



Quarter of budget to go to 5 ministries

Health, education, defence, local government among them

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

About one-fourth of the upcoming fiscal year's budget will go towards five ministries and divisions including health, education and defence, with a significant portion kept as block allocations to undertake projects in line with the BNP's electoral pledges.

In fiscal 2026-27, the Secondary and Higher Education Division, Health Services Division, Local Government Division, Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Primary and Mass Education may receive allocations of Tk 221,224 crore, which is about 24 percent of the proposed budget.

The Secondary and Higher Education Division will receive the highest allocation of Tk 50,302 crore, with Tk 11,500 crore kept as block allocation in its development budget.

The Health Services Division will get Tk 43,189 crore, with Tk 20,805 crore as block allocation.

The Local Government Division's allocation is Tk 43,130 crore, with Tk 7,562 crore as block allocation.

The defence ministry will get Tk 42,462 crore.

The reason for the block allocation is that the government did not get sufficient time to prepare projects in line with its electoral pledges, The Daily Star has learnt from finance ministry officials involved with the proceedings.

The Ministry of Primary and Mass Education will receive Tk 42,145 crore, with Tk 16,299 crore as block allocation.

The reason for the block allocation is that the government did not get sufficient time to prepare projects in line with its electoral pledges, The Daily Star has learnt from finance ministry officials involved with the proceedings.

"Time is needed to design suitable projects that would truly improve the quality of education and health. For this reason, the proposal for block allocations was made," said one of the officials.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4



Wood is being burned in large earthen ovens to produce charcoal in Jabusa area of Rupsa upazila, Khulna, sending thick smoke and soot across adjacent farmland, water bodies, and homesteads. Such an operation pollutes the air, threatens crop yields, and raises health risks. Besides, illegal tree-felling by unscrupulous traders destroys forest resources. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN



Zverev wins first Grand Slam at Roland Garros

AFP, Paris

Alexander Zverev finally secured his maiden Grand Slam title with a dramatic five-set victory over Italy's Flavio Cobolli in the French Open final yesterday.

The second seed became the first German man to win a major tournament since Boris Becker at the 1996 Australian Open with a 6-1, 4-6, 6-4, 6-7(5/7), 6-1 win after four hours and 16 minutes on Court Philippe Chatrier.

It was Zverev's fourth Grand Slam final and second at Roland Garros after some heartbreaking near misses in his career.

"Now finally it's a happy end," said Zverev after battling past Cobolli.

"We've been losers at times... but at the end of the day we're Grand Slam champions now and that's what counts."

Cobolli, the 10th seed, was bidding to become the first Italian man to win the French Open in 50 years.

The 24-year-old had never even played a Slam semifinal before, let alone a final, after his last-four opponent

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3

GOVT'S 100 DAYS IN OFFICE

'Old practices remain despite reform pledges'

TIB report cites partisan appointments, weak institutions, executive-heavy laws

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government's first 100 days have failed to demonstrate a clear break from past political practices, with partisan appointments, executive-heavy laws and weak institutions continuing to raise questions about its commitment to good governance and accountability, Transparency International Bangladesh said in a report released yesterday.

While acknowledging some positive steps, the report said many government actions ran counter to its pledges on the rule of law, anti-corruption measures and accountable governance.

Titled "Monitoring the Implementation of Good Governance and Anti-Corruption Commitments in the First 100 Days of the Government Formed after the 13th National Parliamentary Election", the report was presented at a press conference at TIB's office in Dhanmondi.

The report was presented by TIB Senior Research Fellow Md Zulkarnain

We are seeing signs of an exceptional or new style of leadership in some cases. But whether that means a new political culture is emerging is still not clear. In many cases, we are seeing the continuation of old practices.

TIB Executive Director Dr Iltekharruzzaman

and Research Fellow Razia Sultana.

Speaking at the event, TIB Executive Director Iltekharruzzaman said, "We are seeing signs of an exceptional or new style of leadership in some cases. But whether that means a new political culture is emerging is still not clear. In many cases, we are seeing the continuation of old practices."

He, however, added that 100 days was not enough to assess a government, particularly one that inherited a "political and authoritarian mess".

