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Today's issue 24 pages

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## Spillover effects

### Commotion from sick industries, 'jhoot' traders behind destruction

**REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA**

Workers of a few sick and sub-contracting factories and some local "jhoot" (garment rejects) traders together vandalised garment factories, including Ha-Meem Sweater unit, at Ashulia on Monday.

These workers, who are either paid low or irregularly, have been mounting pressure on the managements of well-running factories in the area over the last few months to halt production until their demands are met, industry insiders said.

They have been demanding regular payment and re-opening of the closed factories soon. The sick and sub-contracting factories can hardly pay their workers because of huge shortfall in orders from big factories and international buyers in the wake of global economic recession.

Apart from this, trading of garment leftovers, commonly known as jhoot, has long been a reason behind violence in the area, locals said.

A worker of Ha-Meem said he had been asked by some angry workers of other factories to join their demonstration. "But we did not join them and kept our operation running," he told The Daily Star, requesting not to be named.

A number of Ha-Meem workers said real garment workers did not burn the factory because the management pays them well and does it in time.

"So far as I know, Ha-Meem Group filed a case with Ashulia Police Station a few days ago when three trucks of jhoot were looted by a gang of miscreants," said Sanjeev Behal, a mid-level official of Ha-Meem Group, adding that this might be a reason behind the attack.

Sanjeev said, "It is true that during the incident our workers tried to protect the factory from vandalism."

He said their management exchanges views with the workers on a regular basis. Owners of the factory also spend money from jhoot sales on social activities like donating for mosque construction and wedding of poor girls working at garment factories or living in nearby areas.

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A fire service team searches the wreckage of a gutted Ha-Meem Group factory for any simmering fires, a day after an arson attack at the complex.

PHOTO: SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN

## Food, disaster get highest allocation

### Budget passed in absence of opposition

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Jatiya Sangsad yesterday passed the budget for the fiscal year 2009-10 in the absence of the main opposition BNP.

The budget, the first by this Awami League government to be implemented from today, outlines Tk 1,89,960 crore of gross expenditure, including revenue and development, and Tk 1,13,819 crore of net expenditure.

The food and disaster management ministry has received the maximum allocation of Tk 12,946 crore in both development and non-development sectors.

The defence ministry received the second highest allocation of Tk 8,199 crore followed by the Local Government Division with an allocation of Tk 7,934

ITEMS	PROPOSED DUTY	APPROVED DUTY FOR 2009-10
Mobile set imports	25%+5% regulatory duty	12%
Newsprint imports	5%	3%
Corporate tax for financial institutions	45%	42.50%

crore.

The education ministry received Tk 7,415 crore, health ministry Tk 7,000 crore, primary and mass education ministry Tk 6,617 crore, home ministry Tk 5,879 crore and the power division Tk 3,578 crore.

As the BNP remained absent from the

whole budget session their cut motion proposals were not placed in the House yesterday. Only a few proposals by independent lawmaker Fazlul Azim were placed.

The absence of the opposition made the process of passing the budget very quick in just about two hours.

Earlier on Monday, Prime Minister and Leader of the House Sheikh Hasina and Finance Minister AMA Muhith gave concluding speeches on the budget.

The finance bill on tax and tariff was also passed in the House on that day, with revision of tax proposals for mobile phone, newsprint, cars and some other items.

Tax on cellphone handsets has been reduced to 12 percent from the proposed

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RELATED STORIES IN STAR BUSINESS

## Labour leaders blame owners, govt inaction

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Owners' tendency to control workers using muscle power, especially engaging local politicians and jhute (garment wastes) businessmen, and government's indifferent attitude to solving problems of workers have caused the recent unrest in garment sector, said labour leaders.

Unless trade union is established providing a table for both garment workers and owners to sit around and discuss the problems in the garment factories it cannot be handled properly, the leaders observed.

"Garment owners tend to

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

## Thousands lose jobs

### Ha-Meem Group to relocate factories to adjacent buildings; production resumes in other factories amid tight security

KAILASH SARKAR

Monday's arson attack on Ha-Meem Group complex at Ashulia is going to mean job loss for around half of 4,000 workers at its sweater factories.

A number of workers, who came to the factory site yesterday morning, said managing job in other factories would be very difficult as the garment sector is seeing its export decline amid a global recession.

Almost all factories at Ashulia and Savar including those inside the Export Processing Zone got back in operation yesterday.

It was a welcome contrast to the previous three days when fierce demonstrations by the workers forced the production to remain suspended.

