

Reactions

MCCI terms budget as bold, forward-looking

Due execution, quality of public spending among major challenges

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Congratulating Finance Minister A H M Mustafa Kamal, the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Dhaka (MCCI) has said the budget for the upcoming fiscal year (FY), 2021-22, is 'courageous and forward looking', as it sets goals for bringing back lives and livelihoods to a reasonably stable situation without worrying too much about any deficit and lack of growth.

The MCCI thinks that this year's budget cannot be treated like any regular budget.

However, the major challenges remain, the trade-body thinks, in proper implementation and ensuring the quality of public spending, if the nation is to obtain full benefits of the proposed budgetary allocations as well as fiscal and other incentives. The MCCI made the observations in a statement, sent by its President Barrister Nihad Kabir on Friday.

The chamber appreciates the emphasis placed on issues such as: prioritising spending on health, including capacity development and vaccine management, enhancing social protection, creating employment opportunities, solving multidimensional problems of the youth and women, developing the agriculture sector, and needs for a business-friendly tax regime.

In order to really reach benefits of the budgetary allocations in the relevant sectors, more specific guidance is expected from the final document.

The MCCI applauds the finance minister for keeping in mind the national development goals and visions while preparing the budget and proposing measures to implement effectively the government's 'Comprehensive Plan' to overcome the possible negative impacts of the pandemic on the economy and the people.

Under this plan, so far, the government has introduced 23 recovery packages with a combined value of Tk 1,284.41 billion, which is approximately 4.2 per cent of the revised budget of FY 2020-21.

The FY 22 budget has set a target of 5.3 per cent inflation and 7.2 per cent growth in gross domestic product (GDP) by keeping the industrial sector afloat through continuation of the ongoing incentive programmes as well as reining in the increase in poverty rate through expansion of the social security programmes.

In light of the disruptions, already caused to the economy, and probably further disruptions, the MCCI thinks it is possible that the budget deficit in the end may be more than the targeted amount.

The trade-body, since the onset of the pandemic, has suggested that the government should use the headroom accrued through prudent fiscal management in the past years to break out of its self-imposed budgetary deficit limit of around 5.0 per cent in order to finance expenditure in public projects, incentive packages, Covid-19 management and related health sector expenditures in order to protect the lives and livelihoods of the citizens.

The MCCI is pleased to note that the budget has not been constrained by the 5.0 per cent limit on deficit, instead has increased it as required in the current circumstances.

At the same time, the trade-body strongly urges the government to use all available channels to pursue all the different lower-cost sources of funding being made available internationally - in order to reduce the pressure on domestic resource mobilisation as well as keep the budget deficit duly funded.

The MCCI believes that the first priority of the government would be to ensure the health and economic security of the citizens as far as possible.

The government should not hesitate to increase the deficit, if it is required for essential expenditure, infusing funds into the economy and raising aggregate domestic demand, it opines.

It must be appreciated that the previous several years of prudential macro-economic management, including keeping the budget deficit at or close to 5.0 per cent, has created the headroom, which may now be used to expand the deficit in this emergent situation, if needed.

The MCCI thanks the government for giving priority in the upcoming budget, to the five essential sectors for protection of live and livelihoods, which are the health sector, continuation of implementation of the stimulus packages to address the financial and economic impact of the pandemic, the agriculture sector in order to ensure food security, overall development of human resources including education and skills enhancement, and rural development and job creation.

The chamber appreciates the allocation of Tk one billion in the FY 22 budget for research on various issues of healthcare and medical education.

It believes that the upcoming fiscal year may be one of the most challenging years from the perspective of fiscal management due to the present economic slowdown caused by Covid-19, not just in Bangladesh, but globally.

Revenue mobilisation would be a daunting task, given the proposed tax concessions and administrative forbearances that would have to be allowed in practice to individuals and institutions in this very difficult time, it says.

Because of the sluggish tax collection by the NBR (only 65.64 per cent of the yearly revised target up to April) in the present fiscal, the proposed budget sets an equivalent target of Tk 3,300 billion for the upcoming fiscal year.

Besides, the budget has not indicated any specific reform and restructuring of the tax policy and tax administration to enhance its capacity and deliver the right kind of public services, which in turn would increase revenue collection without over-burdening already compliant taxpayers, the trade-body opines.

The MCCI, as always, advocates for meaningful structural changes in tax administration, which would allow for an effective tax collection mechanism without burdening the good taxpayers, while

also bringing into the net many others who earn high amounts of taxable revenue but do not pay the requisite tax.

The chamber thinks that underdeveloped communication and education infrastructure, weak energy transmission and distribution infrastructure, and bureaucratic bottlenecks are still the major impediments to the growth of the economy.

Also, shortfall in the NBR revenue collection and weak ADP implementation are worrying.

The MCCI appreciates the plan for reduction of corporate tax rates by 2.50 per cent. The chamber thinks it is a step in the right direction to meet the long-time demand of the business community to bring the corporate tax rates in line with regional competitor countries.

In order to obtain the full benefits of this reduction, however, the existing maximum allowable limits of legitimate business expenditures, such as promotional and travelling expenses, arbitrary disallowance of other expenses, and high and irrational rates of tax deduction at sources (TDS) would have to be rationalised and/or removed, as the case may be.

Discretion in the levy and collection of taxes, which often results in an effective higher rate, in these difficult times, would discourage investment in the private sector, where such investment has already suffered a significant reduction due to the pandemic, and therefore must be curbed, it opines.

The MCCI is also disappointed that no step has been taken in the budget for reduction or elimination of advance income tax.

In this connection, it is noted that the budget proposes an increase in the corporate tax rates for mobile financial service (MFS) providers. MFS, as an industry, is still in its nascent stage in Bangladesh.

But even now it has significantly improved financial inclusion, and more than 110 million MFS accounts are in operation now. It has had a huge role in providing financial services to lower income and previously unbanked people in the country.

Increasing their tax rate steeply at the time of pandemic, and effectively disallowing a large portion of their promotional expenses would cause a slowdown of the growth of MFS services and send a wrong signal to investors and users alike amidst all the positive signals of the budget.

The MCCI has always advocated that the minimum turnover tax is totally contradictory to the principles of income tax. Income tax should be imposed on businesses only on their taxable profits, not on revenue or other funds. Also, the minimum turnover tax is not logical during the pandemic period. The chamber opines that the minimum turnover tax be eliminated.

The MCCI welcomes the proposed income tax exemption of up to 10 years for newly established hospitals, agriculture and fruit processing industries, milk producers, producers of milk products, new areas in the IT sector, domestic manufacture of electronic home appliances, light engineering and skill development, vocational training institutes, and 'Made in Bangladesh' brands, etc.

"This will help to develop import substitute industrialisation, which will ultimately increase employment generation as well as save foreign currency," it says.

Welcoming 25 per cent tax on one person company (OPC), the MCCI also calls for rationalising the minimum requirement of paid-up capital of Tk 2.5 million for OPCs, in order to attract small and new start-up entrepreneurs.

The minimum paid-up capital requirement is not even applicable to unlisted private and public limited companies, and hence should be removed from the law.

The chamber appreciates the plan to reduce advance VAT rates to make it more business-friendly in the budget for FY 22.

Budget to incentivising local production is appreciated. At the same time, the MCCI is disappointed that much needed structural reforms to VAT law (and incorporated in the original version of VAT Act 2012) have not been proposed in this budget.

In particular, the MCCI strongly advocates deletion of Input-Output Coefficient, reduction of the limitations placed on claiming input rebate, easing of the requirements for central registration, and reduction of the scope of deduction of VAT at source.

The trade-body is pleased to note that the FY 22 budget is extending tax exemption facilities until 2024 to some new IT sector services (cloud service, system integration, e-learning platforms, e-book publications, mobile application development services, and IT freelancing), which will take the dream of building a Digital Bangladesh one step further.

The chamber notes that the maximum limit of investments by individual taxpayers to get tax rebate is reduced to Tk 10 million in the upcoming FY budget, compared to Tk 15 million now.

This would have a negative effect on both savings rates, which need to be increased in order to increase private sector investment to the desired levels, as well as investments in the capital market, it mentions.

The MCCI appreciates non-renewal of the opportunity of whitening black money by paying only 10 per cent tax.

