

### 'Foreign firm allowed to work within 10 miles from border'

# Full TV coverage of proceedings demanded

The Jatiya Sangsad resumed its sitting at 11:28 am Wednesday with the Speaker, Abdur Rahman Biswas, in the chair, reports BSS.

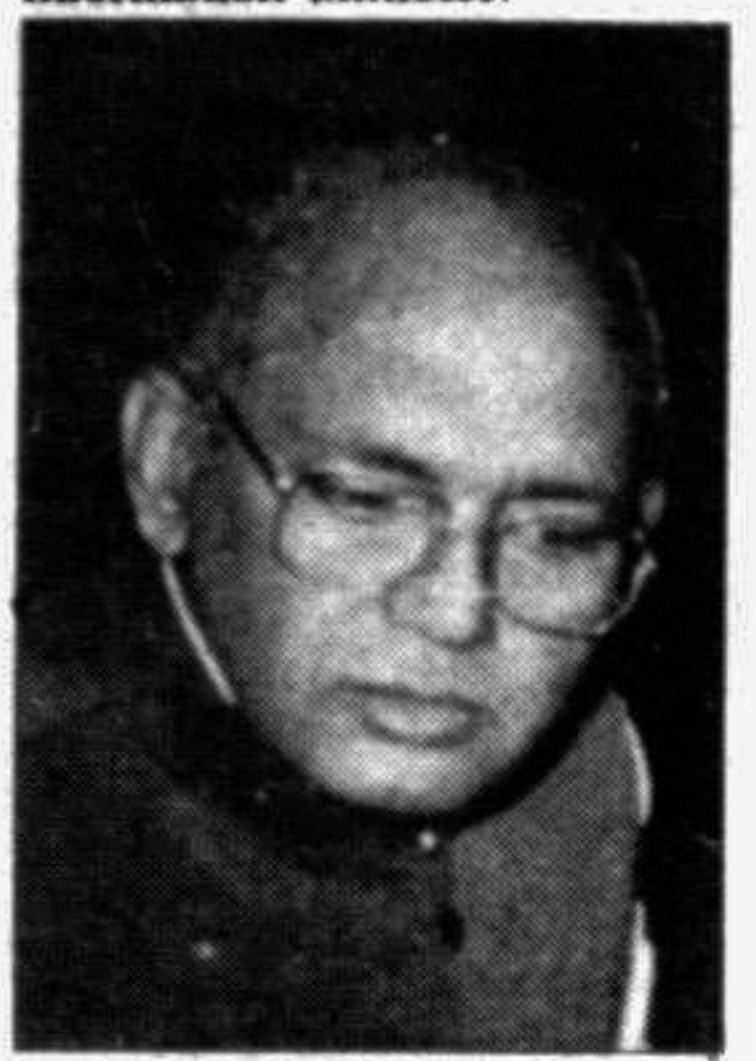
The Speaker switched over to the scheduled question and answer session after recitation from the Holy Quran.

After the question hour, the Speaker disposed of the notices submitted by the members on breach of privilege and call attention on matters of urgent public importance.

## Rashed Mosharruf

On a point of order, Haji Rashed Mosharruf (AL-Jamalpur) said the radio and television while broadcasting and telecasting news on the proceedings of Parliament did not mention the names of the members who asked questions but gave the names of the Ministers' who replied to the questions.

The chair told the member that the matter would be brought to the notice of the Information Minister.



Tofael Ahmed

Taking the floor, Awami League Member Tofael Ahmed proposed for television coverage of the proceedings of the House.

Referring to the telephone bills lying as arrears with the former members of Parliament as mentioned in the question hour earlier, Ahmed said he had not received any such letter from the telephone department in the past. He said he wanted to pay the arrear and said it was not because of his fault that the payment was delayed.

He urged the concerned minister to take steps so that telephone bills of the MPs were sent timely and every month.



