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# The Daily Star BUSINESS

DHAKA WEDNESDAY, JUNE 28, 1995

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## Telecommunications Minister informs JS Introduction of digital phones at thana level likely soon

The government has given importance to expand telephone systems with introduction of digital telephone at the thana level, Telecommunications Minister Tariqul Islam told the Jatiya Sangsad Monday, reports BSS.

Replying to a call attention notice from Treasury Bench member MA Matin he said the government had signed two separate agreements with two private organisations like Bangladesh Rural Telecom Authority (BRTA) and Integrated Service Limited (ISL) for installation of modern digital exchanges at the thana level.

The BRTA will install telephone exchanges in 199 thanas while ISL in 191.

He listed the steps taken so far by the government to expedite the process of installation of telephone exchanges at the thana level by those two private organisations.

In this context Tariqul Islam said a nine-member cell headed by chief executive of the T and T Board had been formed, on September 3, 1994.

He said as a result of the activities of this cell, chairman and officers of BRTA and monitoring at the level of Minister and Secretary, the BRTA had so far installed digital telephone exchanges in 16 thanas and in three growth centres. It would set up 16 exchanges in another sixteen thanas within September this year.

The minister said the BRTA would further install digital telephone exchanges in 105 more thanas within June next year. The rest 34 exchanges will be set up by BRTA by December 1996, he added.

Although under the agreement the BRTA is supposed to complete the work in 1997 yet the government had taken steps to complete it one year ahead of the schedule.

The minister said the ISL had taken steps to set up digital telephone exchanges in 12 thanas under Noakhali district by September next.

The ISL will set up exchanges in three thanas in October and in another 14 thanas by December this year.

## 504 industrial units disinvested

A total of 504 industrial units, abandoned after the country's independence and then nationalised, were disinvested till date, the parliament was told yesterday, reports UNB.

Replying to a question of Md Abdullah, State Minister for Industries Lutfur Rahman Khan said, buyers of 466 units had already paid all the government liabilities in time.

However, the government is yet to realise Tk 29.68 crore from the owners of 38 remaining industrial establishments, he added.

The State Minister also informed that some 130 units out of the disinvested industries are now closed.