It expects that the government would reconsider its strategies for employment creation in a more specific way, so that those who have lost their jobs during the pandemic can return to the job market soon.

The recovery trajectory of the global economy is still uncertain due to the ongoing pandemic. Therefore, the MCCI feels that there should be an interim evaluation of the budget after three months, and every three months for the next year, so that, if required, it can be restructured and revised accordingly.

As there are still so many 'unknown unknowns' to be dealt with in regard to the pandemic and its ongoing effect on society and economy, the need of the hour is flexibility to deal with situations and requirements swiftly as they arise, it adds.

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Economists, business leaders call for framing virus-centric budget



Economists and business leaders on Tuesday unequivocally criticised the existing budgetary provision for legalising 'black money' and said the opportunity is biased against the honest taxpayers.

They also urged the government to frame a 'pandemic-focussed' budget for the upcoming fiscal year (FY) rather than being obsessed with the GDP growth data.

There should be substantial allocations for vaccination, new poor, micro, cottage, small and medium industries and tax incentives for luring investment in key economic sectors, they said.

They made the observations and suggestions at a virtual pre-budget webinar titled 'Macro Economy: Expectation from National Budget 2021-22'. The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh (ICAB) and the Economic Reporters' Forum (ERF) organised the event jointly.

Dr Mashiur Rahman, economic affairs adviser to the Prime Minister, attended the webinar as the chief guest.

Senior economists, presidents of major trade bodies, researchers and accounting professionals took part in the discussion, moderated by former president of ICAB Mr Humayun Kabir.

ICAB president Mahmudul Hasan Khushru delivered the welcome speech while vice presidents Sidhartha Barua and Md Abdul Kader Joaddar, and council member of ICAB Mohammad Forkan Uddin also spoke at the webinar.

Dr Mashiur Rahman said reforms in the financial and revenue sectors need to be carried out throughout the year while tax collection should be increased in line with the market value of goods and services.

He also suggested people not to depend only on the government for health services that are running at full capacity.

Dr Mustafizur Rahman, distinguished fellow of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), said the government should now concentrate more on spending in the priority sectors only rather than thinking about the budget deficit.

"It is unfortunate that we are neither able to earn nor spend," he added.

He laid emphasis on employment generation and providing benefits to the domestic manufacturing sectors by revisiting the import benefits.

"Some in-built weaknesses remained since the pre-Covid period. Those include poor revenue mobilisation and sluggish investment," Rahman said.

Dr Rahman also suggested reinstating 30 per cent highest tax rate for individual taxpayers and discontinuing the black money whitening scheme.

He said that the well-off section of the society got the benefit of reduction of highest tax rate by 5.0 per cent which is an anti-equity measure.

Dr Ahsan H Mansur, executive director of the Policy Research Institute (PRI), felt that at least Tk 150 billion should be allocated for the vaccination programme.

He also suggested extending support to develop the capacities of domestic industries on vaccination.

Strategic investment is also required to ensure vaccination supply, he added. He proposed allocation of Tk 10 billion for the new poor.

The government should focus on reforms rather than imposing huge revenue target which is not achievable, he said, adding that spending the allocation is necessary to reap benefit.

He wanted the government to be practical while setting the revenue target and said the deficit in the next budget could be raised to 7.0 to 8.0 per cent for the sake of higher spending.

Dr Selim Raihan, executive director of South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (SANEM), said that the erosion of business confidence is an alarming sign as the recovery of SMEs remained slow.

He said that exports in some destinations and remittances were increasing, but the growth of those two sectors has some multiplier effect.

The country will not be able to come out of the crisis unless it implements the budget properly, he added.

Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI), Dhaka president Nihad Kabir said the allocations of budgetary resources for various sectors in the budget has remained almost unchanged over the years.

"We see some changes in the budget numbers. But the destination of the taxpayers' money remain unclear," she added.

The SMEs sector needs policy support so that they get access to the stimulus packages, she added.

Large industries got benefit of the stimulus package, but the government should tag the condition of employment generation with their package to thwart job cut, she said.

The economy would rebound if the government prioritises on cottage and small industries, she added.

She was highly critical of the provision of legalising black money by paying only 10 per cent tax. " We pay tax at the rate of 32 per cent. We don't like this unfair and unjust provision", she said.

Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) president Rizwan Rahman said the most part of the stimulus packages has reached the medium scale industries, depriving the cottage industries of their due.

He said the government should give a target to the NBR for expanding the tax net rather than setting target for revenue collection.

On black money, he said the illegally earned money should not get the opportunity to legalise by paying lower rate of taxes.

Rather a penal tax at the rate of 10 per cent needs to be added to the normal tax rates for legalising illegally-earned money, he said.

Mr Rahman said the government could consider attracting investment of undisclosed money in health, bond market and infrastructure.

He demanded reduction of corporate tax at a progressive slashing by 2.5 per cent for three consecutive years to bring it down to 25 per cent.

Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) president Faruque Hassan demanded keeping the tax rate stable for five to 10 years to help the sector stay competitive.

He pointed out that the recovery from the pandemic impact was taking longer time, affecting the export of goods.

He said the SMEs were in most vulnerable condition now. "We hope that there would be specific direction and allocation for the sector in the upcoming budget," he added.

Rupali Chowdhury, president of the Foreign Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICC), said the existing corporate tax rate is higher than that of the profit level of the businesses.

She demanded withdrawal of the minimum tax as it is charged on businesses irrespective of their incurring losses or making profits.

She said that the effective tax rate becomes 50 per cent in some cases for corporate tax payers due to different withholding taxes.

Abul Kasem Khan, chairperson of Business Initiative Leading Development (BUILD) and former president of the DCCI, suggested the government to maintain the growth of goods consumption through providing 'consumption incentives'.

"The production will fall if consumption declines and it will ultimately affect employment," he added.

Masrur Reaz, chairperson of the Policy Exchange of Bangladesh, said the government should allocate 1.0 per cent of GDP for the low income group of people to help them survive in this pandemic.

Dr Nazneen Ahmed, senior research fellow at the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), suggested the government to arrange part-time employment opportunities for the people in urban areas.

Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services (BASIS) president Syed Almas Kabir, former president of the American Chamber of Commerce and Industry (AmCham) Aftab-ul Islam, and former adviser to the past caretaker government Rasheda K Chowdhury, among others, spoke at the programme.

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Budget may help recovery, say business leaders

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Jashim Uddin



Nihad Kabir



Rizwan Rahman

Leaders of trade bodies have termed the proposed budget as inclusive one, expressing hope that the proposals, if implemented, may revitalise the economy.

In their instant reactions to the budget proposed on Thursday, they also emphasised the need for taking steps to implement the budget and increasing revenue.

The business leaders urged the government to make special focus on ways and means to overcome the effects of the Covid-19 in the coming days.

FBCCI President: Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industries (FBCCI) President Md Jashim Uddin has termed the size of the budget realistic in view of the government's pledges.

He identified governance, proper monitoring, and revenue collection as the key challenges in implementing the budget.

"There should be specific directives and strategies to ensure efficiency, transparency, and accountability in budget implementation," the business leader said.

He, however, added, "We demanded removal of 5.0 per cent advance income tax (AIT) on businesses that increases operating cost as the adjustment or refund is not made in time."

Suggesting integrated and automated revenue collection system, he, however, regretted that the government has not increased the target of revenue collection to any significant proportion.

On how to meet the budget deficit, the FBCCI president recommended that the government should emphasise taking higher amount of low interest loans from foreign sources.

MCCI President:

President of Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) Nihad Kabir termed the proposed outlay as courageous in view of the current circumstances.

She said none is sure whether or not there will be another wave of the pandemic. "It will take time to recover the speed at which the economy was growing," she said.

Dwelling on the steps taken to revitalise the industry by proposing reduction in tax, as demanded by the business community, she said, "I consider this to be a very creative budget."

Ms Kabir pointed out that the social safety net has been widened and this will help the citizens who have really suffered to recover and begin to return to normal life.

Referring to failure to implement the budget, she underscored the need for steps for implementation of the budget and for ensuring quality implementation.

"The taxes lowered in the proposed budget in practice have to be given a fact," she insisted.

DCCI President:

Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) President Rizwan Rahman has described the proposed outlay as inclusive budget for economic recovery.