Badruddoza

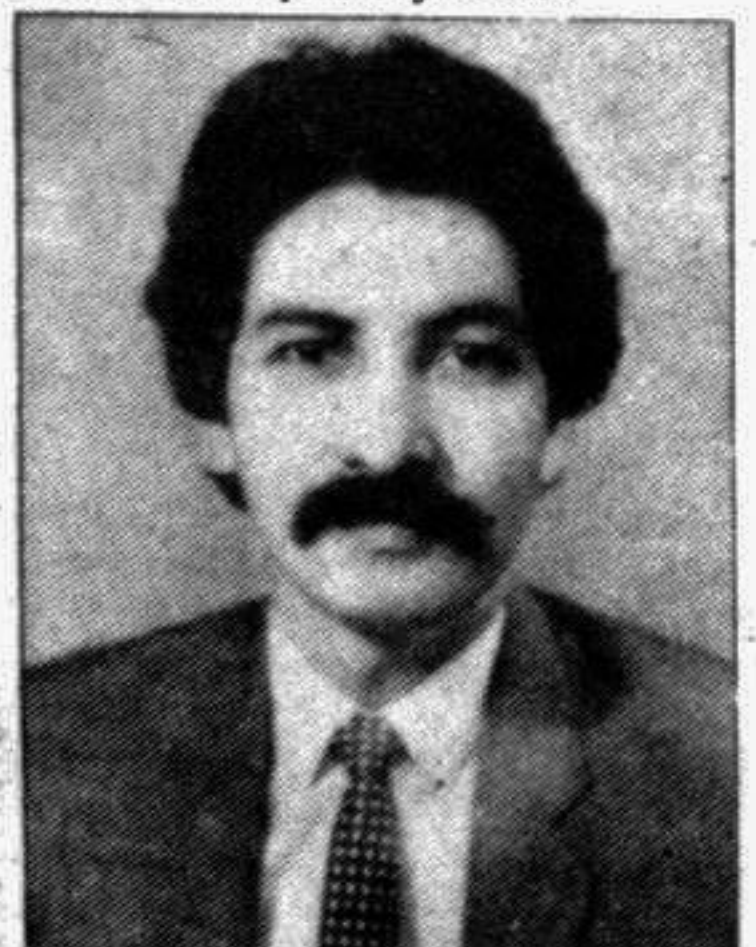
Tofael was supported by the Deputy Leader of the House Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury, who drew the attention of the Telephone Minister to take steps to ensure the regular sending of such bills to the MPs.

On television coverage, Prof Chowdhury said it was a costly matter.

## Mohammad Nasim

Mohammad Nasim, Chief Whip of the Opposition, said on many occasions the names of the members were wrongly quoted by the television.

He pleaded for regular coverage of the proceedings of the House on a priority basis.



Nurul Islam Moni

Independent Member Nurul Islam Moni said he had been away from the country for two months but he had received the bills for that period. He wondered how such bills could come when he had given an application in writing to the telephone department to disconnect his telephone line.

## LK Siddiqi

BNP member LK Siddiqi (Ctg) said Chittagong was now isolated from the rest of the

country. Traffic jam on the Dhaka-Chittagong road had been preventing the entry of the sacrificial cattle there.



Salahuddin Quader

Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury (NDP-Ctg) also referred to the same problem and said according to law no foreign firms should be allowed to work within a radius of 10 miles from the border.

But he added that a foreign firm had been given a contract to work within such radius.

Deputy Leader of the House Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury told the House that a notification was issued about the suspension of road communication between Dhaka and Chittagong Wednesday for repair work but he assured that it would be completed Wednesday and the communication would be restored today (Thursday).

## ASM Feroz

ASM Feroz (AL-Patuakhali) rose to protest against the comments of Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury.

Supporting Feroz, the Chief Whip of the Sangsad Delwar Hossain said although Chowdhury had made the comment in a light vein, it should be expunged or the concern member should withdraw the comment.