## Philips light dealers' prize distribution ceremony held

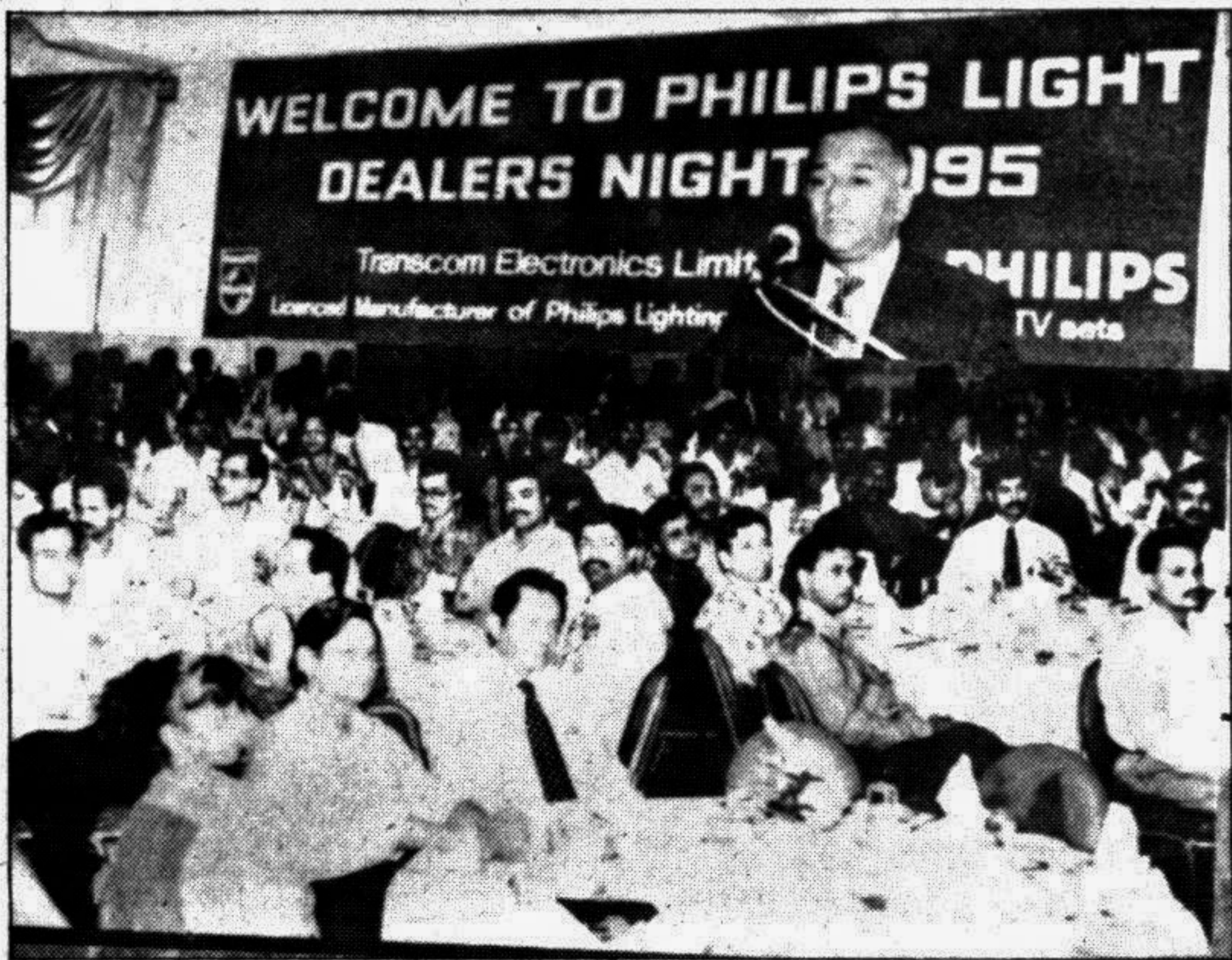
The Philips Light Dealers' Night and the prize distribution ceremony for Philips light dealers for '94 was held at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel on Sunday, says a press release.

The Managing Director of Bangladesh Lamps Limited and Transcom Electronics Limited Latifur Rahman gave away the prizes.

M/s Rahman Traders of Dhaka was declared the best retail distributor and highest lamp seller while M/s Moyna Store of Dhaka was the best wholesaler. The prizes included trips to Italy and Sanyo Microwave Ovens.

Speaking on the occasion A S Mahmud, Chairman of Bangladesh Lamps Limited and Transcom Electronics Limited, emphasised the need for giving quality service to the customers.

Obaidur Rahman Khan, Executive Director and A R Chowdhury, Light Manager of Transcom Electronics Limited, also spoke on the occasion. Other dealer prizes included trips to Italy, Hongkong, Bangkok, Philips TV's, Sanyo Washing Machines, Refrigerators and Microwave Ovens.



Latifur Rahman, Managing Director of Bangladesh Lamps Ltd. and Transcom Electronics Ltd. seen addressing the Philips Light Dealers' Night and the prize distribution ceremony for Philips light dealers for '94 at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel on Sunday.

## Add 870 mw power generating schemes undertaken, JS told

The government has undertaken schemes for generating an additional 870-megawatt power in 1998-2001 period to meet the country's fast-growing demand for electricity, reports UNB.

Replying to a question from Sakawat Hossain Bakul, Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Dr Khandaker Mosharrat Hossain told parliament that generation capacity would be increased by 476-megawatt with completion of repairing and rehabilitation works of a number of power units in 1997.

The minister also informed the House that a 450-megawatt power plant was now under construction. The steam plant of Sylhet Combined Cycle Plant with a capacity of 30-megawatt is expected to be operational this month (June). Two gas-turbine units of the plant have already been put to work.

Two other plants — the 210-megawatt Ghorasal Sixth Unit and the 210-megawatt Chittagong Second Unit — will go into operation in July 1997.