"(The) budget is by and large inclusive and pro-people," he said.

He thanked the government for reducing corporate tax both for listed and non-listed companies. "It will help boost investment."

Mr Rahman suggested reducing corporate tax at a 'progressive' rate of 2.5 per cent in fiscal year (FY) 2022-23 and FY 2023-24.

He also called for ensuring accessible stimulus packages for all cottage, micro, small and medium enterprises (CMSMEs).

The DCCI President urged the government to widen tax net, strengthen collection of due taxes, tax collection at the district level, and ensure tax automation for more revenue collection. "Mandatory e-TIN for national savings, cooperatives, and postal savings will increase tax."

"When the world economy is devastated by Covid-19 pandemic... the proposed budget has set 7.2 per cent growth and 5.3 per cent inflation target. The progressive and attainable growth target has created hope among us," he said.

The DCCI leader appreciated the steps for raising allocation to contain pandemic effects, providing incentives and subsidy, rehabilitating agriculture, expanding social safety net, and taking steps for employment generation.

He praised the government for accepting recommendations like lowering income tax and value added tax, lessening advanced tax on import raw materials.

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MCCI welcomes budget but worried over implementation



Star Business Report

The Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) welcomed the proposed budget for 2021-22 fiscal year, but it thinks implementation of the annual plan will be the biggest challenge.

One of the leading business chambers of the country thanked the government for giving priority on health and agriculture sectors along with overall development of human resources, rural development and job creation.

It also thanked the government for the continuation of the implementation of the stimulus packages.

The trade body believes the upcoming fiscal year may be one of the most challenging years from the perspective of fiscal management due to the present economic slowdown caused by Covid-19 pandemic.

The chamber shared the observation today in a press release, which also contains its budget reaction.

"Revenue mobilisation will be a daunting task," according to the statement.

MCCI termed the budget as courageous and forward-looking in many aspects.

However, the major challenges of proper implementation and ensuring the quality of public spending must be addressed if the nation is to obtain the full benefits of the proposed budgetary allocations and fiscal and other incentives, it added.

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Leading trade bodies welcome tax cuts

Say implementation is a major challenge



Photo - Star Digital Graphics
Staff Correspondent

Leading business associations yesterday lauded the government's proposed budgetary measures, but pointed out that implementing those would be a major challenge.

The reaction came a day after Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal proposed the Tk 6,03,680 crore national budget, offering a cut of 2.5 percentage points in corporate taxes for listed and non-listed companies and tax exemptions for several sectors to stimulate investment in manufacturing.

In its reaction, the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) said the proposed budget for the next fiscal year 2021-22 was courageous and forward-looking in many aspects, but its proper implementation would face major challenges.

The budget focuses on health, agriculture, human resources, rural development, job creation, and continuation of the stimulus packages, it said in a statement, adding that these steps were commendable.

However, the major challenges in proper implementation and ensuring the quality of public spending must be addressed if the nation is to obtain the full benefits of the proposed budgetary allocations and incentives, it said.

The MCCI said the upcoming fiscal year might be one of the most challenging years from the perspective of fiscal management due to the economic slowdown caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

"Revenue mobilisation will be a daunting task," said MCCI President Nihad Kabir in the statement.

Besides, the budget has not indicated any specific reform and restructuring of the tax policy and tax administration to enhance associated capacities and deliver the right kind of public services, which in turn will increase revenue collection without overburdening the compliant taxpayers.

The MCCI suggested adopting an interim evaluation system for the budget every three months for the next year so that, if required, it could be restructured and revised accordingly.

"As there are still so many unknowns to be dealt with regarding the pandemic and its ongoing effect on society and economy, the need of the hour is flexibility to deal with situations and requirements swiftly as they arise," she said.

The MCCI urged the government to utilise all available channels to pursue all the different lower-cost sources of funding being made available internationally in order to reduce the pressure on domestic resource mobilisation.

It, however, opposed the plan to increase the corporate tax rate for mobile financial service (MFS) providers, citing that the sector was at a nascent stage of development in Bangladesh.

Increasing their tax rate steeply during the pandemic will cause a slowdown of the growth of the MFS services and send a wrong signal to investors and users alike amidst all the positive signals of the budget, said the MCCI.

The Foreign Investors' Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) lauded the move to reduce corporate taxes and tax exemptions for agro processing and IT-related industries.

"The chamber also highly appreciates the government's plan to vaccinate 80 percent of the population in phases against the novel coronavirus," it said.

The FICCI, however, said it would have been happier had the government withdrawn the 2 percent minimum tax on telecom, 1 percent on tobacco, 0.25 percent on individuals and 0.6 percent on others.

The Bangladesh Chamber of Industries said the private sector would benefit from the tax reductions and exemptions.

It urged the government to continue reducing the corporate tax rate in the next three fiscal years.

Bangladesh Frozen Foods Exporters Association (BFFEA) demanded a reduction of source tax on export of frozen shrimp and other fish to 0.25 percent from the present 0.50 percent.

The BFFEA also urged the government to increase the cash incentive on export of frozen shrimp to 20 percent from 10 percent and incentive on export of other fish to 10 percent from 5 percent.

In a separate statement, Business Initiative Leading Development said the budget seems to have done well in addressing the current situation and is forward-looking, considering the "Made in Bangladesh" concept.

This will not only help businesses to diversify but also pave the way for the country's graduation from least developed to a developing country, it said.

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PROPOSED BUDGET FOR FY22

Trade bodies concerned over higher deficit

[Staff Correspondent](#) | Published: 22:26, Jun 04,2021

Different trade bodies have appreciated various tax incentives proposed in the national budget for fiscal year 2021-22, but raised concern over widened deficit and sluggish revenue collections.

Finance minister AHM Mustafa Kamal placed the proposed budget before parliament on Thursday.

The proposed budget of Tk 6,03,681 crore for FY22 is 12.0 per cent higher than the revised budget (Tk 5,38,983 crore) of the outgoing financial year (FY21). The budget deficit has been set at Tk 2,14,681 crore in FY22 (6.2 per cent of GDP), up on the original target of Tk 1,90,000 crore (in the current fiscal year). Out of the total deficit, Tk 1,01,228 crore will be financed from external sources, while Tk 1,13,453 crore from domestic sources.

The trade bodies, including American Chamber of Commerce in Bangladesh (AmCham), Bangladesh Chamber of Industries, **Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry** and Foreign Investors' Chamber of Commerce and Industry, have expressed their worries over the higher deficit in their post-budget reactions on Friday.

The trade bodies appreciated a 2.5-per cent reduction in corporate tax for listed and non-listed manufacturing companies.

They also recommend that advanced income tax and VAT should be withdrawn from import of industrial raw materials to enhance domestic production capacity.

They also welcomed additional (Tk 10,000 crore) allocation and 10 years of tax holiday for hospitals outside the capital.

The trade bodies acclaimed tax holidays for various sectors. The benefits will help to develop import substitute industrialisation, which will ultimately increase employment generation as well as save foreign currency, they said.

They emphasised drastic reform in automation of income tax and VAT system in these circumstances to increase efficiency of overall tax system and to make it business-friendly.

They urged the government to take a proper course of actions for achieving a huge revenue collection target in the final budget.

AmCham recommended that the government focus on crisis management, prioritising spending on health, education, enhancing social protection and building on the resilience demonstrated by the agriculture sector.

‘Alongside we expect immediate support for MSMEs, government infrastructure developments, which may face serious consequences days ahead to attract foreign direct investment.’

Due to disruption and discontinuation of businesses, created unemployment and increased level of poverty, the government should double the allocation to these sectors to counter poverty and income inequality, the chamber said.

It suggested lowering discretionary power of field-level tax officials to boost confidence of investors and businesses at the same time to focus more on expanding the tax net.

The trade body also recommend introducing the e-payment and e-TDS system as the online submission of tax returns would not work without it.

The Bangladesh Chamber of Industries said that the major challenges of proper implementation and ensuring the quality of public spending must be addressed if the nation is to obtain the full benefits of the proposed budgetary allocations and fiscal and other incentives.

Revenue mobilisation will be a daunting task, given the various proposed tax concessions and administrative forbearances, it said.

