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## Blip fizzles out

### Industrial production index loses momentum

INAM AHMED

There was after all a hope for industrial recovery this year, however feeble it may have been. But it has fallen flat again on the back of a fresh export collapse.

According to statistics, the trend of production of major industries – excluding jute textiles – which account for 54.11 per cent of the total weight, shows only 2.6 per cent growth in the first three quarters till March this fiscal, according to a Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) analysis. This is quite depressing by any standard if one considers last fiscal's 9.1 per cent industrial growth.

As the trend today shows, the industrial growth this fiscal is set to be lower than 3.2 per cent of 1998-99, the flood year.

"The dampening effect is not only because of export slump, but also due

to weak domestic demand expressed by low inflation rate even after moderate monetary expansion and low off-take of credit," said Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya, executive director of the CPD.

Although the March-on-March figure shows industrial growth this fiscal was at 15.7 per cent, which is comparable to other years, it still conceals the fact that March 2002 was the second consecutive month since January when the Quantum Index of Production (QIP) actually dropped.

In December this fiscal, the QIP was 247.12 and then it edged up to 248.15 in January. But then it again slumped to 232.64 in February and even lower to 222.46 in March.

"Traditionally the QIP picks up in December in line with heavy export of apparels, and then drops in January before taking off again in June," said Dr Debapriya. "But this year, the index increased in January over that of

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## ROK'n'roll over Poland

AFP, Pusan, South Korea

An ecstatic South Korea finally exorcised its World Cup demons yesterday after 48 years and 15 games with an emphatic 2-0 Group D victory over Poland.

With deafening encouragement from 53,000 drum-banging Koreans in the Busan Asiad Stadium, Guus Hiddink's Red Devils ran Poland ragged, sparking wild celebrations.

Korea opened aggressively and it paid dividends in the 26th minute when Hwang Sun-Hong executed a sweet left-foot volley after Lee Eul-Yong played a perfectly-weighted ball in from the left flank.

Hwang's Kashiwa Reysol teammate Yoo Sang-Chul made it 2-0 after 53 minutes when he weaved around two defenders and fired a powerful right-foot shot past the outstretched arms of Liverpool goalkeeper Jerzy Dudek.

"First of all, this is a historic game for Korea," said Hiddink, the first non-Korean to take charge of the team.

"This game is a step forward from the last two or three months.

"The players have worked hard and this victory was their reward. It wasn't just about the goals but the concept of the way they played. They attacked from the first minutes and I'm very proud of them," added the man, who coached the Netherlands at France '98.

South Korea are playing in their sixth World Cup, stretching back to 1954, but until Tuesday they had never tasted victory, losing 10 and drawing four.

They will now consider themselves in with a real chance of making the second round. Group D favourites Portugal may prove a difficult nut to crack but they will fancy their chances against the United States.

And the win was a welcome shot in the arm for Asian football after China's 2-0 loss to Costa Rica yesterday and Japan's 2-2 draw



Goal of glory... South Korea's Yoo Sang Chul (R) shoots to score as Poland's Michal Zewiakow (L) watches at the Busan Asiad Main Stadium in Busan, South Korea during first round Group D action in the World Cup yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## AL stays off JP walkout marks JS session opening

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The opening of the budget session of the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday was marked by a walkout by the pro-Ershad Jatiya Party (JP).

Main opposition Awami League continued staying off the House due to what it says the absence of a congenial political atmosphere and 'continued persecution' of the opposition activists by the government.

Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar in his opening remarks reiterated his call for the main opposition party to join the parliament, especially during the budget session.

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## Miners keep off work, demand safety

### Probe starts in roof collapse at Barapukuria coal mine

SHARIER KHAN in Dhaka and ANWAR ALI in Parbatipur

Five hundred labourers of the Barapukuria coalmine project abstained from work yesterday, demanding safety.

The move came after the country's first mine disaster that left two workers dead and seven others injured on Monday. However, the coalmine project remained unaffected.

The labourers demanded an assurance of safety from the authorities but did not stage any demonstration.

Meanwhile, two committees have been formed to investigate the coalmine disaster.

A two-member committee of Petrobangla headed by Senior General Manager Khandker Mominul Haq arrived at the Barapukuria coalmine site in Dinajpur.

In addition to detecting flaws, the committee will also recommend necessary measures to prevent such disasters in future, said an official press release. Petrobangla Chairman Syed Sajedul Karim will visit the site today.

Another five-member committee of the project developer headed by the project's British consultant has also begun investigation yesterday. It will file its report in 72 hours.

Sources in the Barapukuria project said the disaster did not

threaten the coalmine project, as it took place below the mining areas.

A high official of the Barapukuria mining authorities told The Daily Star, "The main coalmine is located above the disaster spot, which is why the project remained unaffected. Workers usually are spread around the mine and we don't think a large number of people would face a major threat like roof collapse."

The mine had two shafts or outlets at opposite points. "Unless there is a disaster caused by some huge explosion, there will be no major risk of people remaining stuck

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## JS bars pvt TV coverage

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The authorities did not allow private television channels to cover the parliament's opening sitting of the budget session yesterday.

However, the state-run Bangladesh Television covered the sitting.

Camera crew of Ekushey Television (ETV), Channel I and ATN Bangla were barred from getting into the House yesterday afternoon to cover the opening sitting.

They were however allowed into the parliament building but asked not to cover the sitting.

When asked an official concerned said the authorities would allow the electronic media into the House from the day the budget is placed.