Dr Mosharrat said two more units with a total capacity of 319-megawatt at Haripur and Shiddirganj would be started by 1999. Steps have been taken to implement a 60-megawatt gas-turbine plant in Mymensingh by the Rural Electrification Board.

The Energy Minister informed the House that the present installed power-generating capacity in the country is 2878-megawatt while the highest production of electricity was 1970-megawatt this year.

Quoting a study conducted under the Power System Master Plan, he projected that the demand for electricity would increase to 3,149-megawatt in

the year 2000 from the present 2038-megawatt, to 4597-megawatt in 2005 and to 6779-megawatt in year 2010.

### 22 districts get gas

BSS adds: Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Khondkar Mosharrat Hussain yesterday told the Jatiya Sangsad that twenty-two districts have so far been supplied with natural gas.

Replying to a question from Begum K J Hamida Khanon (women) 20 the minister said that the districts covered with gas supply are: Dhaka, Mymensingh, Tangail, Jamalpur, Sherpur, Kishoreganj, Munsingaj, Manikganj, Gazipur, Narayanganj, Narsingdi, Brahmanbaria, Chittagong, Comilla, Noakhali, Chandpur, Feni, Sylhet, Sunamganj, Moulvibazar and Habiganj.

## Karnaphuli Paper Mills earns over Tk 11.59 cr profit

Karnaphuli Paper Mills, the only state-owned paper manufacturing mills, earned a profit of over Tk 11.59 crore from January 1990 to till date, the parliament was told yesterday, reports UNB.

Replying to a question from Redwan Ahmed, State Minister for Industries Lutfur Rahman Khan, however, said that the Karnaphuli Rayon and Chemical Mills incurred a loss of Tk 11.33 crore during the period.

Although the paper mill earned profit in last four years it suffered a loss of Tk 3.92 crore during the first 10 months of the current fiscal year (1994-95).

But the rayon mill sustained losses in a row during the last five years, the state minister said.

## IESC specialist observes Opportunity prevails for flourishing packaging industry in Bangladesh

By Rafiq Hasan

The packaging industry in Bangladesh has considerable opportunity to grow, observed Nathan Sakolsky, a packaging specialist of New York-based International Executive Service Corps (IESC), a USAID-funded organisation.

Attached with Business Advisory Services Centre (BASC) Sakolsky has been working in Bangladesh for last two months.

During his stay here, he visited a number of local packaging industries and reviewed the existing level of packaging technology in Bangladesh.

He also conducted a workshop at BASC training hall last month where he shared views with the leading local manufacturers on the scope of its future development.

In an exclusive interview with The Daily Star at the BASC office Monday, Sakolsky said packaging was the moving force behind the industrial world's economic growth because new and improved packaging technology contributes to the development of new products and new industries and markets.

Opportunity for packaging industry will come from greater demand for consumer products, based on economic

growth, he said.

Stressing on standard packaging quality, the IESC consultant said, "quality standard should be established by both the packaging producers and the packaging users."

"If the packaging users set quality standards the producers will have to maintain them in order to keep their customers satisfied" he added.

Regarding the packaging sector in Bangladesh, he said there is a small market base

which has limited purchasing power and as a result it restricts the expansion of packaging industry because companies can not produce products in a very large quantity.

He also viewed that the better quality raw materials must be imported as there are limited quality materials in

Bangladesh.

"If import duties for raw materials and machinery were reduced, it would permit packaging producers to obtain better quality materials and machinery", he further mentioned.

For the overall economic development of the country, Sakolsky said more people must work to earn more money to buy products. The more they buy, the more will have to be produced which will expand the manufacturing base and packaging industry. The consequence of these would be the growth in the industrial market and improved economic condition, he added.

In this regard, he emphasised on foreign investment saying that it is essential for the growth and expansion of the Bangladeshi economy as well as other developing countries.

