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## JS passes Finance Bill '98

The Jatiya Sangsad last night passed the Finance Bill, 1998, reports UNB.

The bill comes into force from July 1.

Before the bill was passed by voice vote, Finance Minister SAMS Kibria amended several of his tax proposals, withdrawing some and reducing few others.

The Finance Minister reduced 7 per cent income tax instead of 10 per cent on the band roll of bidi.

Other amendments made by the Finance Minister are:

Tax at source on the deed value of land sale in urban areas has been re-fixed at 7 per cent instead of proposed 9 per cent.

Duty on raw materials of soap industry has been re-fixed at 25 per cent against the proposed 40 per cent.

Duty on raw materials for

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## Budget reflects leadership crisis: B Chy

Deputy Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury yesterday said the country is facing crisis of leadership in every sector, reports UNB.

Taking part in the budget discussion, he said: "It is true that we could not form a government having all the leadership quality... the budget is the true reflection of that."

Prof B Chy regretted that the budget "could not provide anything that can help the country to stand on its own feet."

He said: "Country belongs to everyone, both to the government and the opposition...we

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## JP stages walkout

For the first time, Jatiya Party staged a walkout from Parliament yesterday protesting the Chair's decision not to allow Ershad to speak on personal explanation, reports UNB.

The walkout came after Deputy Speaker Abdul Hamid, who was in the chair, did not give the floor to Ershad for replying to an allegation made against him by Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed.

Tofael alleged that the Ershad government was involved in corruption related to KAFCO deal.

The attitude of the chair

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## Ban on function at Ramna Green, batamul and Shatayu Angan

The government has imposed restriction on holding of function at city's Ramna Green, including Ramna Batamul and Shatayu Angan from next month, reports UNB.

Only traditional functions like Pahela Baishakh and important government programmes will remain out of purview of the restriction, said an official announcement yesterday.

It was decided at a meeting of Ramna Park Development and Advisory Committee, formed by Housing and Works Ministry, in view of maintaining scenic beauty, protecting congenial atmosphere and saving the trees of the park.

## Inside Today Article

**Jobless Growth in the Public Sector**  
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 by Shahed Latif

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## Focus

**We have to go for combined use of ground and surface water: MD, WASA**  
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## Budget to be passed today Tax proposals on some items revised

By Staff Correspondent

Finance Minister SAMS Kibria yesterday proposed reduction of duties and taxes on some items and enhancement on some others in the budget for fiscal 1998-99, accommodating a large portion of the demands made by the business community.

If these new proposals are given a go-ahead by the Jatiya Sangsad, this would mean a revenue loss of about Tk 38 crore. But Kibria said the revenue target would remain unchanged as the loss would be made-up by "improving the tax administration and the tax realisation process."

On the last day of budget discussion in the Parliament yesterday, Treasury Bench lawmakers praised the proposed budget for taking positive steps in regard to socio-economic uplift while legislators from the Opposition Bench criticised the budget for not having any vision.

The proposed budget for fiscal 1998-99 is scheduled to be passed today. The Jatiya Sangsad session is scheduled to resume at 10 am today.

The items on which import duties have been proposed to be reduced are: raw materials for noodle soap to 25 per cent from 40 per cent, raw materials for cycle tyres to 15 per cent from 25 per cent, operation table and dental surgery chair to 7.5 per

cent from 15 per cent, phenolic resin used for making electrical switches to the current rate of 7.5 per cent from the proposed 15 per cent.

He also proposed to increase the depreciation rate of reconditioned cars from 40 per cent to 50 per cent. Along with this, he proposed a new reduction of supplementary duty to 60 per cent from 80 per cent on cars and jeeps of 1300 cc to 1600 cc, and to 80 per cent from 100 per cent on 1600 cc to 1800 cc cars. These, he said, would mean a Tk 28.70 crore revenue loss.

Supplementary duty on air conditioners have been reduced to 25 per cent from the proposed

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## Govt has revitalised economy: Hasina

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday defended the proposed national budget for 1998-99 saying that it had given special thrust on social development and raising the standard of living of the people.

"I thank the Finance Minister for pulling up an economy that had already been on the verge of collapse," said Hasina, also Leader of the House, while taking part in discussion on the proposed budget in the Jatiya Sangsad last night.

Coming down heavily on the previous BNP government for 'ruination of the national economy' the Prime Minister said that it was a difficult task for her government to revitalise the economy within a short span of two years.

Sheikh Hasina alleged that the BNP government used to prepare budgets in a manner so

suit interests of businessmen within the party and putting tax-burden on the common man.

Noting the absence of Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad Begum Khaleda Zia from the House on the last day of budget discussion, Hasina said, "It is unfortunate that the Opposition Leader is not present today. I would be delighted if she would take part in the discussion."

