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## Saifur softens stance

### Some tax proposals may be revised after JS discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman has softened his stance on tax proposals in the budget for next fiscal and indicated he might go for some changes after thorough discussion in the Jatiya Sangsad.

"I do not think what I have proposed is absolutely correct. It is also not correct that everything I proposed is bad. It is only natural that I would make changes after discussions in the parliament because I am a democrat," Saifur Rahman said at a discussion on the proposed budget yesterday.

"If I do not opt for changes, the whole discussion (in parliament) will prove a futile exercise," he observed.

A faction of the Jatiya Party (JP) led by Anwar Hossain Monju MP organised the discussion, held at Hotel Sheraton in the city.

The finance minister said he proposed to ban import of reconditioned vehicles as many people complained to him that junks are being brought into the country in the name of reconditioned vehicles.

"I know middle income people want to buy car. And particularly when there is a law and order situation, people want to send their children to school in car. Many people might not be able to buy new cars even after duty

reduction," Saifur said.

He defended his other tax proposals that will put extra burden on the lower and middle income people. If he cuts duty on any item, then he would have to increase it on another, noted. "If I do not do this, then I will have to go for deficit financing."

The finance minister has already withdrawn his proposal for incased duty on soyabean oil.

On the proposal to lower the income tax exemption limit to Tk 75,000 from Tk 100,000, he said, "Not that we (government) will earn a fat amount by this measure, but we want to give a signal that we want to mobilise more resources for self sufficiency."

Saifur went on, "People who earn more than Tk 75,000 enjoy various services from the state. So, what is wrong if they are brought under tax net."

He however observed, "No finance minister wants to tax people and become unpopular through tax proposals. But my philosophy is that I want to give a direction for the future benefit of the nation."

Chaired by Anwar Hossain Monju, the discussion was also addressed by Planning Commission Member Dr Momtazuddin Ahmed, Pubali Bank

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## Itchy Italy Korea's kill

REUTERS, Taejon

Ahn Jung-hwan headed a golden goal winner to put co-hosts South Korea into the quarter-finals of the World Cup with a 2-1 win over 10-man Italy after one of the most dramatic matches of the tournament.

With a penalty shootout looming, Ahn, who had missed a penalty after five minutes of normal time, leapt high to glance in the 116th minute winner after three-times champions Italy had looked likely winners for much of the match.

Two minutes from the end of regular time, the raucous crowd of 39,000 had been sent into raptures when Seol Ki-hyeon latched on to a Christian Panucci error to rap the ball into the right-hand bottom corner to equalise an 18th minute Christian Vieri goal.

In 1966, Italy lost 1-0 to North Korea and 36 years later the Azzurri were again shaken to their foundations by a Korean team.

"I'm very, very happy. I'm very satisfied," said Korean coach Guus Hiddink whose team now play Spain on Saturday. "They are one of the superpowers of football. I think this is unique what the Korean players have done so far."

The defeat was pure agony for Italy who had Francesco Totti controversially sent off for diving in extra time and also had a Damiano Tommasi goal disallowed for offside which looked a doubtful decision by Ecuadorian referee Byron Moreno.

In Italy, fans were convinced the match was fixed and one minister said the refereeing had been "absolutely scandalous" but Italian coach Giovanni Trapattoni refused to be drawn on the subject.

He said only: "The winners should have been Italy. We had far, far more chances -- but Korea showed heart."

"I'd say we're going out with our heads held high but with a lot to be bitter about."

Italy are the latest fancied former



PHOTO: AFP

Swimming in seventh heaven...the entire South Korean squad dives across the pitch to celebrate their stunning victory over favourites Italy in Daejeon yesterday.

## New Chief Justice takes oath

UNB, Dhaka

President A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury yesterday administered the oath of office to the newly appointed Chief Justice Mainur Reza Chowdhury.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, Speaker Barrister Jamiruddin Sircar, former Chief Justice (CJ) A T M Afzal, former CJ Mostafa Kamal, former CJ and Chief Advisor (CA) to the caretaker government (CG) Justice Habibur Rahman, former CJ and chief adviser to the caretaker government Justice Latifur Rahman and the immediate past CJ Mahmudul Amin Chowdhury attended the oath taking ceremony.

Besides, cabinet ministers, advisors to the Prime Minister, Judges of the Appellate and High Court divisions of Bangladesh Supreme Court, Principal Secretary to the government, MPs, Attorney General, secretaries to the government and senior lawyers of the country were present.

Cabinet Secretary Dr Saadat Hossain conducted the oath-taking ceremony held at the Darbar Hall of

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## Suicide bomber kills 19 on Israeli bus

### Tel Aviv decides to retaliate

AFP, Jerusalem

A Palestinian blew himself up on a bus here early yesterday, killing 19 other passengers and threatening to unleash a fresh cycle of bloodshed as Washington readied a new strategy for Middle East peace.