Chowdhury said he had made the comment out of his hurt burning.

The Speaker expunged the comment of Chowdhury made earlier.

Awami League Member Tofael Ahmed said he knew why Chowdhury was hurt. He said the cause of Chowdhury's hurt burning was that the contract was given to India instead of Pakistan.

Tofael said Bangladesh had been liberated through the sacrifices of three million lives but today a well circulated daily has pleaded for deleting the word people's republic before the name of Bangladesh.



Shamsuddoha

Replying to a call attention notice on a matter of urgent public importance, the Minister further said the government would also consider the canal digging on voluntary basis and he himself offered to participate in it.

Majid said Bangladesh is a riverine country and our land is alluvial. As a result one side of the river erodes while the other side comes up.

The Minister said if we want to contain the erosion all over the country, our whole budgetary amount would have to be spent on it.

He said projects for saving the big towns from erosion

were taken with the World Bank assistance. Accordingly, he said, projects for saving five towns including Chandpur and Sirajganj had been taken.

Majidul Huq said a project was taken in 1983-84 for removing water logging in Tala upazila under Satkhira district. He said steps had also been taken for saving the sluice gate there under 1989-90 flood rehabilitation programme. The area where the erosion is continuing is outside the project area.

Moving his call attention, notice Sheikh Ansar Ali (Jamaat-Satkhira) said a hat (Melakholar hat) in Tala upazila had been eroded in to the river Kapotakkha. He said the thana office was also on the brink of erosion.

Besides, he said, Tala-Satkhira road had been eroded along with the Melakholar hat into the river. As a result, people had to travel 23 miles in place of seven miles to reach the district headquarters.

lades, which came into existence after supreme sacrifices of lakhs of people, would never become Pakistan again just as a baby could never go back to its mother's womb after birth.

If somebody feels frustrated at the birth of Bangladesh, let him live with that frustration, he added.

Thereafter, the Speaker adjourned that House at 1:11 pm until 4 pm Wednesday.

## Razzak Ali

The House reassembled after lunch break at 4:20 pm with Deputy Speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali the chair.

After disposing of the call attention notice on matter of urgent public importance moved by Sheikh Ansar Ali, the Deputy Speaker gave the floor to State Minister for Finance moving the Finance Bill, 1991 for immediate consideration by the House.

But Sudhangsu Sekhar Haldar took the floor on a point of order and said discussion could not take place under Article 187 of the Constitution and under the relevant rule of the rules of procedure.

He said if the Finance Bill was adopted Wednesday there was no need of discussing the budget at all.

Salahuddin Yusuf said the Finance Minister had placed three budget still today. So, the Minister was aware that the Finance Bill is always placed for adoption as the last item of the budget, Yusuf said.

He, however, said if the government wanted to break the convention "we have nothing to say." He supported the contention of Haldar.

Yusuf also said that it would not be wise to discuss the Finance Bill as members would discuss various provisions of the budget and they may increase or reduce any tax on any item.

Mohammad Asaduzzaman (AL-Magura) supported the contentions of Haldar and Salahuddin Yusuf.

## Delwar Hossain

Quoting Rule 127 of the Rules of Procedure, Chief Whip Khandker Delwar Hossain said here was no law barring discussion of both the Finance Bill and the budget simultaneously. He suggested to begin discussions on the Finance Bill.

Shipping Minister M K Anwar said the Finance Bill was the last stage of the budget, but the discussion on it could continue.

Tofael Ahmed (AL-Bhola) said according to the Rules of Procedure, the Finance Bill could not be discussed Wednesday.

Clarifying the situation which demanded discussion on the Finance Bill, State Minister for Finance Majibur Rahman said if the bill could not be passed by June 30, interest of the people would suffer. He said in the absence of the law, collection of taxes and customs duties would be difficult and many anomalies would be created.