Giving a resume of various positive features of the proposed budget, the Prime Minister shifted her focus on other socio-political developments in the country in her 40-minute deliberation.

She expressed her doubt over the 'ever increasing number of cases' being filed relating to repression on women and said, in

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## Holding of offices by Dr Alauddin, Swapan challenged

By Staff Correspondent

A writ petition challenging the holding of the offices of State Minister and Deputy Minister by Dr Mohammad Alauddin and Hasibur Rahman Swapan was filed with the High Court yesterday, reports UNB.

The High Court bench comprising Justice M Mahmudur Rahman and Mozammel Hossain adjourned the hearing till Sunday and the petition is expected to be taken up for preliminary hearing on the question of issuance of Rule on the same day.

Advocate Majedul Hoque filed the writ petition.

Moving the petition, Barrister A Hasib and Advocate Mozammel Hossain said under what authority of the law the two ministers, who were MPs of Opposition BNP, are sitting in their offices.

It was contended in the writ petition that the two ministers were wrongfully appointed and

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## Accord on Dhaka-Calcutta direct bus service

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh and India yesterday decided to open direct bus service between Dhaka and Calcutta, paving the way for the first non-stop transit of passengers between the two countries.

At official talks held in the capital, the two sides also agreed to look into measures to improve economic ties, correct Bangladesh's trade deficit with India and set early dates for holding meetings of the Joint Economic Commission (JEC), the Joint Rivers Commission (JRC) and the Joint Wing Group (JWG).

This was disclosed to newsmen separately by Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad, Foreign Secretary Mustafizur Rahman and visiting Indian External Affairs Secretary K Raghunath after the official talks.

The Indian side also proposed that Bangladesh sell facilities in the service sector by providing scope for more transit facilities and port facilities to reduce the trade imbalance.

The two sides also discussed extradition of ULFA leader Anup Chetia, from Bangladesh, cross-border insurgency and several other issues.

The talks between the two foreign secretaries were held for

nearly two hours at the State Guest House Padma and was followed by discussions at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Indian foreign secretary also called on Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad.

Raghunath said, "We have agreed to start Dhaka-Calcutta bus service." Asked if his country had insisted on an umbrella agreement that would include transit of cargo vehicles, he replied, "We have been given the understanding that it would be considered later."

**SOFA: 'Dhaka to go ahead with its own policy'**

By Staff Correspondent

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad yesterday said that Bangladesh will take its own decision on signing the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) with the US.

Responding to a question if India is pressuring Bangladesh not to sign SOFA, as reported in a section of the press, Samad replied, "We will go ahead with our own policy. We will go ahead with our own thinking."

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Foreign secretary Mostafizur Rahman said that for the time being, it was not possible to extend the bus service beyond Calcutta, upto Ajmeer, considered earlier, due to problems in getting permission from Indian provinces. The issue of passage of cargo vehicles will be considered later, he said.

Asked to comment on the discussion with Bangladesh leaders, the Indian External Affairs secretary said, "Among other things, we put across the table the points of view of the Indian government. All matters regarding bilateral issues have been settled to our satisfaction."

Responding to a query, the Indian Secretary said his country did not favour any third party involvement in its 'affairs' with Pakistan. He said India shares views with Bangladesh for a comprehensive non-discriminatory nuclear-free world.

"Delhi's position is known to all, and was also shared by the Bangladesh Prime Minister during her recent visit to Delhi," Raghunath said.

Later, Foreign Secretary Mostafizur Rahman, in a press briefing said, India responded positively to Bangladesh's proposals for reducing the huge

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## Occidental preparing to drill Moulvibazar-2 well

From Iqbal Siddiquee

SYLHET, June 29: US company Occidental has started preliminary work for drilling a new exploration well named "Moulvibazar-2" at Kalachhara, a remote area in Srimangal thana.

The company has selected the location which is about four kilometres off the abandoned well "Moulvibazar-1" at Magurchhara, where an explosion took place in the early hours of June 15 last year.

A source in the company told The Daily Star that the preparatory work has started with a view to starting the drilling by the end of current year.

Work on the 5.75 kilometre approach road from the Dhaka-Sylhet highway has already begun. For establishing the well base, the Deputy Commissioner of Moulvibazar has already acquired three acres of land from

the Majdibee Tea Estate, owned by the British Company Duncan Brothers.

After construction of the approach road, the company will start construction of the drilling pad, the source said.

Meanwhile, officials of the company are facing obstacles from the different local groups. Some organised and leading people of the area are trying to influence the company officials for getting the sub-contracts for the huge construction and material supply in the site. The preliminary expenditure for the purpose would be about Tk 15 crore, the source added.

The company is optimistic about finding a good reserve of gas in the well at Kalachhara, which also falls in the same structure as that in Magurchhara. Both the wells are located in Block-14.