The BCI said that to meet the huge budget deficit, the government would borrow a massive amount of funds from the banking sector that might adversely affect the private sector credit flow.

It said that tax-free income limit should be Tk 4 lakh.

The government should re-examine 15 per cent tax on private university, medical college and engineering college as it would increase cost in higher education, its said.

The MCCI strongly urged the government to use all available channels to pursue all the different lower-cost sources of funding being made available internationally - in order to reduce the pressure on domestic resource mobilisation as well as keep the budget deficit duly funded.

It recommended that the minimum turnover tax should be eliminated as it is totally contradictory to the principles of income tax.

The MCCI said a reduction in tax of SME-owned by women by way of the increasing of tax-exempted annual turnover to Tk 70 lakh from existing Tk 50 lakh is a step that would enhance

the women's participation in sustainable development and economy as well as women's empowerment.

The FICCI feels that the GDP growth target of 7.2 per cent is achievable provided that GDP-investment ratio increases to the expected level.

The trade bodies also appreciated notable allocation for health sector, education, key mega projects. It also expresses concern for bridging the deficit from banking sources which may tighten the liquidity situation.

Both BCI and FICCI hailed waiver of 5 per cent corporate tax rate in case any company recruits 100 members of the transgender community as part of inclusion in the society.

It also admired the reduction of minimum tax rate from 0.5 per cent to 0.25 per cent.

However, the chamber wanted exemption on withholding tax on interest payable against foreign currency loans/deposits obtained from outside the country.

It also requested withdrawal of existing ceiling on royalty expenses and head office expense to promote more conducive business environment for foreign investors.

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Budget deficit may be upped if needed for essential expenditure: MCCI

It says tightening financial management will yield a significant amount of savings



The government should not hesitate to increase budget deficit if it is required for essential expenditure, infusing funds into the economy, and raising aggregate domestic demand, says Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI), Dhaka.

"It must be appreciated that the previous several years of prudential macro-economic management, including keeping budget deficit at or close to 5% has created the headroom which may now be used to expand the deficit in this emergent situation, if needed," MCCI says.

At the same time, tightening financial management will also yield a significant amount of savings if unnecessary over-spending, wastage, and other leakage of funds can be stopped, it said in a press release issued on Friday.

"In order to ensure this, the necessary resources should be allocated to the government agencies tasked with monitoring and evaluating public expenditure and project delivery."

MCCI thanked the government prioritising five essential sectors in the budget for protecting lives and livelihoods. They are health, continuation of the implementation of stimulus packages to address the financial and economic impact of the pandemic, agriculture, overall development of human resources, including education and skills enhancement, and rural development and job creation.

The chamber believes the upcoming fiscal year may be one of the most challenging ones from the perspective of fiscal management due to the present economic slowdown caused by Covid-19 not just in Bangladesh but also globally.

It appreciated the plan for reduction of corporate tax rates, saying it is a step in the right direction to meet the long-held demand of the business community for setting the corporate tax rates in line with regional competitor countries.

It said the budget had not indicated any specific reform and restructuring of the tax policy and tax administration to enhance capacity and deliver the right kind of public services. It also said it always advocates for meaningful structural changes in tax administration.

The chamber said there should be an interim evaluation of the budget after three months, and every three months for the next year so that it can be restructured and revised accordingly, if required.

"As there are still so many 'unknown unknowns' to be dealt with in regard to the pandemic and its ongoing effect on society and economy, the need of the hour is flexibility to deal with situations and requirements swiftly as they arise," it added.

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MCCI appreciates budget, suggests interim evaluations



The logo of Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Dhaka

The Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Dhaka (MCCI) has appreciated the majority measures of the proposed budget and suggested the government evaluate budget implementation in every three months, at least in the pandemic year for its proper implementation.

The leading business body came up with the observations and suggestions at a programme in the capital on Friday to express its budget reactions.

It described the proposed budget as courageous and ambitious in many aspects. On the other hand, the trade body criticised the budget for several measures.

Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal on Thursday placed the budget for the fiscal year 2021-22 before the parliament.

The MCCI urged the government to address the major challenges of the budget and ensure quality of public spending.

MCCI criticises

Lack of measures for rationalising advance income tax

No specific reform in tax administration

Increase tax on mobile financial services

Provision of turnover tax

Limit of investments by individual taxpayers

MCCI suggests

Use all available channels to avail foreign funds

Steps for economic security

More steps to ensure health security

Implement social safety programmes in a more extensive manner

Focus on the new poor

Prioritize businesspeople for vaccination

Rationalise paid-up capital for one-person company

MCCI appreciates

Cuts in corporate taxes

Increase in deficit amid the Covid crisis

Priority to the five essential sectors

vaccinate 80 percent of the population in phases

Tk100cr for health research

Steps for employment generation

Steps to address migrant workers crisis

Tax exemptions

Reduction of tax of SME owned by women

Non-renewal of the opportunity of whitening black money

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MCCI terms budget forward looking in many aspects

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Staff Correspondent

Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) welcomed the proposed budget for 2021-22 fiscal year, but it thinks implementation of the annual plan will be the biggest challenge. One of the leading business chambers of the country thanked the government for giving priority on health and agriculture sectors along with overall development of human resources, rural development and job creation.

It also thanked the government for the continuation of the implementation of the stimulus packages. The trade body believes the upcoming fiscal year may be one of the most challenging years from the perspective of fiscal management due to the present economic slowdown caused by Covid-19 pandemic.

The chamber shared the observation on Friday in a press release, which also contains its budget reaction.

"Revenue mobilisation will be a daunting task," according to the statement.

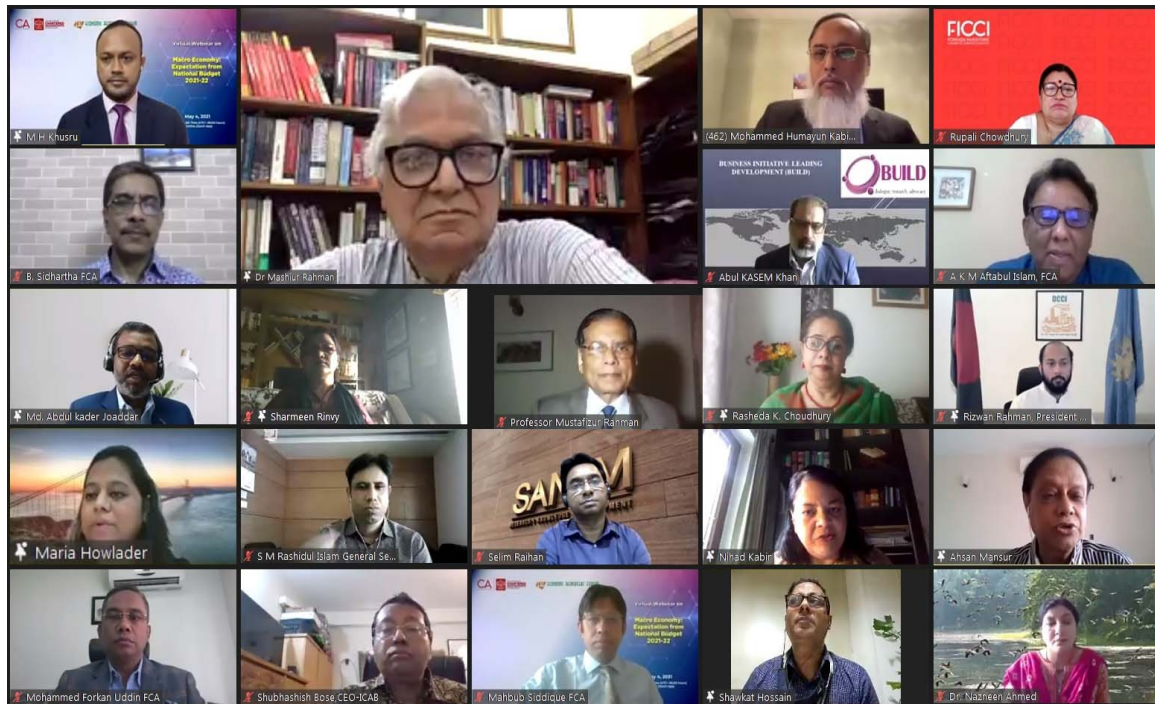
MCCI termed the budget as courageous and forward-looking in many aspects.