The factories in the areas came alive with adequate security arrangements in place.

Things were however gloomy at Ha-Meem Group complex. Wisps of smoke were still rising off the debris there.

Some 200 workers and a number of firefighters had been working to clear wreckage from the scene.

Nazma Begum [not real name], who had been working in Ha-Meem's sweater industry for two years, said, "Though the authorities have asked to keep contact, I don't know if they will let me continue in my job here."

She said her fate depends on the owners now. "It won't be easy to land another if I lose this job."

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## Bangladesh performs poorly in rule of law

### Shows WB governance indicator

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The World Bank's (WB) Worldwide Governance Indicator (WGI) shows that Bangladesh performed poorly in the rule of law, government effectiveness, and regulatory quality but did well in control of corruption, political stability and accountability.

The WB released the WGI 2009 on Monday. Since 1996, it releases every year the WGI based on six indicators.

Talking to The Daily Star, Research Director of Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) Dr Zaid Bakht said the anti-corruption drive launched by the immediate past caretaker government 'curbed' corruption slightly but the panic created by the drive among people led to deterioration of the rule of law.

The WGI shows in case of control of corruption, Bangladesh improved slightly -- minus

SEE PAGE 12 COL 1

## Sahara leaves for S'pore tonight for treatment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Minister Sahara Khatun will leave for Singapore tonight for treatment as she suffered waist injuries when she fell in the washroom of her official residence on Monday.

Sahara will fly for Singapore by a Singapore Airlines flight at 11:30pm. She is to undergo treatment at Mount Elizabeth Hospital,

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## Petrobangla puts Chevron on GTCL's system

### The US oil co to install gas compressor for \$52m, conduct 3D survey outside PSC area in Jalalabad

SHARIER KHAN

Petrobangla yesterday approved a move allowing US oil company Chevron install a gas compressor station at Muchai in the gas pipeline owned by the national Gas Transmission Company Ltd (GTCL).

Petrobangla had earlier asked Chevron to install this compressor to

boost gas supply pressure and volume late last year when GTCL was processing a tender for the same under a loan from Asian Development Bank (ADB).

The GTCL's tender was opened in February, and in May the GTCL board headed by Petrobangla chairman Maj (ret'd) M Muktadir Ali cancelled the tender. Ali had earlier pushed Chevron for

the job last year.

Chevron will install the compressor station under a the Production Sharing Contract (PSC) for block 15 signed with Petrobangla at a project cost of US\$ 52 million. This cost would be recovered from gas sales from the block.

As there is no legal instrument

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## BNP to join JS if 'proper environment' ensured

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP parliamentary party (BNPPP) yesterday alleged that the government did not allow opposition lawmakers to perform their role in parliament and again urged the speaker and ruling party to ensure 'appropriate atmosphere' for joining the House.

"Role of the opposition parties in parliament is inevitable. Parliament is meaningless without the opposition. The functions of the opposition are to hold the government accountable to people for its actions. We want to perform the role," said BNPPP in its written statement.

The opposition lawmakers would join the House if

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Factory workers report to work at the Ha-Meem Group complex in Ashulia yesterday morning after three days of violent protests. Many workers now face uncertainty as the factories they worked in were gutted in an arson attack yesterday.

PHOTO: SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN

## Child survives plane crash

### 152 aboard Yemeni airliner feared dead

AFP, Moroni

A Yemeni Airbus A310 jet carrying 153 people crashed into rough seas as it came into land in the Comoros islands early yesterday but rescuers plucked a child survivor from the water, officials said.

It was the second time in less than a month that an Airbus has crashed into the ocean. This time French authorities said the Yemeni carrier had been under surveillance and that problems had been reported with the jet.

Bodies and wreckage from the Yemenia airline flight were spotted in the Indian Ocean near the island archipelago capital, Moroni, aviation officials said.

But a child among the 142 passengers and 11 crew on Flight IY 626 was rescued alive, a surgeon at the main Moroni hospital, Issa Ben Imani, told AFP.

Imani said the child was being taken to land where an ambulance waited to take the child to hospital.

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## Navy reacts to press reports

### JS body chief says people have right to know

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Navy terms "undesirable" the news recently published in different national dailies on its problems and development plans and says the media didn't take the "views" of the Headquarters or ISPR.

Different national dailies ran the news after a meeting of the parliamentary standing committee on defence ministry on June 22 that discussed the navy's report stipulating its problems and development plans.

After the meeting, Committee Chairman M Idris

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