Occidental started drilling its first exploration well at

Magurchhara in the Komolganj thana of Moulvibazar district on June 4 last year. The well was declared abandoned by the company on January 18 this year.

In addition, the company began drilling an exploration well at Dighalbak on the bank of the river Bibiana in the remote village of Nabiganj thana under Habiganj district in the first week of December last year. It has already struck four gas zones at a depth of 3900 metres. The company will soon close down its drilling rig used there as the flare test of gas in the well has been completed, the source said, adding that the rig will be sent to the Kalachhara site after completion of the preparatory work there.

The US company is also preparing to drill a well at 'Jalalabad-2' near Sylhet town shortly, the source added.



Mexican forward Luis Hernandez (L) is challenged by German defender Thomas Helmer during their World Cup second round match yesterday. —AFP photo

## Germany in quarter finals

MONTEPELLIER (France), June 29: Oliver Bierhoff put home a 12-meter header in the 86th minute as Germany rallied from 1-0 down in the last 15 minutes to beat Mexico 2-1 today and advance to the quarter-finals of the World Cup, reports AP.

Bierhoff outleaped defender Raul Lara for ULF Kirsten's right-wing cross to score his third goal of the tournament. Germany will play either Croatia or Romania on Saturday in Lyon.

Mexico had been on pace to pull the biggest upset of the France 98 until Juergen Klinsmann, who had been threatening to score all game, capitalised on a careless miscue by Lara to tie the game in the 75th minute.

When midfielder Dietmar Hamann's long cross bounded between Lara's feet, Klinsmann hustled to beat goalkeeper Jorge Campos to the ball with a sliding shot. The German captain also has three goals in the tournament.



name. Mexico took its lead less than two minutes after halftime on Luis Hernandez' fourth Cup goal. 'El Matador' took Cuauhtemoc Blanco's pass in the box and moved deftly to the right to avoid midfielder Michael Tarnat and defender Christian Worns before beating goalkeeper Andreas Koepke from eight meters.

Mexico, which had never won a World Cup game in Europe before a 3-1 first-round victory over South Korea in its France 98 opener, easily could have made it 2-0 in the 62nd minute.

Substitute Jesus Arellano made a marvelous 50-meter run only to have his shot saved off the post by a diving Koepke.

Hernandez, six meters from the goal without a defender any-

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**WORLD CUP '98**

**KICK-OFF**

**Today's matches**

Romania vs Croatia, 8:30pm BST

Argentina vs England, 1:00am BST

## Dutch move ahead

TOULOUSE, June 29: A last minute goal by Edgar Davids gave the Netherlands a dramatic 2-1 win over Yugoslavia in their World Cup Second Round match today, reports Reuters.

The game looked destined for extra time until Davids lashed home the winner from the edge of the area.

The shot seemed to take a slight deflection but it was just reward as the Dutch had made most of the chances.

They now meet Argentina or England in the quarter-finals in Marseille on Saturday.

Dennis Bergkamp had put the Dutch ahead in the 38th minute but the Yugoslavs equalised three minutes into the second half when Slobodan Komljenovic headed home from close in after a free-kick.

The Yugoslavs missed a penalty three minutes later, Predrag Mijatovic blasting his shot against the bar.

What had been a dull game was transformed into a thrilling spectacle in the second half, with both sides making gilt-edged chances.

Dutch striker Phillip Cocu could easily have scored in the

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Foreign delegates visiting brothel at Kandupatty attacked

By Special Correspondent

A group of people attacked some delegates attending the regional conference on "organising against sexual exploitation in the Asian region," when they went to visit the now defunct Kandupatty brothel yesterday evening.

The delegates from Indonesia, Philippines, China, Japan, Vietnam, Cambodia, India and Sri Lanka were accompanied by advocate Sigma Huda, President

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## JOINT NOTICE

We wish to advise the Trade, Distributors, Suppliers and you, our Loyal Consumers in Bangladesh that effective from the 23rd June 1998 the direct sales and distribution activities of Transcom Limited on behalf of Nestlé, and the range of local and imported products will pass to Nestlé Bangladesh Limited.

Nestlé Bangladesh Limited is now a wholly owned subsidiary of Nestlé S.A. Switzerland.

The Board of Nestlé Bangladesh Limited is privileged and proud to announce that, on the specific request of the Board of Directors of Nestlé S.A. Switzerland, the Chairman of Transcom Limited, Mr. Latifur Rahman has accepted the appointment as Chairman of Nestlé Bangladesh Limited. Mr. Rahman will continue to provide guidance and direction to Nestlé Bangladesh Limited through his valued and long association with the parent company in Switzerland.

Collectively, we wish to thank all members of the business community and consumers for their loyalty and support over the years.

Nestlé Bangladesh Limited looks forward to the continuous association and prosperity in the years ahead as both a producer of products and services to the community of Bangladesh.

**Nestlé Bangladesh Limited**