However, the major challenges of proper implementation and ensuring the quality of public spending must be addressed if the nation is to obtain the full benefits of the proposed budgetary allocations and fiscal and other incentives, it added.

Speakers: Need for framing pandemic-focused budget for FY22

[Tribune Report](#)

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Economists and business leaders address a virtual pre-budget discussion organized by Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh (ICAB) and the Economic Reporters' Forum (ERF) on Tuesday, May 4, 2021 **Courtesy**

They also emphasized strengthening the ongoing vaccination program, carrying on necessary tax reforms as well as reducing the corporate tax rates

Economists and business leaders at a webinar on Tuesday stressed the need for framing a budget for the next fiscal year (FY22) focused on the Covid-19 pandemic, prioritizing the health sector to mitigate the health-related risks, alongside sound macroeconomic management, widening social safety nets, raising the tax-GDP ratio and generating more employments.

They also emphasized strengthening the ongoing vaccination program, carrying on necessary tax reforms as well as reducing the corporate tax rates, ensuring proper budget implementation and quality spending of development projects, addressing the livelihood issues in the context of pandemic, prioritizing the CMSMEs and bringing the education sector under the purview of the stimulus packages.

Leading economists, professionals, business leaders, and civil society representatives gave their recommendations at a webinar titled "Macroeconomy: Expectations from National Budget 2021-22".

Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh (ICAB) and the Economic Reporters' Forum (ERF) jointly organized the webinar.

Prime Minister's Economic Affairs Adviser Mashiur Rahman spoke at the webinar as the chief guest.

Stressing the need for carrying out necessary reforms in the financial sector and in the revenue sector, Mashiur said that reforms in the capital and bond markets are also necessary to attract large-scale investors.

The adviser noted that if the lion's share of deficit financing could be made available from the foreign sources, then its impact in the domestic sector would be not that much.

Mashiur also stressed the need for boosting confidence among the businesses and investors, attracting more FDI, ensuring skills development and sound basic education up to secondary level.

Rasheda K Chowdhury said that the upcoming budget should be a pandemic-focused one while the education sector should be brought under the stimulus package as the losses to this sector is huge and it is invisible.

[Also Read - BUDGET FY 2021-22: Garment accessories producers demand lower source, corporate taxes](#)

Executive director of Policy Research Institute (PRI) Ahsan H Mansur proposed for allocating Tk15,000 crore for vaccination in the next budget and that fund should be made available from day one.

For the new poor being created from the impacts of the pandemic, he said only cash support is not enough for them, rather some permanent measures should be taken for them.

The renowned economist also suggested addressing the livelihood issue due to the pandemic, prioritizing the SMEs in the stimulus packages, focusing more on expenditure and thus opined that the budget deficit could be stretched from 7% to 8%.

Distinguished fellow of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) Prof Mustafizur Rahman put emphasis on generating more employments, giving relief to the import substitute Industries through taxation, revisiting the import regulations, enhancing quality expenditure, and ensuring necessary reforms.

He was also critical about the scope for whitening undisclosed money in the budget, saying it is an injustice to the honest taxpayers.

BGMEA President Faruque Hassan urged the government to provide policy support to the affected industries until the crisis ends so that those could make a turnaround.

He also demanded to keep the tax rates stable for 10 years, or at least for five years, for turnaround of the industries.

MCCI President Barrister Nihad Kabir put utmost priority on ensuring qualitative spending of development projects through real time basis monitoring and evaluation by the IMED, raising the tax-GDP ratio, giving policy support to CMSMEs, and to check the trend of dodging tax, as well as laundering of money abroad.

DCCI President Rizwan Rahman suggested reducing the corporate tax rate progressively by 2.5% in the next three years and thus bring it at 25% to facilitate the businesses.

Coming down heavily on the scope for whitening undisclosed money, he said that the business community would not accept such provision for whitening the money coming from 'burglary'. Otherwise, the honest businesses will not feel encouraged to pay tax from the next year, he added.

Also Read - BUDGET FY 2021-22: Garment accessories producers demand lower source, corporate taxes

Abul Kasem Khan of BUILD suggested the continuation of the stimulus packages in the next budget as well as rationalizing taxation measures and improving the investment climate.

BASIS President Syed Almas Kabir suggested keeping the digital transaction out of the purview of VAT for the next 3 to 5 years to facilitate online transaction and wider materialization of the 'Digital Bangladesh' initiative.

Masrur Reaz, founder and chairman of Policy Exchange of Bangladesh, suggested bringing around 50% of the country's population under the vaccination program in the next one year, otherwise the revival initiatives and recovery would be much tougher.

He also proposed for allocating 1% of GDP as a social safety net for the poor as well as awarding another stimulus for the SMEs, especially for the small and micro entrepreneurs.

Naznin Ahmed, senior research fellow at BIDS, strongly advocated for reducing the corporate tax rate, prioritizing those development projects which are nearing completion, keeping budgetary allocation on creating health awareness as well as on health disaster management, making cheaper the internet facilities and also making available the gadgets for the poor students.

Sanem Executive Director Prof Selim Raihan called for expanding economic operations and growth, not having an obsessed mindset on growth, rolling out social safety net schemes for the urban poor, boosting business confidence through necessary measures, increasing budget implementation and ensuring some visible reforms.

ICAB President Mahmudul Hasan Khusru chaired the webinar while its past president Md Humayun Kabir moderated the webinar. ERF President Sharmin Rinvy made the opening remarks while its general secretary SM Rashidul Islam gave the vote of thanks.

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Proposed budget business-friendly, say FBCCI, MCCI

4th June, 2021 08:49:56



The Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FBCCI) and **the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industries (MCCI)** have termed the proposed national budget as business-friendly against the backdrop of facilities to local entrepreneurs.

In a post-budget reaction, the FBCCI said the size of the budget has been increased in parallel to cope with the growing trend of economy towards the graduation of a developing country.

However, the MCCI mentioned that the increase in tax on mobile financial service may create a negative signal among investors.

FBCCI President Mohammad Jasim Uddin said the expansion of social safety net will create a positive impact on the life of extreme poor groups amid the coronavirus pandemic.

The apex trade body has appreciated the increase in the allocation for power, energy and transport communications which, the businesses said, will make more contributions to infrastructural development through the public private partnership.

The FBCCI has recommended developing an integrated system for collecting the lofty target of revenue worth Tk 3.3 trillion, around 9.63 percent higher year on year, in the new fiscal year.

Regarding the dependency on local banks to address budget deficit, the apex trade body has requested the government to take fund from alternative foreign source instead of local financial institutions.

The government has targeted to take Tk 764.52 billion from banking system and Tk 320 billion from saving tools to meet the deficit of Tk 1.13 trillion.

The FBCCI has welcomed the cut in corporate tax on different segment of business to promote local industries.

The MCCI has appreciated the reduction in tax on SME owned by women by way of increase of exempt annual turnover to Tk 7 million from existing Tk 5 million is a step in the right direction to enhance women's participation to sustainable development and economy as well as women's empowerment.

“Increasing their tax rate steeply at the time of the pandemic, and effectively disallowing a large portion of their promotional expenses will cause a slowdown of the growth of MFS

services and send a wrong signal to investors and users alike amidst all the positive signals of the Budget,” reads the statement signed by MCCI President Nihad Kabir.

However, the trade body has urged the government to ensure access to finance for women-led cottage, micro and small industry to enjoy the full benefits of this provision and increase the size of their businesses.

Regarding the non-renewal of whitening facilities of black money, the MCCI expects that the government will reconsider its strategies for employment creation in a more specific way so that those who lost jobs during the pandemic can return to the job market soon.