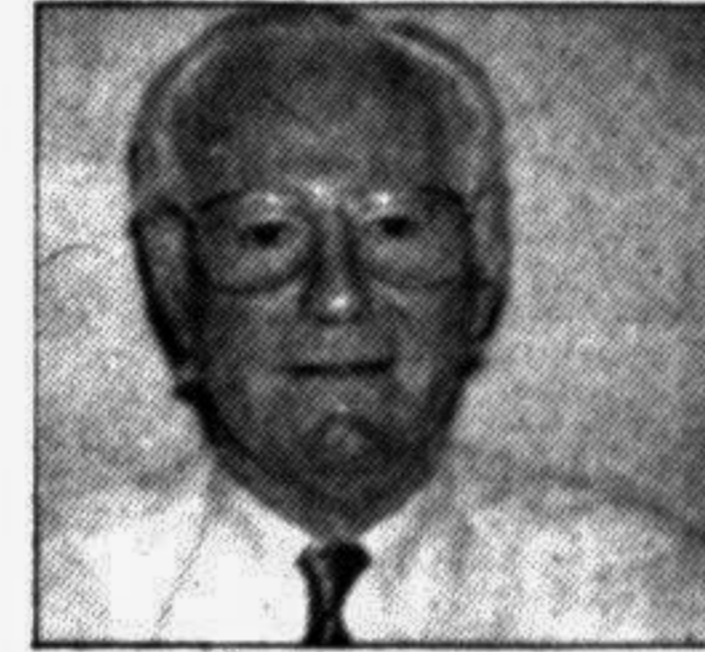
"Although, I am not an economist, but I believe that the foreign investment will only occur in growing and expanding economies, as Bangladesh economy improves, foreign investment can be attracted by favourable taxation and other investment practices, which are used in other areas of the

world," Sakolsky, who spent many years in development activities of the different countries of the world, said. In his long career as a packaging expert he led joint venture operations in Peru, Columbia, Uruguay, Ecuador, Nigeria, Korea, Thailand and China.

Responding to a question regarding the possible area of foreign investment he said, "foreign investment would be desirable in basic industries, which are somewhat related to the packaging industry. Particularly he mentioned petroleum materials such as aluminium and forestry. According to him, these would contribute to help grow large paper packaging industry."

He suggested that the government should encourage major international packaging companies to invest in Bangladesh.

Established in 1991 BASC is engaged in providing technology and market information, training and consultancy for business development. During Sakolsky's stay at BASC, representatives of about 27 leading packaging industries took counselling service from him, officials of the BASC told this correspondent.



Nathan Sakolsky

## 31 BSCIC industrial units in country

The total number of industrial estates under Bangladesh Small Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) are 31 including an electronic complex, it was informed in the House yesterday, reports UNB.

Replying to a question from Nizamuddin Khan, State Minister for Industries Lutfur Rahman Khan said there are 4,766 plots in the 30 industrial estates while the electronic complex has 40,000 square feet of plinth area.

Some 1891 industrial units have already been established in those industrial plots. Of them, 1095 units are in production, he said.

The state minister said works to install machinery as well as construction of building are at different stages in the other industrial plots.

Some 6,000 square feet of space have been allotted to an industrial unit in the electronic complex while the rest space will be allotted to private entrepreneurs after developing infrastructure by the corporation, he informed.

Replying to another question from M Niamatullah, the state minister said the government is planning to establish an industrial estate for leather goods and its chemical in Savar under BSCIC.

A Technical Assistance Project Proposal (TAPP) has already been approved by the government for conducting a study on socio-economic aspect of the project, he added.

## Industrial output in corps grows by 2.85 pc

The growth rate of industrial production in the corporations under the Industries Ministry was 2.85 per cent during the outgoing fiscal year (1994-95), reports UNB.

This was stated by State Minister for Industries Lutfur Rahman Khan in Parliament yesterday while replying to a question from M Niamatullah.

## Bangladesh takes part in 2nd Asian Festival

Bangladesh participated in the 2nd Asian Festival held in London on June 24, according to a message received here yesterday, reports UNB.

High Commissioner to United Kingdom A F M Yusuf inaugurated the two-day festival, organised by British Organisation for People of Indian Sub-continent and with the help of Lewisham Council.

Handicrafts, food and books from the sub-continent were displayed in the festival.