In view of the Eid holidays, he demanded discussion on the bill Wednesday so that it could be passed by June 30.

## Salahuddin Yusuf

Salahuddin Yusuf (AL-Khulna) said "we don't want to create any deadlock" and suggested to follow the convention.

The Deputy Speaker said Finance Bill was a part of the budget and with the introduction of the budget the Finance Bill also had been introduced in the House. He said there was no law that the Finance Bill could not be discussed before or alongwith the budget. There was no bar in the Rules of Procedure and even there was no such instance, he added.

He also said the Finance Bill had been passed, in the committee meeting of the House for its inclusion in the order of the day Wednesday.

## Sudhangsu Sekhar

Interpreting Rule 127 (5) of the Rules of Procedure, Sudhangsu Sekhar Haldar (AL-Pirojpur), said the final proposal of the budget was the Finance Bill.

State Minister for Food Nazmul Huda in his interpretation said proposals of the Finance Bill were part of the budget. Quoting Rule 127(5), he said Finance Bill was not isolated from the financial policy of the government. He said here was no single instance or convention that the bill could not be discussed before the budget.

Pointing to the shortage of time due to Eid holidays, he suggested discussion on the Finance Bill.

When the sitting resumed after the Arak break, State Minister for Finance Majibur Rahman reiterated his demand for discussion on the Finance Bill

in the public interest.

Tofael Ahmed (AL-Bhola) said, after independence, Finance Bill was the last item of every budget, and suggested to follow the convention.

Gonotantree Party leader Suranjit Sengupta said there were many amendments to different acts in the Finance Bill. It would have better if the original copies of the acts intended to be amended had been supplied to the members.

Deputy Speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali said it was decided in the Advisory Committee meeting, held Wednesday morning, that the Finance Bill would be taken up for consideration Wednesday. But Opposition Chief Whip Md Nasim said it was decided in the earlier meeting that Finance Bill would be discussed as the last item of the budget.

Drawing the attention of the members, the Deputy Speaker said in 1974, general discussion on the budget had been taken up on July 4. He urged the members to take it as a precedent that general discussion on budget could be held even after the passage of the Finance Bill.

Reminding the members that the Finance Bill would have to be passed before June 30, he said there was no such law that the budget as a whole would have to be passed.

Explaining the aims and objectives of the Finance Bill and the budget, the Deputy Speaker requested the members to take up consideration of the Finance Bill without wasting any further time accepting the prevailing circumstances.

Accepting the proposal of the Deputy Speaker, Salahuddin Yusuf hoped that the members would be given the opportunity to discuss the cut motion, demands for grant and other related matters.

Haldar thanked the Deputy Speaker saying that he (Deputy Speaker) had understood the points raised by him. He urged the chair to see to it that the appropriation bill was not passed for more than two months.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Abdus Samad Azad, requested the Deputy Speaker to consider his proposal to allow discussion on it even on June 28 (Friday).

He said it was decided in the Advisory Committee meeting that the appropriation

bill would be passed for two months only. But Chief Whip Khandker Delwar Hossain said no decision as such was taken in the meeting of Advisory Committee.

## Mujibur Rahman

Thereafter, the State Minister for Finance, Mujibur Rahman, moved the Finance Bill, 1991, for consideration of the House. The Finance Bill seeks to execute the financial proposals and amend certain acts.

## Moksud Ibne Aziz

Moving his amendment to send the bill for eliciting public opinion, Moksud Ibne Aziz (JP-Sylhet) said if the Finance Bill was passed in its present form there would be no purpose to hold discussions on the budget.

He said he expected that the national budget would be presented before the Sangsad by an elected Finance Minister. Unfortunately the budget was presented by a man who was defeated in two constituencies in the last general election.

## Ruhul Quddus

Shah Md Ruhul Quddus (Jamaat-Khulna) said discipline in the economic sector would be established if smuggling along the border was curbed effectively. The government should make all-out efforts to stop this scourge for strengthening the national economy.