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বাজেট অনেক দিক থেকে সাহসী ও অগ্রগামী এমসিসিআই

সংবাদ :

- নিজস্ব বার্তা পরিবেশক

| ঢাকা , শনিবার, ০৫ জুন ২০২১



২০২০-২১ অর্থবছরের বাজেটের ঘাটতি ও নিম্ন প্রবৃদ্ধির হার নিয়ে চিন্তা না করে যুক্তিসঙ্গতভাবে স্থিতিশীল জীবন ও জীবিকা নির্বাহের দিকে মনোনিবেশ করায় প্রস্তাবিত বাজেটের প্রশংসা করেছে মেট্রোপলিটন চেম্বার অফ কমার্স অ্যান্ড ইন্ডাস্ট্রি (এমসিসিআই)। এই পরিস্থিতিতে বাজেটকে অনেক দিক থেকে সাহসী ও অগ্রগামী মনে করে এমসিসিআই। প্রস্তাবিত বাজেটে বরাদ্দের আর্থিক ও অন্যান্য প্রণোদনাগুলোর পুরো সুবিধা অর্জন করতে সঠিকভাবে বাজেটের বাস্তবায়ন ও সরকারি ব্যয়ের মান নিশ্চিতকরণের প্রধান চ্যালেঞ্জ মনে করছে এমসিসিআই। গতকাল এমসিসিআই'র সভাপতি ব্যারিস্টার নিহাদ কবির স্বাক্ষরিত সংবাদ বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে এ তথ্য জানা হয়েছে।

এমসিসিআই'র পক্ষ থেকে বলা হয়, কোভিড-১৯ মহামারীর কারণে সৃষ্ট দেশীয় ও বৈশ্বিক পরিস্থিতি বাজেট প্রস্তুত করা অর্থমন্ত্রীর জন্য একটি চ্যালেঞ্জিং কাজ ছিল। এক বছরের বেশি সময় ধরে এই মহামারী দেশের এবং বৈশ্বিক সামাজিক ও বিজনেস ইকো-সিস্টেম পাল্টে দিয়েছে। এই বাজেটে জীবন ও জীবিকা নিশ্চিত করার লক্ষ্যে পাঁচটি প্রয়োজনীয় খাতে অগ্রাধিকার দেয়ায় এমসিসিআই সরকারকে ধন্যবাদ জানিয়েছে। এগুলো হলো স্বাস্থ্য খাত, মহামারীর আর্থিক ও অর্থনৈতিক প্রভাব মোকাবিলায় প্রণোদনা প্যাকেজ অব্যাহত রাখা, খাদ্য নিরাপত্তা নিশ্চিত করতে কৃষি খাত, শিক্ষা ও দক্ষতা বৃদ্ধিসহ মানবসম্পদের সামগ্রিক উন্নয়ন ও পল্লী উন্নয়ন ও কর্মসংস্থান সৃষ্টি।

সরকার নোভেল করোনাভাইরাসের বিরুদ্ধে পর্যায়ক্রমে ৮০ শতাংশ মানুষকে টিকা দেয়ার পরিকল্পনা করেছে। প্রথম পর্যায়ে সবচেয়ে বেশি ঝুঁকিপূর্ণ গ্রুপকে প্রতি মাসে ২৫ লাখ হারে টিকা দেয়া হবে। জনসংখ্যার ৮০ শতাংশ মানুষকে এ হারে টিকা দেয়া হলে সেক্ষেত্রে ৪ বছরের বেশি সময় লাগবে। ব্যবসার সঙ্গে জড়িত মালিক, শ্রমিক ও কর্মচারীকে শীঘ্রই এই টিকা কার্যক্রমের আওতায় নিয়ে আসা প্রয়োজন।

২০২১-২২ অর্থবছরে বাজেট ঘাটতি ২১৪,৬৮১ কোটি টাকা নির্ধারণ করা (জিডিপি ৬.২%) হয়েছে, যা চলতি ২০২০-২১ অর্থবছরের ১৯০,০০০ কোটি টাকা (জিডিপি ৬.০%) ছিল। মোট ঘাটতির মধ্যে ১০১,২২৮ কোটি বাইরের উৎস থেকে অর্থায়ন হবে এবং দেশীয় উৎস থেকে ১১৩,৪৫৩ কোটি টাকা। ১১৩,৪৫৩ কোটি টাকার মধ্যে ৭৬,৪৫২ কোটি টাকা ব্যাংকিং ব্যবস্থা থেকে এবং ৩৭,০০১ কোটি টাকা সঞ্চয়পত্র ও অন্যান্য নন-ব্যাংক উৎস থেকে আসবে। ইতোমধ্যে অর্থনীতিতে সংঘটিত বিঘ্নে এবং সম্ভাব্য আরও বিঘ্নের আলোকে বাজেটের ঘাটতি বছর শেষে লক্ষ্যমাত্রার চেয়ে বেড়ে যেতে পারে বলে ধারণা করছে সংগঠনটি।

মহামারীর শুরু থেকেই এমসিসিআই পরামর্শ দিয়েছে, বিগত বছরগুলোর মতো যথাযথ আর্থিক ব্যবস্থাপনার মাধ্যমে সরকারের স্ব-আরোপিত বাজেট ঘাটতি ৫ শতাংশের মধ্যে সীমাবদ্ধ রাখতে সরকারি প্রকল্পে অর্থায়ন, প্রণোদনা প্যাকেজ, কোভিড-১৯ ব্যবস্থাপনা এবং স্বাস্থ্য খাতের সংশ্লিষ্ট ব্যয় নিয়ন্ত্রণ করা, যাতে নাগরিকদের জীবন ও জীবিকা রক্ষা করা যায়। এমসিসিআই আনন্দিত যে, বাজেট ঘাটতির ৫ শতাংশের মধ্যে সীমাবদ্ধ করা হয়নি, বরং পরিবর্তিত পরিস্থিতি অনুযায়ী এটি বাড়ানো যাবে। একই সঙ্গে, অভ্যন্তরীণ সম্পদ সঞ্চালনের ওপর চাপ কমাতে পাশাপাশি বাজেটের ঘাটতি যথাযথভাবে পূরণ করার লক্ষ্যে এমসিসিআই জোরালোভাবে সব মাধ্যমগুলো ব্যবহার করার জন্য সরকারকে অনুরোধ করছে, যাতে বিভিন্ন স্বল্প সুদের তহবিল আন্তর্জাতিক মাধ্যম থেকে সংগ্রহ করা যায়।

এমসিসিআই জানায়, সরকারের প্রথম অগ্রাধিকার হলো যতদূর সম্ভব নাগরিকদের স্বাস্থ্য ও অর্থনৈতিক সুরক্ষা নিশ্চিত করা। অপরিহার্য ব্যয়, অর্থনীতির মধ্যে তহবিল আদান-প্রদান এবং সামগ্রিক অভ্যন্তরীণ চাহিদা মেটাতে (এই ক্ষেত্রে আমরা বাজেটে কোন সুনির্দিষ্টতা দেখতে পাইনি) প্রয়োজনে ঘাটতি বাড়ানোয় সরকারের দ্বিধাশ্রিত হওয়া উচিত হবে না।

কর্মসংস্থান সৃষ্টির জন্য সরকার ব্যাপকভাবে জোর দিয়েছে, এমসিসিআই যার প্রশংসা করেছে। গ্রামীণ দরিদ্র কৃষক, বিদেশ ফেরত শ্রমিক, এবং গ্রামীণ প্রশিক্ষিত ও বেকার যুবকদের ব্যবসার জন্য, এবং কৃষি ও কৃষি সংশ্লিষ্ট উৎপাদন ও সেবা ক্ষেত্রে আত্মকর্মসংস্থান, ক্ষুদ্র ব্যবসা, ক্ষুদ্র ও কুটির শিল্প ইত্যাদির জন্য স্বল্প সুদ হারে ঋণ বিতরণের লক্ষ্যে ৩,২০০ কোটি টাকার একটি তহবিল গঠন করা হয়েছে। এছাড়া প্রবাসী কর্মীদের নিরাপদ অভিবাসন এবং শোভন কাজ নিশ্চিত করার জন্য সরকারের প্রচেষ্টা বিদেশি কর্মসংস্থানের সুযোগ উন্মুক্ত করেছে।