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

Chinese EIZ project in Ctg heads to Ecneec

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A decade after Chinese President Xi Jinping laid the foundation stone, the Chinese Economic and Industrial Zone (CEIZ) in Chattogram's Anwara is set to make a major leap towards implementation this Tuesday, when a Tk 4,189.5 crore infrastructure package is likely to be placed before the prime minister.

The proposal for the infrastructure package is due to be tabled before the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecneec), which will be chaired by Tarique Rahman.

The infrastructure package includes critical transportation routes, including link roads, a multipurpose jetty, as well as vital utilities such as a water reservoir, gas regulating stations, power substations, and dedicated industrial waste and effluent treatment plants.

The CEIZ lies a stone's throw from the Karnaphuli tunnel, which connects the economic zone to the country's main port.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Build 3-month fuel reserve and diversify sources

Recommends bipartisan JS body

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A bipartisan parliamentary committee yesterday recommended building a 90-day strategic fuel reserve, diversifying import sources and accelerating domestic energy development, as the recent global energy turmoil is a wake-up call for Bangladesh's long-term energy security.

The recommendations were presented in the



parliament by Iqbal Hassan Mahmood Tuku, the minister of power, energy and mineral resources, through a report prepared by a special committee formed on April 26 following concerns over fuel supply disruptions and market volatility during the US-Israel war on Iran.

Currently, the reserve capacity of diesel is 57 days, octane 46 days, petrol 29 days, jet fuel 36 days, furnace oil 78 days, marine fuel 53 days and kerosene 201 days.

The recent energy situation should serve as an important warning for Bangladesh, said the 10-member committee comprising five lawmakers from the ruling party and five from the opposition.

While the country has successfully managed the

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

US downs Iran drones near Strait of Hormuz

Pak minister visits Tehran with letter for Khamenei as war reaches 100th day

AGENCIES

The United States said it shot down a pair of Iranian drones threatening the Strait of Hormuz, the latest escalation of violence as the war reached its 100th day yesterday with no end in sight.

"Earlier today, US forces in the Middle East shot down two Iranian one-way attack drones that threatened international maritime traffic in the Strait of Hormuz," US Central Command said on its X account yesterday.

"American forces remain postured and ready to continue defending against Iranian aggression."

CENTCOM said late Friday its forces shot down four Iranian attack drones launched toward the strait, then struck Iranian coastal surveillance radar sites.

The tit-for-tat strikes, including a salvo of Iranian missiles fired Saturday at US allies Bahrain and Kuwait, come despite Washington and Tehran being engaged in weeks of indirect talks on how to end the war.



Mourners carry Amal Movement-flagged coffins during a funeral in Sidon, Lebanon yesterday, as four killed in an Israeli airstrike on Zibdin. PHOTO: AFP

The US government will attempt to redirect Iranian assets to Gulf states for rebuilding and repairs of damage caused by Iran, a source familiar with the matter said.

US President Donald Trump said in an interview with NBC News'

"Meet the Press" that he would not unfreeze Iranian assets or lift any sanctions before a peace deal is reached.

US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent has directed a team to assess

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

Fiscal policy favours fossil fuels over renewables

Says CPD study

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh's tax structure favours fossil fuels over renewable energy technologies, imposing significantly higher duties on clean energy equipment while offering lower tax burdens on fossil fuel imports and power plants, said a study by the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD).

This practice thereby creates discrimination in the competition, said the study, released by the private think tank yesterday at its Dhanmondi office.

It found that the imported liquefied natural gas (LNG) enjoys the most favourable tax treatment among major energy categories, facing a total tax incidence of only 9.5 percent.

In contrast, solar panels, batteries, grid equipment, and electric vehicles – technologies considered critical for integrating renewable energy into the power system – face effective tax rates ranging from 61 percent to 93 percent.

Most of the fossil-fuel based plants' equipment face 15 percent Value Added Tax and 7.5 percent Advance Tax while the renewable energy technologies face multiple layers of customs duties, supplementary duties, advance income tax, and Regulatory Duty in top of the VAT and AT, the study found.

A VAT rate of only 6 percent on LNG imports is artificially making the fuel more lucrative than other energy sources, said the study.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