According to parliament secretariat sources, ETV was given prior permission but Channel I and ATN Bangla were told that they would be allowed on 'special days'.

A parliament reporter of a

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A caged golden-backed spotted woodpecker, up for sale at a pet shop at Katobon Market in the city yesterday, defines the government's negligence to enforcement of environmental laws.

## Environment Day today

UNB, Dhaka

World Environment Day will be observed in the country as elsewhere in the globe today (Wednesday) with a vow to save the planet from environmental degradation.

United Nations declared June 5 as World Environment Day in 1972 to make the people aware of environmental pollution and its preservation and management.

This year, the theme for the day is "Give Earth a Chance."

On the occasion, President Prof A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury, Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina gave separate messages highlighting the significance of the day.

BSS adds: Prime Minister Khaleda Zia is scheduled to inaugurate the day today at Bangladesh-China Friendship Convention Centre at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in the city.

On the same day, she is also expected to open an environment fair of alternative products to polythene and distribute prizes among the winners of a children's art competition held in the city on Monday.

Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman and LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan will be present at the inaugural function as special

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## Where has Ovee gone?

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Schoolboy Ovee is missing since he left home for school Monday morning.

Enamul Hasan Ovee, 14, is a student of class nine at Motijheel Government Boys' High School in the city.

As he did not return to his residence at 391, Gulbagh after school hours, his parents went to the school. The teachers said he did not come to school on Monday.

The helpless father went to the press club yesterday and appealed for help to trace his son. Ovee is the youngest of two sons of Ahmed Hossain, a businessman. Before leaving for school, Ovee had wanted rickshaw fare from his father. His father gave him Tk 20 but he said Tk

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## Japan jive in thriller

REUTERS, Saitama, Japan

Co-hosts Japan have earned their first ever World Cup point after they shared four goals with Belgium in 16 scintillating second half minutes in a 2-2 group H thriller yesterday.

Roared on by a nearly hysterical crowd, Junichi Inamoto's superb 68th-minute goal looked to have clinched a historic win for Philippe Troussier's side until Peter Van der Heyden equalised with 15 minutes left for the Belgians.

With four minutes left Inamoto thought he had settled it after a snaking run in the box finished with the Japanese forward chipping the ball home deftly but the referee ruled the goal out for an earlier foul.

Van der Heyden had been at fault for the Inamoto goal which did count but Belgium will not be completely happy with a point from a match they expected to win.

At one stage, though, after the second Japanese goal, they could have been overrun by their inspired opponents as the near sell-out crowd shouted them on.

Earlier, Takayuki Suzuki had wiped out Marc Wilmots's 57th minute overhead kick for Belgium.

Japan lost all three of their matches at the 1998 finals in France and their draw meant the record of no host nation having ever lost its opening match at a World Cup remained intact.

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## AL impasse makes JS body setup uncertain

REAZ AHMAD

Formation of parliamentary standing committees on various ministries looks uncertain with the main opposition Awami League (AL) indecisive about joining the Jatiya Sangsad session that began yesterday, sources said.

Not a single of the 38 standing committees on different ministries was formed even in eight months since the last parliamentary elections.

The parliament went into its present budget session with the AL already boycotting the first two sessions. With 58 seats in the House, the AL has been asking for proportionate shares in the posts of chairman and member of the standing committees.

Sources close to the parliament's Treasury Bench however told The Daily Star recently that the committees would be formed during the third session of the parliament even if the main opposition party did not put forward its list of nominees.

"In that case, we will keep their (AL) positions vacant

in these committees so that they will have the scope to join these whenever they decide," Chief Whip Khandakar Delwar Hossain explained recently.

However, Opposition Chief Whip Abdus Shahid felt that it would be a major blunder if the ruling party goes ahead with its plan of forming these committees keeping the AL's positions vacant. "We can still have discussion about proportionate sharing of the posts of chairman. I am ready to join any discussion in this regard if invited by the Chief Whip (Khandakar Delwar Hossain)," he said.

Meanwhile, the chief whip wrote to his opposition counterpart about five months ago, seeking names of their nominees for the standing committees.

In response, the opposition chief whip asked for allocating chairmanship of at least 10 of the committees on ministries and other committees, totalling 49.

Shahid recalled that the previous AL government went for amending the parliamentary rules of procedure for replacement of ministers by non-minister lawmakers as head of different standing committees on minis

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## Tk 19,200 cr ADP okayed

UNB, Dhaka

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council yesterday approved a Tk 19,200 crore Annual Development Programme for the next fiscal year on an optimistic note from the Prime Minister that it would be possible to implement the big budget.

Presiding over the ECNEC meeting held in the NEC conference room to approve the ADP, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia asked her cabinet colleagues and officials concerned to "work hard" for proper implementation of the development projects.

"Don't waste resources by beginning project works at the end of a fiscal year," Finance and Planning Minister Saifur Rahman quoted the Prime Minister to have told them.

"We'll prepare budget with our own financing to become self-reliant gradually. We'll move ahead this way," she said as her coalition government calculated 55 per cent contribution of internal resources to the ADP for fiscal 2002-2003.

Dismissing some critical views about the volume of this government's first development budget, the Prime Minister asserted: "The ADP is in no way an ambitious one."

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## Announcement

Due to unavoidable reasons, our weekly Star Chittagong page will be published tomorrow instead of today. We regret the inconvenience caused, if any, to our readers.

## INSIDE TODAY

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Of discretion and valour  
Column: Between Yourself and Me  
KAS Murshid

Supplement 10

One page supplement on 'World Environment Day'