আসন্ন অর্থবছর (২০২১-২২ অর্থবছর) কোভিড-১৯ এর কঠিন সময়ে বিভিন্ন ব্যক্তি ও প্রতিষ্ঠানসমূহকে প্রস্তুত করার ও অন্য প্রশাসনিক সুবিধা প্রদান করাতে, সরকারের জন্য কাক্সিক্ষিত রাজস্ব আহরণ করার কাজটিও কঠিন হবে। করপোরেট করের হারকে ২.৫০ শতাংশ (তালিকাভুক্ত কোম্পানির জন্য ২.৫% থেকে ২২.৫% এবং অ-তালিকাভুক্ত কোম্পানির জন্য ৩২.৫০% থেকে ৩০%) কমিয়ে আনার পরিকল্পনায় এমসিসিআই প্রশংসা করেছে। যা আঞ্চলিক প্রতিযোগী দেশগুলোর সঙ্গে করপোরেট কর হারে সামঞ্জস্য আনতে ব্যবসায়ীদের দীর্ঘদিনের দাবি পূরণে সঠিক পদক্ষেপ। এমসিসিআই হতাশ যে, আগাম আয়কর (এআটি) হ্রাস বা বিলোপের জন্য বাজেটে কোন পদক্ষেপ নেয়া হয়নি।

বাজেটে মোবাইল আর্থিক পরিষেবা (এমএফএস) সরবরাহকারীদের করপোরেট করের হার বৃদ্ধির প্রস্তাব ভুল বার্তা দিবে জানিয়ে এমসিসিআই বলে, মহামারী চলাকালীন তাদের করের হার

উল্লেখযোগ্যভাবে বৃদ্ধি করা এবং তাদের বিজ্ঞাপন ব্যয়কে অনুমোদিত ব্যয় হিসেবে বিবেচনা না করা এমএফএস পরিষেবার বৃদ্ধি হ্রাস করবে এবং বাজেটের অনেক ইতিবাচক দিকের মধ্যেও এই খাতের বিনিয়োগকারী এবং ব্যবহারকারীদের জন্য একটি ভুল বার্তা প্রেরণ করবে।

ন্যূনতম টার্নওভার ট্যাক্স বাদ দেয়ার আহ্বান জানিয়ে সংগঠনটি বলে, এই জাতীয় বাজেটে পাইকারি বিক্রেতা, নিত্যপ্রয়োজনীয় পণ্যের ব্যবসায়ী, প্রোপ্রাটরশিপ, স্টার্টআপ ও দুর্বল কোম্পানি যাদের বিক্রি মূল্য ৩ কোটি টাকার বেশি ন্যূনতম টার্নওভার ট্যাক্স ০.৫০ থেকে কমিয়ে ০.২৫ করা হয়েছে। ন্যূনতম টার্নওভার ট্যাক্স আয়কর নীতির সম্পূর্ণ বিরোধী। এছাড়া মহামারীকালীন ন্যূনতম টার্নওভার ট্যাক্স আরোপ যৌক্তিক নয়।

চলমান মহামারীর কারণে বৈশ্বিক অর্থনীতির পুনরুদ্ধারের অনুমান এখনও অনিশ্চিত। তাই এমসিসিআই'র পক্ষ থেকে ৩ মাস পর বাজেটের অন্তর্বর্তী মূল্যায়ন হওয়া প্রয়োজন বলে দাবি করা হয়েছে।

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বাজেট প্রতিক্রিয়া

কর কাঠামোর প্রশংসা এমসিসিআই ও এফআইসিসিআইয়ের

নিজস্ব প্রতিবেদক

জুন ০৫, ২০২১



২০২১-২২ অর্থবছরের জন্য প্রস্তাবিত বাজেট ব্যবসাবান্ধব বলে উল্লেখ করেছে **মেট্রোপলিটন চেম্বার অব কমার্স অ্যান্ড ইন্ডাস্ট্রি (এমসিসিআই)** ও ফরেন ইনভেস্টর্স চেম্বার অব কমার্স অ্যান্ড ইন্ডাস্ট্রি (এফআইসিসিআই)। সংগঠন দুটি প্রস্তাবিত বাজেট প্রতিক্রিয়ায় গতকাল কর কাঠামোসহ অনেকগুলো উদ্যোগের প্রশংসা করেছে।

বাজেট প্রতিক্রিয়ায় এমসিসিআই বেশকিছু উদ্যোগের জন্য সরকার ও অর্থমন্ত্রীকে স্বাগত জানিয়েছে। এর মধ্যে স্বাস্থ্য খাতে ব্যয়ের পরিমাণ বাড়ানো, সক্ষমতার উন্নয়ন ও ভ্যাকসিনেশন কার্যক্রমের ব্যবস্থাপনা, সামাজিক নিরাপত্তা কর্মসূচির আওতা বাড়ানো, কর্মসংস্থান সৃষ্টি, নারী ও যুবদের নানা সমস্যা মোকাবেলা এবং কৃষিসহ অন্যান্য খাতে সরকারের বরাদ্দ বাড়ানো ও উদ্যোগের প্রশংসা করেছে সংগঠনটি।

প্রস্তাবিত বাজেটে বরাদ্দের সুফল পেতে আরো কিছু স্পষ্ট নির্দেশনা প্রয়োজন ছিল বলে মনে করে এমসিসিআই। এছাড়া বাজেটে চলমান মহামারীর ফলে অর্থনীতি ও মানুষের ওপর যে নেতিবাচক প্রভাব পড়েছে, সেটি মোকাবেলায় বরাদ্দের জন্য অর্থমন্ত্রীর প্রশংসা করেছে এমসিসিআই।

এমসিসিআই বলছে, স্বাস্থ্য ও অর্থনৈতিক নিরাপত্তা নিশ্চিত করতে সরকারের যথাসম্ভব অগ্রাধিকার দেয়া উচিত। এজন্য প্রয়োজনীয় ব্যয় বাড়াতে ঘাটতির পরিমাণ বাড়লেও সেটি নিয়ে সংশয় করা উচিত হবে না। বরং অভ্যন্তরীণ বাজারে চাহিদা তৈরি করতে ও অর্থনীতি চাঙ্গা করতে অর্থের সরবরাহ রাখতে হবে।

অন্যদিকে এফআইসিসিআই বাজেট প্রতিক্রিয়ায় চলমান মহামারী ঠেকাতে সরকারের ভ্যাকসিনেশন কার্যক্রমের জন্য নেয়া উদ্যোগকে স্বাগত জানিয়েছে। চেম্বারটি বলছে, জনসংখ্যার ৮০ শতাংশ ভ্যাকসিনেশনের আওতায় আনার যে পরিকল্পনা করেছে, সেটি অবশ্যই প্রশংসার যোগ্য। আমরা আশা করি, বিদেশী ও আমাদের কোম্পানিগুলোর সদস্যরা, যারা মহামারীর মধ্যেও অর্থনীতিতে গতি আনতে কাজ করছে তাদের টিকার ক্ষেত্রে অন্তর্ভুক্ত করা হবে।

এছাড়া চেম্বারটি বাজেটে করপোরেট করহার কমানো, তৃতীয় লিঙ্গের কর্মী নিয়োগে কর অব্যাহতি, অগ্রিম করহার কমানো, ৫০ হাজার টাকার বেশি লেনদেন ব্যাংক ও মোবাইল আর্থিক সেবাদানকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের মাধ্যমে করার বাধ্যবাধকতা আরোপসহ বাজেটে যেসব উদ্যোগ নিয়েছে, সেগুলোর প্রশংসা করেছে।

বাজেট ব্যবসা ও বিনিয়োগবান্ধব

বাণিজ্য সংগঠনের প্রতিক্রিয়া

দেশের শীর্ষস্থানীয় তিন ব্যবসায়ী সংগঠন নতুন বাজেটে নেওয়া বিভিন্ন পদক্ষেপের প্রশংসা করেছে। তবে এই বাজেট বাস্তবায়ন কঠিন বলেও উল্লেখ করেছে।

