবার ব্যবহার্য প্লাস্টিক/পলিথিনের তৈরি ব্যাগ, প্যাকেট, পানির বোতল বা পণ্য ইত্যাদি পরিবহন বন্ধ করা এবং যাত্রীদেরকে এ সকল পণ্য প্রদান/সরবরাহ না করার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো।

সিঙ্গেল ইউজ প্লাস্টিক ব্যবহার বন্ধ করি
নদী দূষণ রোধ করে জলজ জীববৈচিত্র্য রক্ষা করি।



পরিবেশ অধিদপ্তর
পরিবেশ, বন ও জলবায়ু পরিবর্তন মন্ত্রণালয়

GD-1343