Police said some 50 people were wounded in the attack on a rush-hour bus in southern Jerusalem carrying commuters and schoolchildren. At least five were reported in serious condition, including four under the age of 18.

Israeli officials vowed to retaliate for the deadliest suicide attack since the March 27 "Passover Massacre" that claimed 29 lives at a holiday feast in the northern coastal city of Netanya.

The suicide bomber in a red jumper managed to sneak through a net of Israeli police on high alert and board the bus travelling from the Jewish settlement of Gilo on Jerusalem's southern outskirts

toward the city centre.

The blast went off just after he clambered aboard at a bus stop across from the Arab neighbourhood of Beit Safafa. It blew the vehicle across the road and left it a charred wreck with a huge hole in its roof.

The attack was claimed by the armed wing of the radical Palestinian group Hamas by a caller who named the bomber as Mohammed al-Ghul, 23, originally from the northern West Bank refugee camp of Al-Faraja.

Israeli police later arrested one of his six brothers, Iyad al-Ghul, 28, a nurse at Saint John's eye hospital in east Jerusalem, relatives and colleagues said.

Jerusalem police chief Micky Levy said his men were hunting for other Palestinians believed to be preparing suicide attacks in the city, where police had been placed on high alert.

In an unprecedented move for

him, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon personally inspected the damage from the second suicide bombing in Israel in a week and the first in Jerusalem in more than two months.

With US President George W Bush preparing to announce his blueprint for ending the nearly 21-month-old conflict, Sharon decisively rejected the idea being floated to declare at least a provisional Palestinian state.

"A Palestinian state? It would be interesting to know what kind of Palestinian state they are talking about," bellowed the headline leader, surrounded by dozens of bodyguards and police.

"What we are seeing today is the continuation of Palestinian terrorism, and we must fight this terrorism and that is what we are doing."

Sharon and Defence Minister

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## No gas export means no funds from developers

### Minister discloses at a seminar in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country's proven gas reserve is too little to consider export but a group of people is creating confusion regarding the reserve knowingly or unknowingly, eminent geologists told a seminar yesterday.

Presently, the proven gas reserve is estimated at about 7 TCF while the proven plus probable reserve is 11.5 TCF, they said. Probable reserve is not a bankable asset and should not be traded, they added.

The mean undiscovered gas resource is 32.1 TCF, according to the United States Geological Survey (USGS). It is 41.6 TCF as per estimates by the Norwegian Petroleum Directorate (NPD).

Undiscovered gas resource

estimate is a scientifically engineered imaginative exercise which does not give any scope for trade, the experts said.

The seminar on 'Gas Reserve in Bangladesh' organised jointly by the Department of Geology, Dhaka University, the Department of Geology & Mining, Rajshahi University and the Department of Geological Sciences, Jahangirnagar University, was held at the Business Studies Faculty auditorium at the DU in the city.

State Minister for Energy and Mineral Resources A K M Mosharrar Hossain spoke at the inaugural session as chief guest while DU Vice-Chancellor Prof Anwarullah Chowdhury, JU VC Prof Jasim Uddin Ahmad and DU Treasurer Prof M

Rashidul Hassan attended as special guests.

Prof M Shafiqul Alam, Chairman of RU Department of Geology & Mining and Prof A S M Woobaid Ullah, Chairman of DU Department of Geology also spoke at the inaugural session.

The state minister said there no pressure from any country to export gas but 'we have other types of pressure.' Elaborating, he said, nobody wants to finance gas development projects if gas is not exported.

The government is yet to take any decision to export gas. A decision will be taken after getting reports of the two gas committees, he said.

"Instead of politics, economic

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## No bowing, say salaam or adab

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Rules of Procedure has recommended an end to the tradition of bowing to the Chair while entering or leaving the House and instead, introduction of religious greetings.

Parliament sources said, the committee at a meeting yesterday decided to take out the word "(a member shall) bow" from the rule 267 (1) of the Rules of Procedure and suggested replacing it with the MPs' respective religious custom such as *Assalamu Alaikum* for Muslims, *Adab* for Hindus or any such rituals followed by the other religious communities.

Article 267 of the Rules of Procedure deals with the rules to be observed by lawmakers while in the House. The Article 267 (1) reads, "Whilst the House is sitting a member shall bow to the Chair while entering or leaving the House, also when taking or leaving his seat."

Delwar Hossain Sayeedi of

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## Sayonara Nippon

REUTERS, Miyagi

Turkey ended Japan's World Cup party here yesterday after defeating the co-hosts 1-0 in pouring rain to reach the quarter-finals for the first time.