অর্থ ও বাণিজ্য সেক্টর

দেশের শীর্ষস্থানীয় চেম্বারগুলো অর্থসেক্টরের বাজেটকে জনকল্যাণমুখী এবং ব্যবসা ও বিনিয়োগবান্ধব বলে আখ্যায়িত করেছে। তাদের মতে, বর্তমান কঠোরা পরিস্থিতিতে বিভিন্ন প্রতিষ্ঠানের মধ্যেও জনগণের চাহিদা, জীবন-জীবিকা এবং অর্থনৈতিক কাঠামো আরও সুদৃঢ় করা ও অর্থনীতি পুনরুদ্ধারের বিষয়গুলোকে বাজেটে প্রাধান্য দেওয়া হয়েছে। এ জন্য চেম্বারগুলো সরকারের প্রশংসা করেছে।
একই সঙ্গে তারা কোভিডের পরিস্থিতিতেও অর্থনৈতিক প্রবৃদ্ধির ধারা বজায় রাখার সরকারকে অভিনন্দন জানিয়েছে। তবে তারা বলেছে, বাজেটে উচ্চ প্রবৃদ্ধির (৭.২%) লক্ষ্যমাত্রা আশাবাজক এবং এটি অর্জন সম্ভব। কিন্তু তা বাস্তবায়নে কঠিন জালেঞ্জের মুখোমুখি হতে হবে সরকারকে। রাজস্ব আহরণের লক্ষ্য অর্জনও কঠিন হবে। তাই বাজেটের সঠিক বাস্তবায়নে জোর দিতে হবে। এ ছাড়া অর্থমন্ত্রী নতুন বাজেটে করপোরেট কর ২.৫% কমানোর প্রস্তাব দেওয়ার তীক্ষ্ণ স্বাগত জানিয়েছে চেম্বারগুলো।

এমসিসিআই

মেট্রোপলিটন চেম্বার অব কমার্স আন্ড ইন্ডাস্ট্রি (এমসিসিআই) মনে করে, এবারের বাজেট গতানুগতিক নয়। এতে ঘাটতি ও নিম্ন প্রবৃদ্ধির হার নিয়ে চিন্তা না করে যুক্তিসংগতভাবে জনগণের স্থিতিশীল জীবন ও জীবিকার দিকে মনোযোগ দেওয়ার উদ্যোগ প্রশংসনীয়। বর্তমান পরিস্থিতি বিবেচনায় এই বাজেট অনেক দিক থেকে সাহসী ও অগ্রগামী।

তবে সংগঠনটি এ-ও বলেছে, প্রস্তাবিত বাজেট বরাদ্দের আর্থিক ও অন্যান্য প্রশোধনীর পুরো সুবিধা যদি অর্জন করতে হয়, তাহলে সঠিকভাবে বাজেট বাস্তবায়ন ও সরকারি ব্যয়ের মান নিশ্চিত করতে হবে। এ ছাড়া তিন মাস পরে বাজেটের অন্তর্বর্তী মূল্যায়ন হওয়া উচিত। তখন যদি প্রয়োজন হয়, তবে বাজেট পুনর্গঠন ও সংশোধন করতে হবে।

শীর্ষ এই ব্যবসায়ী সংগঠন বাজেটে করপোরেট কর আড়াই শতাংশ কমানোর প্রস্তাবকে ব্যবসায়ীদের দীর্ঘদিনের দাবি পূরণে একটি সঠিক পদক্ষেপ বলে অভিহিত করেছে। বাজেটে অগ্রিম মূল্য সংযোজন কর কমানোর পরিকল্পনাকে ব্যবসাবান্ধব বলে মনে করে এমসিসিআই। এ জন্য সরকারের প্রশংসা করেছে সংগঠনটি।

১০ শতাংশ কর দিয়ে কালো টাকা সাদা করার সুযোগ না দেওয়ায় এমসিসিআই সরকারকে ধন্যবাদ জানিয়েছে। সংগঠনটি বলেছে, যারা আইন মেনে কর প্রদান করে, তাদের আরও বেশি কর দিতে হবে। অন্যদিকে যারা কর দেয়না, তারা

এই ধরনের থেকে বেঁচে যাবে।

বাজেটে সরকার কর্মসংস্থান সৃষ্টিতে ব্যাপকভাবে জোর দেওয়া সরকারের প্রশংসা করেছে এমসিসিআই। সেই সঙ্গে জীবন ও জীবিকা নিশ্চিত করার লক্ষ্যে পাঁচটি শতাংশ অর্থনৈতিক সেওয়ার জন্যও সরকারকে ধন্যবাদ জানিয়েছে।

এমসিসিআই মনে করে, ব্যক্তিগত কর রেয়াতের জন্য সর্বাধিক বিনিয়োগের সীমা দেওয়া কোটি থেকে এক কোটি টাকায় পূর্নিকভাবে বিনিয়োগে নেতিবাচক প্রভাব পড়বে।

নারী উদ্যোক্তাদের এস-এমই ব্যবসাতে কর্মসূচী লেনদেনের সীমা ৫০ লাখ থেকে বাড়িয়ে ৭০ লাখ টাকায় উন্নীত করাকে সংগঠনটি সঠিক পদক্ষেপ মনে করে।

এফআইসিসিআই

ফরেন ইনভেস্টমেন্ট চেম্বার অব কমার্স আন্ড ইন্ডাস্ট্রি (এফআইসিসিআই) বাজেটে করপোরেট আয়কর আড়াই শতাংশ হ্রাস, অগ্রিম কর (এটি) ৪% থেকে ১% কমিয়ে ৩%-এ এবং সিমেন্ট খাতে অগ্রিম আয়কর (এফআইটি) ৩% থেকে ২%-এ নামিয়ে আনায় সরকারের প্রশংসা করেছে।

এফআইসিসিআই বাজেটে নেওয়া কিছু পদক্ষেপে সন্তোষ প্রকাশ করেছে। যেমন স্থানীয় মানুষকে চাকরি বা উৎপাদন হাতেকে গুরুত্ব প্রদান, ভ্যাট-সংক্রান্ত করিমানা দুবার থেকে কমিয়ে একবার করা, নির্বাচিত কিছু আঁকুটি খাতে কর অব্যাহতি, ন্যূনতম করহার দশমিক ৫ শতাংশ থেকে কমিয়ে দশমিক ২৫ শতাংশে নামিয়ে আনা।

সংগঠনটি বাজেটে বিবেচনার জন্য কিছু সুপারিশও করেছে। সুপারিশগুলোর মধ্যে রয়েছে, সাধারণ খাতের তুলনায় করপোরেট করহার আরও যৌক্তিকীকরণ, ই-কমার্সনির্ভর ব্যবসায় কর প্রণোদনা সুবিধা প্রদান, শিল্পের গীচামাল আমদানিতে অগ্রিম কর (এটি) সম্পূর্ণ রহস্যহার, নিত্যপ্রয়োজনীয় পণ্য আমদানি শুদ্ধ যৌক্তিকীকরণ ইত্যাদি।

বাংলাদেশ চেম্বার

বাংলাদেশ চেম্বার অব ইন্ডাস্ট্রিজ (বিসিআই) মনে করে, প্রস্তাবিত বাজেটে দেশীয় পণ্য উৎপাদনকারী বৃহৎ শিল্পে (অটোমোবাইল) ২০ বছর, হোম অ্যাপ্লায়েন্স শিল্পে ও কৃষি প্রক্রিয়াকরণ শিল্পে ১০ বছর এবং হালকা প্রকৌশল খাতে যন্ত্রাংশ উৎপাদনে ১০ বছর কর অব্যাহতি প্রদান করার অর্থমন্ত্রীকে ধন্যবাদ জানিয়ে বলেছে, এটি দেশীয় শিল্প ও বেসরকারি হাতসহায়ক বাজেট।

তবে বিসিআই শিল্পপ্রতিষ্ঠানের মূলধন যজ্ঞাংশ আমদানিতে আরোপিত ১%-এর অতিরিক্ত সব শুদ্ধ-কর মওকুফের দাবি জানিয়েছে।

বিসিআই মনে করে, বর্তমান পরিস্থিতিতে বিশাল রাজস্ব লক্ষ্যমাত্রা অর্জন অনেকটা চ্যালেঞ্জিং হবে।

সংগঠনটি স্বাস্থ্য খাতে বরাদ্দ বৃদ্ধি ও করোনভাইরাস মোকাবিলায় জন্য ১০ হাজার কোটি টাকার বরাদ্দের জন্য এবং হাসপাতাল স্থাপনে ১০ বছর কর অব্যাহতি প্রদান করার অর্থমন্ত্রীকে ধন্যবাদ জানায়। তবে বেসরকারি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, মেডিকেল কলেজ ও ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং কলেজের ওপর ১৫% কর আরোপের প্রস্তাব পুনর্বিবেচনার পরামর্শ দিয়েছে বিসিআই।