He expressed his grave concern over the explosive situation on the campuses all over the country. The country could not make any stride if terrorism continued on the campus and if corruption was not checked.

The Jamaat member from Khulna said there had been slight improvement in the economic management under the present government. This was manifested in the aid consortium meeting held in Paris, he added.

## Abul Kalam Azad

Speaking next, Abul Kalam Azad (AL-Jamalpur) said raising the exemption limit of wealth tax to Taka 50 lakh from the existing 25 lakh would serve the richer section of the society.

He said the opening of Income Tax offices at the upazila level would further make the administration top-heavy entailing more expenditures for

the government. He said when the scope for internal resource mobilisation was limited and the dependence on foreign assistance was increasing steps for reducing the expenditures should be the prime aim. He, however, said if opening of offices was needed it can be done at the zonal levels only.

Turning to the introduction of the VAT he said "we have so far heard about VAT-69 but now we see VAT-91." He said VAT which is unknown to the commonman will be a duel tax.

Azad was also critical about the reduction of travel tax which he said would help the rich. He said Finance Bill should be sent to elicit public opinion before its passage.

## Sakhawat Hossain

Defending his motion in favour of sending the Finance Bill for eliciting public opinion, Sakhawat Hossain (Jamaat-Jessore) said no care was taken to protect the interest of the poor while proposing taxes in the budget. He said all efforts should be directed to ward rooting out corruption which had crept into all levels of society.

Sakhawat Hossain said only the rule by the Quranic injunctions and Islamic teachings can take the country to the path of progress and prosperity.

Speaking next, Principal M M Nazrul Islam (AL-Bhola) said sectors like education, health, flood control, industries and energy did not receive the expected budgetary allocations.

He said the introduction of Value Added Tax (VAT) in an under-developed country like ours would not be helpful.

## Principal Nazrul Islam

Resuming his speech after the Maghreb prayer, Principal Nazrul Islam said the proposal for compulsory purchase of bonds equivalent to 20 per cent profit of the companies would affect growth of business and the businessmen would try to conceal their real profit.

Tofael Ahmed (AL-Bhola) criticised the proposals for increasing tax on consumer items like fertilizers, gas, soybean oil and ball point pens and demanded withdrawal of these taxes. He also demanded restoration of subsidy on agricultural inputs and reduction on price of diesel oil to help boost agricultural production.

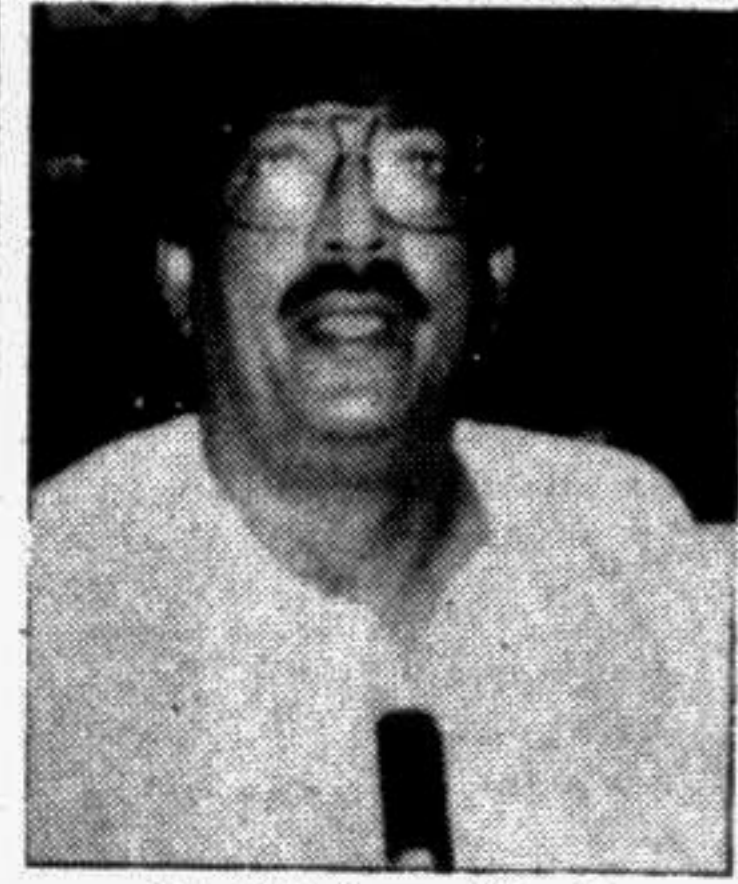
Referring to reduction of tax on imported white cement and air coolers, he said this would not benefit the common people.

