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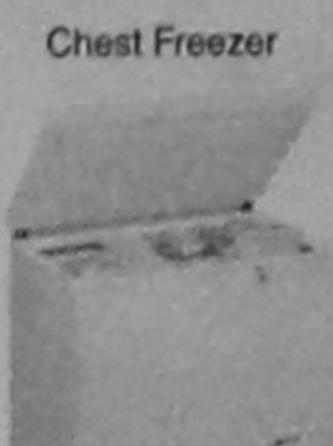
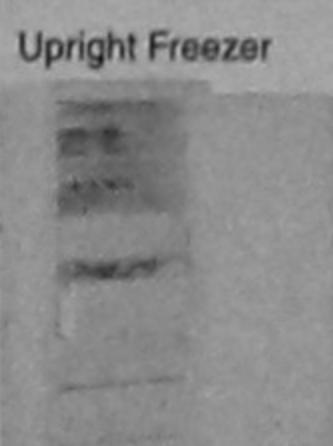
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## Hasina leaves for Damascus

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina left for Damascus yesterday evening to attend the funeral of Syrian President Hafez Al-Assad, reports UNB.

The funeral service will be held today at his village home at Qardaha, 200 km northwest of Syrian capital Damascus.

Hasina is accompanied by State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury, Foreign Secretary CM Shafi Sami and Press Secretary Jawad Karim.

Cabinet members, the chiefs of three services and the Dean of diplomatic corps were at the airport to see off the Prime Minister.

Hasina is expected to return home tomorrow.

## Khaleda thanks people for observing hartal

Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia said the people have rejected the anti-people budget by successfully observing yesterday's nationwide dawn-to-dusk hartal, reports UNB.

The people once again expressed their 'no-confidence' in the government through rejecting the proposed budget, she said congratulating the countrymen on their making the shutdown programme a success.

"There is no guideline in the budget for socio-economic development of the country, rather it only reflected the financial bankruptcy of the government," she said in a post-hartal statement.

The BNP chairperson criticised government's failure in controlling law and order, resolving electricity crisis, reducing corruption and ensuring public security.

"People would not get rid of the problems so long this failed, inefficient, corrupt and secretive government stays in power," she said.

The BNP chief, who is leading a four-party opposition campaign for fresh elections, asked the government to step down immediately admitting all its failures and hand over power to a neutral caretaker government.

## HC vacation bench formed

Acting Chief Justice Bimalendu Bikash Roy Chowdhury has formed a Vacation Bench of the High Court that will hear emergency cases from June 18 to 22, reports UNB.

The vacation bench comprising Justice M M Ruhul Amin will sit only on June 18 in the chamber of Court No 2 from 11 am to 1 pm.

## MiG-27 crashes into house in India

NEW DELHI, June 12: A Russian-built MiG-27 fighter jet of the Indian Air Force crashed into a house today in the eastern Indian town of Midnapore, an air force spokesman here said, reports AFP.

Officials in Midnapore said at least two villagers and the pilot were injured in the accident.

The plane was on a routine flight when at around 7:30 a.m. (0800 BST) ground control alerted the pilot to a fire at the tail of the jet and warned him that he was flying over a densely populated area.

## Assess impact

From page 1  
before Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to Washington in October, they suggested.

They also requested the minister to take steps to improve port and customs operations and assured co-operation in removing fraudulent practices in the sector to increase exports.

The minister assured them that all possible steps would be taken to help develop the garments sector and increase exports.

Commerce Secretary Golam Rahman, Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) Vice-Chairman A B Chowdhury and a number of BGMEA board members were present during the discussion held at the EPB auditorium.

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## Army attacked Kargil keeping govt in dark, says Sharif

ATTOCK FORT, June 12: Deposed Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif yesterday accused the Pakistani army of attacking Indian-controlled Kashmir without informing the elected government, saying that the operation brought the region to the brink of a nuclear war, reports AP.

The army's May 1999 offensive in the snowcapped mountains of Kargil derailed peace talks with India and isolated Pakistan internationally. Sharif told reporters in Attock Fort, where he is being tried on charges of corruption and tax evasion.

Pakistan, governed by Sharif at that time, said that Islamic militants had launched the offensive.

Sharif said Monday that the country's military leaders kept him in the dark over the Kargil conflict.

Pakistan and India, both

nuclear powers, fought a bloody border war last summer in Kashmir's Kargil area, triggering international fears that the conflict might turn into a full-blown confrontation.

New Delhi had accused the Pakistani army of seizing its military posts in Kashmir, the cause of two wars between India and Pakistan. The two countries control parts of Kashmir but both claim it as a whole.

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An official release said the cabinet also adopted an obituary reference on the death of Syrian President Hafez Al-Asad.

Witnesses said the gunmen numbering about 10 took away the youth at gunpoint.



Employees of a department store wear a mask of North Korean leader Kim Jong-II(L) and South Korean leader Kim Dae-Jung(R), pose on a shopping street "Myeongdong" in Seoul yesterday to celebrate an historic June summit between the two Cold War foes. Kim Dae-Jung will meet at least twice with Kim Jong-II during his three-day stay in the North Korean capital (Story on page 9).

— Star photo

## Hartal call failed as budget was pro-people: Hasina

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She said: "We have continued our effort for the improvement of law and order and law and order situation improved all over the country. Only in the capital some scattered incidents are being committed."

The Prime Minister said it is not possible for the government alone to improve law and order to optimal levels. "If the people remain alert, if the opposition parties assist us, then we will be able to improve law and order further."

The government is taking strong actions against the terrorists, and if the opposition parties do not give protection and the people stand by the government, then terrorism can be eliminated from the country, she added.

She said when this government took over charge, there was massive misrule and corruption in the country, there was no discipline in any sector.

There were problems in gas, water and power sectors, but for the efficient steps of the present government existing problems are going gradually and discipline has been restored in all their rules.

Regarding workers' demand, the Prime Minister said the government formed a wage commission that has already placed its report. The wage commission report will be im-

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