



BUDGET TODAY

## Waiting for big push

Can democratic dividend be reaped?

INAM AHMED

Making a budget in the shadows of a double dip fear in Europe and an increasingly disquieting home theatre can be a challenging task. More so when you are faced with the daunting task of churning out enough energy to douse public dissent and pumping out enough growth to create jobs for the ballooning labour force.

For Finance Minister AMA Muhith, as he presents the budget for the next fiscal year, there are many more clouds gathering in the corners. An investment dip, gas crisis, many competing hungry mouths for subsidy and a peeping head of inflation that wants to wake up from sleep may all be clouding his mind. But then Muhith has shown his mantle in the past one and a half years and has shown his spunk and wisdom. He may well be enjoying the

prospect of a testing time, ill health notwithstanding.

The most elusive question that remains today is a growth that takes the country out of the 6 percent bracket. And that would take a completely innovative approach to development -- it would need administrative, political and business innovations. The question is whether we have that to break the barrier.

The growth that we have been witnessing for the past decade or so is in fact the result of 'demographic dividend', as Dr Wahiduddin Mahmud puts it.

"Our labour force has increased more than our population growth and that burgeoning working people have been doing something to eke out a living. This simple behaviour has been feeding the growth we witness today," Dr Mahmud says.

"But to grow faster like India, we need

to arrange enough meaningful jobs for them."

This window of opportunity coming in the form of demographic dividend does not last long, may be for about 20 years, and countries like India have grabbed it. Unless Bangladesh also utilises it soon, actually right now, the growth bus would leave.

The budget that the finance minister is going to present today should outline a strategy to get on that bus -- a way to shift gear in skills and technology to go to the next stage after the readymade garment revolution. The repetitive ways of manufacturing and sectoral output is not enough anymore. It all needs a massive investment, too.

Spurring investment today surfaces as a major task that spans a number of cross-cutting issues. When the finance minister

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Leaders of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami exchange views with BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday during a sit-in programme in front of Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh.

PHOTO: COURTESY

Robbers, not cops

A CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

There was no way of having a sneaking suspicion as they had everything on-duty policemen have. They were carrying wireless and handcuffs. A notebook was in their hand. Even the nameplates in place bore the names of policemen posted to the local outpost.

Besides outfit, they had a clear conception about the major concern now and used the issue of militancy to manage a safe and commendable entry to the house.

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## Rab men told to be people's friend

HC reminds Satkhira officials about their duty, asks to protect human rights

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday observed that the law enforcers should behave in such a manner so that people can treat them as their friend, and human and fundamental rights are not violated by their activities.

An orientation course should be arranged to train up the law enforcers in order to make

them aware of human and fundamental rights guaranteed in the constitution of the republic, it said.

An HC bench of Justice AHM Shamsuddin Chowdhury Manik and Justice Md Delwar Hossain made the observation when two Rapid Action Battalion officials appeared before it to explain allegations against them of their

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## Traffic mess in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP's sit-in programme at Engineers' Institution of Bangladesh yesterday triggered a chain reaction in Dhaka traffic system hindering vehicular movement throughout the day.

City dwellers and commuters went through unbearable sufferings having to remain stranded for hours in jam-packed public transport and other vehicles on major city streets in the hot and humid weather.

Traffic on major roads in parts of the city apparently

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## War paint is on

Khaleda tells sit-in that agitation to start if EC fails Ctg city polls test; warns govt of dire consequences if it skips democratic path, cautions intelligences against 'oppression'; says no pardon for Fakhruddin, Moeen, few others

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday warned of launching a countrywide mass movement against the government from the polling day if any rigging occurs in the Chittagong City Corporation Election.

The CCC polls will be a real test for the Election Commission to prove its neutrality, said Khaleda, the leader of the opposition, at a mass sit-in organised by BNP on the premises of Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh in the

capital. She said the government must get back to the path to democracy and follow the rule of law; otherwise it will face dire consequences.

"We won't tolerate any more oppression by the government. If attacked, we will retaliate," she said.

The former premier said they would have to go for tough programmes if the government does not change its attitude.

Khaleda warned the intelligence agencies

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## NIMTOLI FIRE Gano Bhaban hosts wedding of 3 victims

HASAN JAHID TUSHER

Three weddings with a difference: they all played out in the shadows of sadness.

The only silver lining was the role of a woman, who was none other than the prime minister.

Sheikh Hasina last night married three girls off at a low-key ceremony at Gano Bhaban. Two of the girls were orphaned by the June 3 building blaze in Old Dhaka. The third lost her mother to the inferno. Her father is fighting for life in hospital.

It was Hasina who came

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina helps the brides wear ornaments as their mother at Gano Bhaban yesterday.

PHOTO: COURTESY



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## We Mourn



Hamidul Haq (71), Director, First Security Islami Bank Limited passed away due to severe cardiac arrest on June 08, 2010 at United Hospital, Dhaka. (Innah.....Rajeeun). Board of Directors, Management, Officers and all Employees of First Security Islami Bank Ltd. have expressed their deep sorrow at the sad demise of Late Hamidul Haq. He hails from Patiya Upazila of Chittagong.

We express our condolence and sympathy to the members of bereaved family and pray to Allah for the salvation of the departed soul.



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