The 57th meeting of the Board of Directors of KAFCO and the 23rd meeting of the Board of Directors of KAFCO International Co Ltd were held at Hotel Sonargaon yesterday. The meetings were presided over by Dr A M M Shawkat Ali, Secretary, Ministry of Industries and Chairman of the companies.

## Japan's imports on the increase

TOKYO, June 27: With the United States firmly demanding Japan open its automotive markets, you might suppose imports in Japan were rare, reports AP.

But Japanese consumers last year purchased more goods from abroad — nearly 275 billion dollars worth — than ever before.

That represents a 14 per cent jump over 1993's 240.7 billion dollars in imports and is nearly 18 per cent higher than 1992. Compared with 1986 levels, the dollar value of imports into Japan has more than doubled.

While some of the increase reflects the declining value of the US dollar against the Japanese yen, which inflates more recent figures when converted into dollars, the data also show Japan is importing more from abroad and expanding the range of imported foreign products.

The surge is evident in places like Shinanoya, a fast-growing food and liquor store chain that almost exclusively sells foreign goods.

At the year-old store in Tokyo's pricey Ginza district, manager Koichiro Tobe takes a look around the shelves — tomato sauce from Ohio, French designer nail polish, garlic margarine from New Zealand — and says business is booming.

"Customers are getting very picky about price," Tobe says. With the skyrocketing yen, which makes foreign products cheaper in Japan, "now is a favourable time" for imports.

Most of Japan's imports used to be food and other raw materials like oil, but that's changing. Since 1991, manufactured goods have made up more than half of imports —

meaning the Japanese are buying more high value-added products like American computer software.

"If you look at the figures, you'd have to say it just isn't true that Japan isn't trying to import US products," says Yoichi Nakagawa, an economist who watches imports at the Bank of Tokyo.

So what's all the fighting about?

For one thing, US trade negotiators say, Japanese exports have surged at a pace equal to imports.

### Bad loan scam in Tokyo : 4 held

TOKYO, June 27: Prosecutors on Tuesday arrested four people accused of breach of trust in connection with bad loans that brought down two credit unions and led to a battle about using taxpayers' money to bail them out, reports AP.

The scandal already had led to the resignations of one legislator from Parliament and another from his party, and of the president of the prominent Long-Term Credit Bank of Japan.

Last month, police and prosecutors raided companies linked with the two credit unions' presidents, suspected of extending illegal loans to tallying 27.3 billion yen (325 million dollars) to pay back personal debts.

The two presidents — Harunori Takahashi of Tokyo Kyowa Credit Association and Shinsuke Suzuki of Anzen Credit Bank — were among those arrested Tuesday. In testimony before a Parliamentary committee in March, both denied wrongdoing.

## Tk 23,82, 83000 budget okayed for Chandpur Pourashava

CHANDPUR, June 27: Chandpur Pourashava has announced Tk 23,82,83,000 budget for the next fiscal 1995-96, reports UNB.

The newly elected Pourashava Chairman Md Yusuf Gazi announced the budget at his office room on Sunday evening.

Revenue income has been shown as Tk 2,31,83,000 in the budget while Tk 23,50 crore revenue is expected to come from the development assistance fund and the Secondary Town Project.

However, no fresh tax has been imposed in the budget.

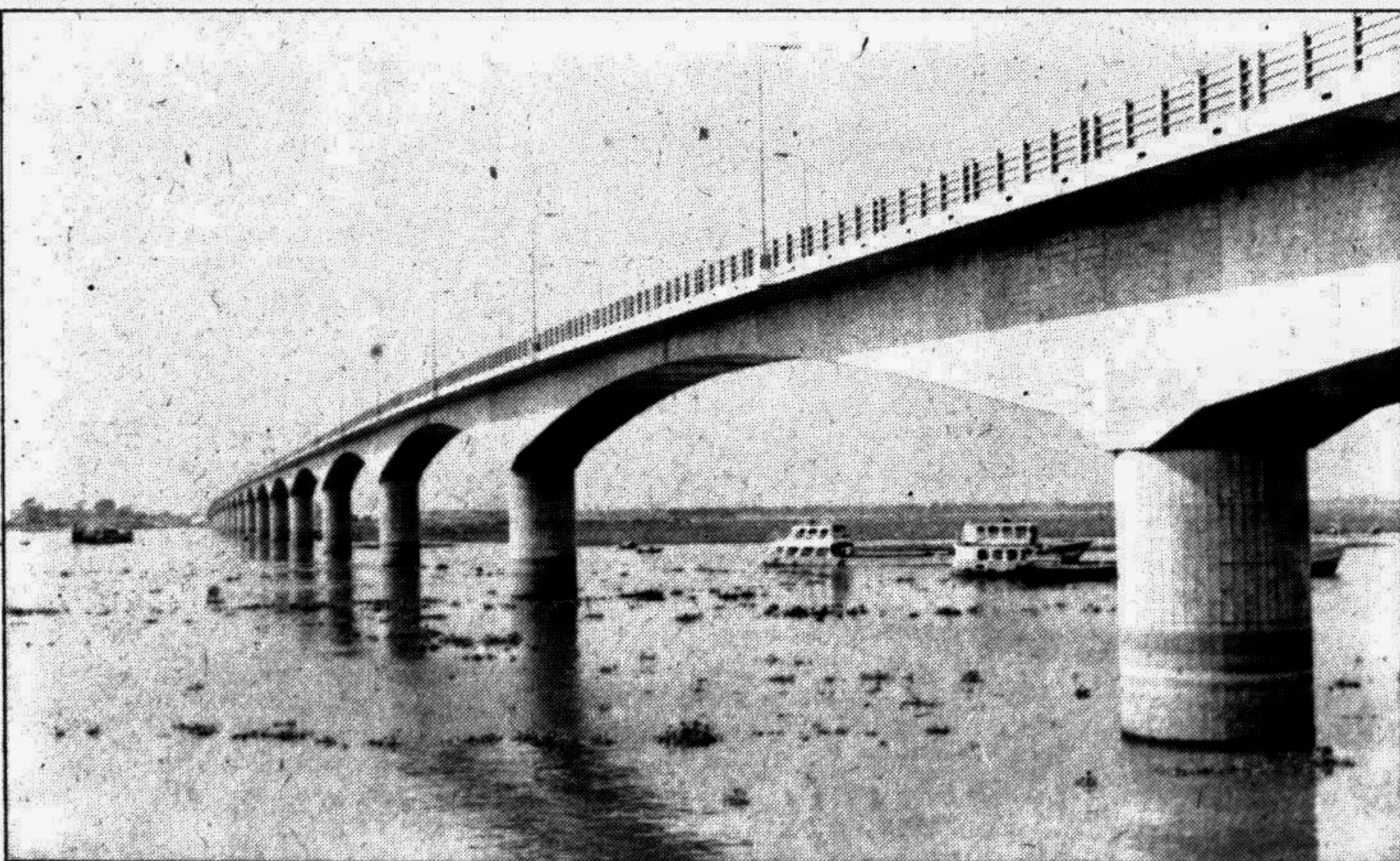
About Tk 34 lakh has been allocated for the Primary and Secondary Education for the next fiscal year while 21.50 crore has been shown as expenditure for development works and establishment and other expenses.

## Over Tk 15 cr Rangpur Poura budget

RANGPUR, June 27: Rangpur pourashava has approved development budget of about Taka 15 crore and 95 lakh for 1995-96 fiscal year, reports BSS.

A sum of Taka 32,25,500 has been shown as surplus on the receipt side and Taka 26,86,600 as earning from own resources while the rest Taka 13,29,34,800 as probable grant from government and other sources.

A special budget session held on Sunday last at pourashava auditorium with Sarfuddin Ahmed Chairman of Pourashava in the chair unanimously approved the budget.



The Meghna-Gumti Bridge has recently been awarded the highest award for outstanding civil engineering achievement by the Japanese Society of Civil Engineers, the most prominent academic society in the field of civil engineering in Japan.