Criticising the government for deterioration of law and order situation, he said the we want improvement including the situation in Chittagong University.

Pointing to corruption in the Education Department, he said this should be stopped to save the education system from ruination. He said education institutions in the cyclone affected areas were not reconstructed as yet.

Tofael said the budget was a prescription of the World Bank, IMF and other aid giving agencies which would not help economic improvement of the people.

Terminating the last nine years as an economy of looting he said the budget could not come out of this trend. He said supremacy of the politicians on bureaucrats should be established to improve the situation.



Shahjahan Siraj

Shahjahan Siraj (JSD-Straj) described the budget as "stereotyped" and framed to benefit a small section of the agents of the capitalists.

He said while preparing the budget, the Finance Minister did not take into consideration the conditions of the landless people.

Criticising withdrawal of subsidy on Agriculture, Siraj said the rich farmers of America enjoy subsidy, while the poor farmers of Bangladesh are going to be deprived of the subsidy because of the measures being proposed in the budget. He said unless farmers are supported through extension of subsidy (farm input) production would not rise.

Siraj questioned the authority of the government to impose new taxes when it cannot contain price hike. He criticised the imposition of new tax on refrigerator used by Middle class, and pointed out that duty has been reduced on air conditioner used by the af-

fluent.

He also criticised increase in duty on soybean oil and ball point pen, while relief was given to white cement and car.



Suranjit Sengupta

Suranjit Sengupta (GP-Sylhet), called for a national consensus on economic issues.

Describing the budget as a document prepared as per the donor's dictation, Sengupta said economy would flourish only if production was boosted and equitable distribution ensured.

Sengupta criticised raising the price of soybean oil, ball pen and other articles used by the commoners.

He said since farmers are the mainstream of our economy, every effort should be taken to support them so that they feel encouraged to grow more adding to the GDP. He opined that the budget lacked in direction for the promotion of agriculture and industry.

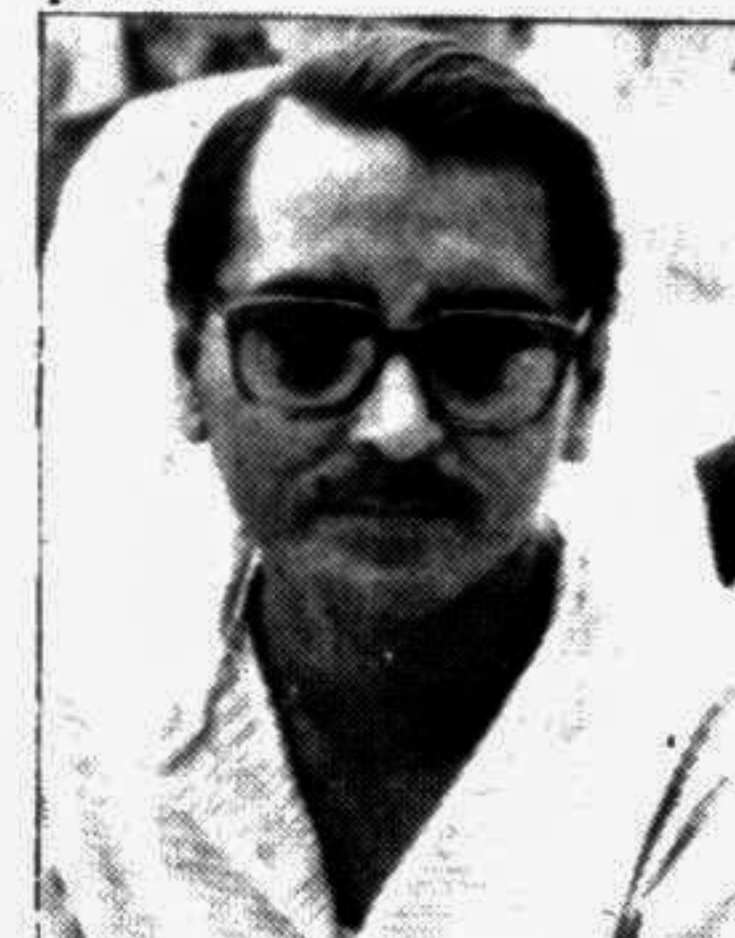
He said indirect tax causes price hike for which the common people have to pay dearly.