Japan's hopes fizzled out in the rain against a well-organised but unspectacular Turkish team, who reached the quarter-finals for the first time in their history and will take on another surprising qualifier, Senegal, in Osaka on Saturday.

Japan never recovered after conceding a goal after 12 minutes.

Umit Davaala was left completely unmarked by the Japanese defence at a corner, allowing him to head Ergun Penbe's kick firmly past goalkeeper Seigo Narazaki, silencing a partisan crowd of almost 46,000.

Japan came closest to an equaliser when their Brazilian-born midfielder Alex sent a free-kick from the edge of the penalty area crashing against the crossbar five minutes before half-time.

Turkish defender Alpay Ozalan had brought down Japan's European-based playmaker Hidetoshi Nakata to concede the

kick. Alex's curling effort left Turkish keeper Rustu Recber helpless and grateful for the assistance of the woodwork.

Japan put Turkey under intense pressure at the start of the second half, roared on by the home crowd.

The Turks escaped when Kazuyuki Toda's cross was met by a sliced clearance by Alpay in front of his own goal, but no Japanese attacker was there to take advantage.

At the final whistle, jubilant Turkey looked ahead to a match against Senegal for a place in the

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## DHL Spec Report

semi-finals. Japanese players left the pitch in tears.

"Our great adventure is over," said Japan's French coach Philippe Troussier, choking back tears himself.

"Today I was very proud to be their trainer and to have worn the Japanese shirt for four years," he added. "I say Bravo to this Japanese team."

Japan were disappointing and showed little of the sparkle that took them to the second round for the first time on the back of their debut

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## Back from Brunei empty-handed



PHOTO: STAR

One hundred and four Bangladeshis, who returned from Brunei on Monday, show their passports to the newsmen at the Central Shaheed Minar yesterday.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Cheated by both local recruiting agents and their employers in Brunei Darussalam, over 104 Bangladesh workers returned home empty-handed on Monday.

They were forced to work for extra eight hours a day and live in unhealthy conditions, but tortured for demanding the extra wages and were also denied treatment facility.

Two Bangladeshis died of illness. One of them was Nurul Islam Dudu Mia, but details could not be known.

The 104 Bangladeshis returned in a flight of Singapore Airlines and went to the Central Shaheed Minar where they narrated their sad plight to this correspondent.

Another 116 Bangladeshi workers, also victims of cheating, will have to return home soon, they said. They alleged that manpower recruiting agencies sent them to Brunei six to eight months back with two-year job contracts with garment factories there.

Most of them could not even bring the money they earned by

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## Eight months since takeover by new govt 145 journalists assaulted or given death threats: RSF

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As many as 145 journalists were assaulted or threatened with death, one was murdered, four detained by the authorities and 16 newsrooms or press clubs attacked in over eight months since Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's assumption of power.

The facts were revealed yesterday in a report by the Reporters sans frontiers (RSF), a Paris-based organisation for the rights of journalists. The report was prepared after consultations with different government officials, editors, media professional bodies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) on human rights and those engaged in media issues.

This endemic violence against news media professionals is endangering press freedom. Paradoxically, this South Asian country has never enjoyed a greater plurality of information sources. Over the last five

years, the print and electronic media -- especially television -- have enjoyed a rapid growth.

The Reporters without Borders (Reporters sans frontiers) fact-finding team stayed in Bangladesh from March 3 to 10, 2002. The representatives had the opportunity to meet journalists, managing editors, human-rights activists, lawyers, the minister of law, justice and parliamentary affairs, the principal information officer for the government, and families of murdered journalists. The endeavour was carried out with the Bangladesh Centre for Development, Journalism and Communication (BCDJC), a member of the RSF network.

"The issue of safety in general has now reached dramatic heights," said a European diplomat based in Dhaka. For example, the criminal tactics now being used in politics are said to have cost the lives of 280 people in February 2002 alone, as

the report said.

Nothing seems able to stop the attacks especially against the members of the press. They are influencing the way the national and local press treats issues of critical importance to the country, such as corruption, collusion among politicians, organised crime, and interfaith crimes.

"Not a single day goes by without the press reporting on an assault or death threat against a journalist," said Nayeemul Islam Khan, advisory editor of the Daily Aker Kagoj.

The perpetrators of 90 per cent assaults have been identified as "political militants, mafia groups, offenders, and police officers". According to Monjurul Ahsan Bulbul, executive director of Media Watch, a Bangladeshi organisation

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	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
June 19		6-48 pm
June 20	5-11 am	

Prayer Timings		
June 19		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-15	4-45
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-52	6-56
Esha	8-15	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation