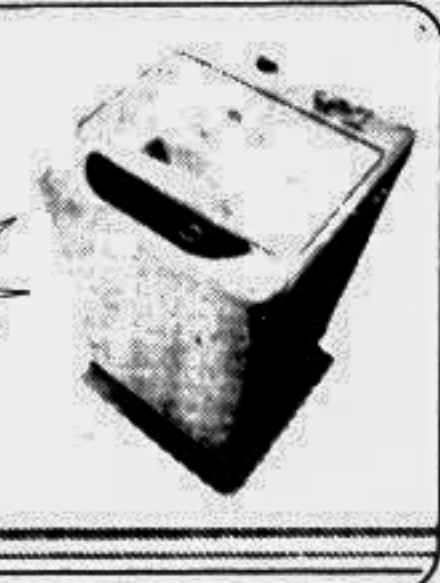



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# The Daily Star BUSINESS

DHAKA TUESDAY, APRIL 28, 1998



**HYUNDAI**  
CARS THAT MAKE SENSE

## Parliament told Govt to open 250 training centres for farmers

The government has a plan to open 250 training centres for farmers in the country. Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury informed the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday, reports BSS.

Replying to a question from treasury bench member Abdul Latif Mirza (Siraganj), she said the plan was taken under the Agriculture Support Services Project-Phase Two.

Replying to another question from treasury bench member Mostafizur Rahman (Dinajpur), Matia Chowdhury said the government has been supplying fertiliser, agricultural inputs like fertiliser, insecticide and seed etc to the farmers at fair price to encourage cultivation.

To ensure the fair price of fertiliser, the government gave a subsidy of Taka 212 crore for importing about four lakh tonnes of fertiliser during the 1996-97 fiscal year and Taka 112 crore to import three lakh tonnes of fertiliser during the current fiscal year.

## Bank holiday

Bangladesh Bank and other scheduled banks will remain closed on Friday on the occasion of May Day, said a press release yesterday, reports UNB.

## Bribery in Japan Finance Ministry punishing 112 officials

TOKYO, Apr 27: In an unprecedented attempt to repair its battered public image, the Finance Ministry announced Monday that it is punishing 112 of its officials for receiving lavish entertainment from financial institutions, reports AP.

Eisuke Sakakibara, the vice finance minister for international affairs known as "Mr Yen" for his influence in currency markets, will be one of 14 ministry officials "severely reprimanded" under a national law for public servants.

Two other senior bureaucrats submitted resignations after their punishments were announced.

Finance Minister Hikaru Matsunaga said the punishments resulted from a three-month, in-house investigation into the ties of 550 ministry officials to the private financial sector.

"It is with great pain that I must announce that 112 officials will receive severe punishment," Matsunaga told a gathering of ministry officials.

Matsunaga didn't specify what any of the officials had done wrong.

The investigation began after four officials from the ministry were arrested on charges of bribery earlier this year. The four allegedly extended favours or revealed confidential information to banks and brokerages after being treated to expensive dinners and golf outings by representatives of the companies.

Japanese bureaucrats long have accepted lavish attention from private companies.

Former finance minister Hiroshi Mitsuoka and another ranking official resigned earlier this year over the scandal, although they were not directly implicated. It is common in Japan for top officials of institutions to quit when subordinates have been accused of wrongdoing.

Atsushi Nagano, chief of the Securities Bureau, and Takashi Sugii, deputy director general of the Banking Bureau, submitted resignations. The ministry had announced it would cut Nagano's pay by a fifth for six months and suspend Sugii for the same period.

Most of the punishments announced Monday were meted out under the ministry's own rules against unethical behaviour.

## ROK's jobless rate hits 12-yr high

SEOUL, Apr 27: South Korea's unemployment rate hit a 12-year high at 6.5 per cent in March, government officials said Sunday, and warned that the figure will be far higher in the second half of the year, reports AFP.

The statistics office estimated the number of jobless in March at 1.378 million, or 6.5 per cent, the higher since February 1986, in the first three months of this year, 720,000 people lost jobs, it said.

It was higher than a target of six per cent projected by the South Korean government and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the office said.

The monthly unemployment rate has risen gradually from 3.1 per cent in December when South Korea accepted an IMF bailout to avert a debt moratorium, it said.

But the real labour crisis has yet to come, it said, warning the rate would surge up to eight per cent from the second half, when troubled firms and financial institutions are expected to lay off workers en masse.

## MCCL, government differ on statistics

# Minister confused over industrial growth data

Star Business Report

What was the country's industrial production growth during the first six months of the current fiscal year?

Even the industries and commerce minister Tofail Ahmed was confused yesterday when the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) claimed that industrial output grew by only 4.5 per cent, as against the finance minister's assertion that it is growing robust and posted around 12 per cent increase during July-October, 1997.

To clear the confusion, the minister proposed to hold a meeting of all concerned agencies immediately. He was speaking at a pre-budget discussion meeting with the MCCI members at its auditorium yesterday.

MCCI President Laila Rahman Kabir presided over the meeting while industry secretary Ejazul Huq was also present.

MCCI president Laila Rahman Kabir in her speech mentioned that the country's over all industrial production growth was a negligible 4.5 per cent mainly due to the strong ready-made garment sector.

"Except some few sectors like garments, cement, iron and steel products, all other industries particularly those oriented to domestic market, suffered production losses," Laila Kabir said.

The industry minister promptly responded and said he

was confused because data provided by the government agencies were telling a different story.

"Which one (statistics) should we believe? Yours, or the finance minister's?" Tofail Ahmed quipped.

He said he was also confused over the data relating to export growth and the long list of loan defaulters disclosed at parliament recently. The defaulters list was published in different newspapers and evoked strong reaction from the businessmen and industrialists.

Laila Kabir in her speech expressed grave concern over the declining trend in industrial production.

"This is not a healthy situation in a country where the manufacturing sector is expected to create additional employment and spearhead the macro-economic fundamentals of the economy," she added.

She held responsible insufficient inter-ministerial coordination, tariff anomalies and inadequate support from infrastructural services, financial institutions and law and order situation for the gloom in the industrial sector prevailing today.

The MCCI president criticised the government's tariff policy and termed it "ad-hoc arrangement" and "unrealistic."

The result of this policy was dislocation of local production by imports, she observed.

She felt that the matter should be reviewed at the highest level of the government before the next budget.

"Many local industries will have little chance of survival if the anomalies in import duty are not removed and levies such as development surcharge and fees are not waived," she noted.

Giving example from export-import policies of the neighbouring countries Laila Kabir said the government of India recently exempted about 340 items of raw materials and components used by export-oriented industries from import duty.

"A further 300 items are apparently being identified for similar concession which will enhance the competitiveness of Indian export including those coming into our country," she mentioned.

She warned against the impact of such changes in India's tariff policy on Bangladesh, which, she said, should not be ignored.

Disclosing the result of a limited survey conducted by MCCI, Laila Kabir said that 252 enterprises lost Tk 206 crore due to power failure during January to September 1997 period.

She also blamed the country's central bank for "playing an indirect part in destabilizing the industrial sector."

"This has occurred firstly through tighter monetary poli-

cies last year and then by stopping credit facilities to running industries on the ground that some of their associates concerns have overdue loans with banks," the MCCI president said.

As the cancellation of credit to ongoing enterprises has had disruptive effect on industrial production, she urged for a decisive solution to the problem of bank defaults.

The minister admitted the industrialists and businessmen suffered due to disclosure of a defaulters' list. But he made a counterargument saying that many entrepreneurs bought latest model cars, built luxurious houses with the money borrowed from the banks for industrial purposes.

There are many instances that crores of taka were taken from the banks by a section of people and did not use even a single penny for setting up any industry, the minister alleged.

On the other hand, they are threatening the government for launching a movement and demanding financial help for rehabilitation of their "sick" industries," Tofail Ahmed said.

Laila Rahman said her chamber was the first among those demanding punishment to borrowers who defaulted intentionally.

The MCCI president also blamed the deteriorating law and order situation, extortion and smuggling for disturbing industrial sector.



Finance Minister S A M S Kibria talking to a DSE delegation and high officials of SEC at his office yesterday. — PID photo

## India unveils steps to boost power generation

NEW DELHI, Apr 27: The Indian government on Sunday announced steps to boost power generation and investment in the sector, while the power minister said he was disappointed over the role of the private sector, reports AFP.

Power Minister Rangarajan Kumaramangalam told reporters here that the cabinet had cleared a policy package to speed up investments in the sector.

It includes competitive bidding for new projects, simplified guidelines for government clearances and "transparent standards for bidding," he said.

The government would offer big power projects to the private sector by setting up "shell companies," which would have obtained necessary clearances from the authorities, he added.

"The company which wins the bid will automatically receive all the clearances when the project is handed to it," Kumaramangalam said.

The minister said in the five years to 1997, the power generation target fell short by 80 per cent.

The reason for the shortfall was due to the sudden shift in emphasis of creating additional generating capacity only in the private sector.

"Many good sites earmarked for the public sector were changed for private sector generation... the private sector investment did not take off as the policy had inherent defects," Kumaramangalam said.

## New MDs

**BKB**  
Shoab Ahmed has taken over the charge of Managing Director of Bangladesh Krishi Bank (BKB) on Thursday.

Prior to joining the bank, he was Managing Director of Bangladesh Shilpa Rin Sangstha (BSRS), says a press release.

He held many important positions like Collector of Customs and Excise, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, Director General, Export Promotion Bureau and Chairman of TCB.

## BSB

Enamul Haq Chowdhury joined Bangladesh Shilpa Rin Sangstha (BSB) as Managing Director on current charge recently, says a press release.

Chowdhury joined the then United Bank Ltd, Pakistan in 1965, as a senior officer.

He held various responsible positions. He visited India, Pakistan, Thailand, US and England to attend various workshops, seminars and study tours.

## BSRS

Mahmudul Karim has joined Bangladesh Shilpa Rin Sangstha (BSRS) as Managing Director on current charge on Thursday.

Prior to his present assignment, he held the current charge of the Managing Director of Bangladesh Shilpa Rin Sangstha (BSB), says a press release.

He joined BSB in 1964.

## BETS training course held

Bangladesh Engineering & Technological Services Ltd (BETS) recently organised a course for the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) in a narrow range and closing at 38.70-75 to a dollar, compared to the previous week's close at 39.40-45.

Analysts said the currency strengthened on the back of ongoing capital inflow from banking recapitalisation measures, including Bangkok Bank PLC, the country's largest commercial bank.

The baht is expected to continue to gain against the greenback over the next week.

## Exchange Rates

Following is the Monday's forex trading statement by Standard Chartered Bank, Dhaka.  
Central Bank USD/BDT Rate: Buying-BDT46.15/Selling-BDT 46.45

Selling		Buying			
TT/OD	BC	Currency	TT Clean	OD Sight	OD Transfer
46.5100	46.5500	USD	46.1150	45.9550	45.8400
77.9973	78.0644	GBP	76.6431	76.3772	76.1861
26.1586	26.1811	DEM	25.6337	25.5447	25.4384
0.3567	0.3570	JPY	0.3480	0.3468	0.3460
31.4045	31.4315	CHF	30.7024	30.5959	30.4585
23.2434	23.2634	NLG	22.8066	22.7275	22.6370
29.4088	29.4341	SGD	28.7590	28.6592	28.5341
7.7848	7.7914	FRF	7.6648	7.6382	7.6153
32.6845	32.7126	CAD	31.9356	31.8248	31.6793
6.0788	6.0840	SEK	5.9733	5.9526	5.9354
30.5571	30.5834	AUD	29.4214	29.3193	29.1084
12.6730	12.6839	MYR	11.8700	11.8268	11.8083
6.0098	6.0150	HKD	5.9427	5.9220	5.9095
12.4692	12.4799	SAR	12.2289	12.1864	12.1656

Usance Export Bills

TT DOC	30 Days	60 Days	90 Days	120 Days	180 Days
46.015	45.731	45.352	44.9162	44.4425	43.3183

Exchange Rates of Some Asian Currencies Against US Dollar

Indian Rupee	Pak Rupee	Thai Baht	Malaysian Ringgit	Indonesian Rupiah	Korean Won
39.6373	44.1013	38.9939.08	3.770050	80008100	136265

US Dollar Libor

Buying	Selling	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	12 Months	
Cash	46.05	46.6	USD 5.6525	5.6875	5.78125	5.91797
TC	45.9	46.5	GBP 7.4414	7.5	7.49609	7.45313

Indicative forward cover selling rates against Taka

Month	Months	months	Months	Months	Months	
USD/BDT	46.71	46.92	47.13	47.34	47.55	47.76
GBP/BDT	78.10	78.33	78.57	78.82	79.08	79.33
DEM/BDT	26.26	26.42	26.58	26.79	26.91	27.07
CHF/BDT	31.52	31.79	32.06	32.33	32.60	32.87

**Market Commentary**  
The local foreign exchange and money market was quite active on Monday as the international markets resumed operation after weekend. In the interbank market, demand for US dollar was high and the US dollar traded between Taka 46.4470 and 46.4560. The local market was quite liquid as funds are coming back in circulation. The call money rate remained steady and is reported to have ranged between 7 pc and 8 pc.

In the international markets Japanese yen softened against the major currencies. Fear of Bank of Japan's intervention persists but market believes that successful intervention depends on erasing Japan's gloomy economic outlook that persist despite the stimulus package announced earlier. Sacking of 112 MOF officials including "Mr Yen" (Vice Finance Minister), also kept the yen low. At 1700 hours local time, US dollar closed at 1.7948/53 DEM, 132.64/2.73 yen and GBP at 1.6679/90 against USD.

## Shipping Intelligence

### Chittagong port

Berth position and performance of vessels as on 27.4.98

Berth no	Name of vessels	Cargo	L port	Local agent	Date of arrival	Leaving
J/1	Yunlin	G Dali	Prog	18/4	4/5	
J/2	Diamond Dragon	G Osaka	Prog	20/4	28/4	
J/3	China Stra (48)	G Col	Ever	25/4	25/4	
J/4	Macho	R.Sed	Sing	Rainbow	16/4	1/5
J/5	Banglar Mookh (Flag)	G Mong	BSC	23/4	29/4	
J/6	Meghna	Wheat(P/G)	Sing	Seacom	27/3	1/5
J/7	Banglar Asha	Wheat(G)	-	Lams	R/A	2/5
J/8	Tamakgol	Rice(G)	Mald	OSA	19/4	1/5
J/10	ESCO Argo	G Jaka	Prog	19/4	29/4	
J/11	Sea Bird	Rice(G)	Kaki	Litmond	8/4	30/4
J/12	Nil Beryl	Cont	Sing	Nol	16/4	28/4
J/13	Kota Berjaya	Cont	Sing	Pil (BD)	18/4	29/4
CCT/1	Banglar Moni (Flag)	Cont	Sing	BSC	21/4	27/4
CCT/2	Sea Bright	Cont	Sing	Pil (BD)	20/4	29/4
RM/14	Penguin	Repair	Yang	Cross	30/3	30/4
GSJ	Tristar-1	C. Clink	Larb	RML	24/4	2/5
TSP	Ever Forest	Wheat(G)	Tilb	OWSL	9/4	28/4
RM/4	Ocean Cruiser	Sulp	Duba	USTC	17/4	5/5
RM/5	Lestari Indah	Cement	Pada	RML	20/4	28/4
RM/6	Nidia	Sko/MS	Sing	H&SL	23/4	29/4
DD	Banglar Robi(Cont)	Cont/Repair	Sing	BSC	21/4	29/4
DDJ/1	Banglar Shourabh	Repair	-	BSC	R/A	-
SM/10	Albatross-III	Repair	Card	Cross	29/3	28/4
CUFLJ	Tanary Star	IDLE	Pana	PSAL	-	-
	Tug Ocean Alpha	-	Batam	Olapis	19/4	-
	Tempest	Cement/Idle	Sing	HSL	R/A	5/5

### Vessels due at outer anchorage

Name of vessels	Date of arrival	L port	Local agent	Cargo	Loading port
Thor Simba (48)12/4	27/4	-	Everet	G	-
Josie	27/4	-	USTC	Rie(G)	-
Leorot 16/4	27/4	-	OTBL	Cont	Sing
SkyLark	27/4	Mong	RSB	Ballast	-
Mokran	29/4	Kaki	OWSL	Rice(G)	-
Ryong Nam Sam	29/4	Hamr	Delmure	R/Phos	-
Mir Damad 19/4	29/4	Sing	SSL	Cont	Sing
Prosrich 21/4	29/4	Sing	QCSL	Cont	Sing
Al Salamas	29/4	Cal	ASLL	G	-
Sea Joy	29/4	-	Seacom	Rice(G)	-
Mizoram	2/5	-	SSL	G	-
Amethyst (48) 21/4	3/5	P. Kel	MBL	G	-
Moskovskiy Komsomolets	30/4	Kaki	ANCL	Rice(P)	-
Sin Hai 20/4	1/5	Sing	QCSL	Cont	Sing
Ocean Brave	1/5	-	Everitt	G	-
Gong Jiang	2/5	Kaki	OWSL	Rice(G)	-
Banglar Kakoli	2/5	Male	BSC	G	-
Xpress Resolve 23/4	2/5	Sing	HSL	Cont	Sing
Manasul 23/4	3/5	Col	Baridul	Cont	Col
QC Pntal 20/4	3/5	Sing	QCSL	Cont	Sing
New Reach	3/5	-	Seacom	C. Clink	-
Bonsai	4/5	Inch	OTBL	Scraping	-
Hai Xiong 26/4	4/5	Sing	Pil (BD)	Cont	Sing
M Hegina 26/4	7/5	Sing	Pil (BD)	Cont	Sing
trade Fast 22/4	5/5	Sing	Pil (BD)	Cont	Sing

### Vessels at Kutubdia

Name of vessels	Cargo	L port	Local agent	Date of arrival
Ismaya	-	-	B Bay	9/1
Laut Tide	-	Sing	B Bay	R/A (25/4)
Seabuck Energy	-	Sing		