Sengupta called upon the Treasury Bench to come forward with an open mind to formulate a policy which would unify the nation for attaining economic growth.

Rashed Khan Memon (WP-Barisal) said the people had expected that the Finance Minister would propose some measure for punishing those who had embezzled Taka 40,000 crore and try to recover the money. But they had been disappointed that no measures were proposed in this respect.

Memon said the Finance Minister had also disheartened the people as he failed to spellout any measure to recover the time-barred loans from defaulting industrialists. He said he understood the difficulties of the Finance Minister because he was under pressure from some quarters.

Criticising the budgetary provisions, Memon alleged that the Finance Minister had followed the foot-steps of autocrat Ershad government in framing the budget. He said we did not launch the movement against any persons, like Ershad, but we were against his policies.



Rashed Khan Memon

Refuting the Finance Minister's contention that out of Taka 700 crore tax proposals, there would be new tax of only Taka 250 crore, Memon said in fact the taxes would be realised from the common man directly or indirectly. He said the Finance Minister had proposed some small tax rebates on one hand and on the other hand he had taken away more.

Criticising the government for increasing tax on essential items used by the common people, Memon said the items under VAT would hit them hard. He suggested to impose VAT on the basis of different slabs as is done in the neighbouring India and other countries.

Referring to the savings, Memon said though the Finance Minister had pleaded for encouraging savings in fact it would be invested in land and unproductive ways. He said there was no logic in reducing tax on white cement and imposing tax on aluminium. He pleaded for withdrawal of taxes on power, gas, paper, ball pen and other essentials.

Memon urged the government to form a Parliamentary standing committee on budget so that the opposition could play a vital role in framing the national budget.

The Deputy Speaker, Sheikh Razzak Ali, adjourned the House at 8:53 pm to meet at 10 am tomorrow.

## Canal digging being considered

Majidul Huq, Irrigation, Water Development and Flood Control Minister, told the Jatiya Sangsad Wednesday that he had already directed the concerned experts of the Water Development Board to make a study on the problem of erosion in the river Kapotakkha, reports BSS.

Replying to a call attention notice on a matter of urgent public importance, the Minister further said the government would also consider the canal digging on voluntary basis and he himself offered to participate in it.

Majid said Bangladesh is a riverine country and our land is alluvial. As a result one side of the river erodes while the other side comes up.

The Minister said if we want to contain the erosion all over the country, our whole budgetary amount would have to be spent on it.

He said projects for saving the big towns from erosion

## Flood situation deteriorates: vast areas submerged

Country's overall flood situation aggravated as onrush of water and heavy rains submerged vast areas and homesteads in Feni, Sirajganj and Bogra districts Wednesday, reports UNB.

Reports reaching in Dhaka say more than 2 lakh people have been affected and nearly 20,000 acre of standing crops damaged by the gushing water of the Muhuri.

Hilly waters are pouring in through the breaches on Muhuri river embankment at Jaipur, Ratanpur and Goni-amora, flooding Purshuram, Chhagalnaiya and parts of Sadar upazilas.

Chhagalnaiya UNO Zafar Sadek Chowdhury told this agency, water had entered houses in Pathannager, Amjadhat, Mahamaya, Sadar, Radhanagar and Gopal unions.

In Sirajganj, the situation took a serious turn Wednesday with 40,000 people of 10 villages awaiting evacuation from their inundated homesteads, officials and villagers said.

## 'Proposed budget won't benefit poor people'

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Muslim League on Tuesday criticising the proposed budget said it would not benefit the peasants, labourers and workers.

The League told this at a press conference held on Tuesday at the Jatiya Press Club. M A Hannan, Convenor, Central Convening Committee of the League read out a written statement on behalf of the party.

Hannan said the government had withdrawn subsidies on agricultural materials and imposed new taxes when the farmers in the southern part of the country had just suffered one of the severest cyclones of the century.

He demanded reduction in prices of diesel saying it was largely used for irrigation and the farmers will be hard hit if the prices are not refixed.

He praised the government for highest allocation in educational sector but said the pro-

posed budget had failed to solve the job crisis. Taxes on soybean oil, soft drinks, condensed milk, powdered milk, ball pen, refrigerator and fridges should be withdrawn because, according to him these are not luxury items.

He further pointed out this budget would not improve the living standard of people of the country as it was, what he said, prescribed by donor countries. Eighty six per cent of the budget is dependent on foreign assistance, he added.

Hannan said Finance Minister had followed "Ershad style budget" which he had criticised during Ershad period.

Stressing the need for helping industries flourish he said this type of budget would not encourage the investors. The league also urged the government to revise the budget in the greater interest of the people.

## SAARC FMs meet July 3

The ninth session of the SAARC Council of Ministers will be held in Male on July 3 and 4, according to official sources in Dhaka Wednesday, reports BSS.

Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman will lead the Bangladesh delegation to the meeting.

The Foreign Minister, will be accompanied by Additional Foreign Secretary Reaz Rahman and Director-General (SAARC) Shamsheer M Chowdhury.

## Kader Siddiqi's release demanded

Eight hundred and nine students of the Engineering University Wednesday demanded immediate release of valiant freedom fighter Kader Siddiqi, Bir Uttam, reports BSS.

The students, in a joint statement, also demanded the withdrawal of the "false case" against Siddiqi.

His arrest was the outcome of a deep conspiracy

already eroded half of the Belkuchi thana building during the last few days and threatened the embankment at Sonali Bazar and Meghal.

In Bogra district, the Jamuna eroded a vast tract of land in Sarikandi and Dhunat upazilas and rain waters entering through the damaged embankment has flooded Adbaria, Kamalpur, Tekla, Magura and Chadobaisa villages of the two upazilas.

An acute crisis of fuel and

fodder is prevailing in the affected areas.

Meanwhile, the Flood Forecasting Centre in Dhaka informed that river Surma registered rise by 5 cm at Sylhet while it receded by 4 cm at Sunamganj, but it was flowing 31 cm above danger level at the "latter point Wednesday morning.

The Kushiara flowing 20cm above its flood mark at Sheola remained steady during the last 24 hours during which river Gunti in Comilla marked slight fall and was just one cm above the danger level.

A Centre source said the Surma, both at Sylhet and Sunamganj, the Kushiara at Sheola are likely to rise while the Manu at Moulvibazar and the Khowai at Habiganj are likely to fall during the next 24 hours.

The Gunti is likely to fall further while the Brahmaputra and the Ganges will continue to record considerable rise during the period, the Centre forecast.

The flood situation in greater Sylhet district may not improve.