

## Industrial sector contributes 27pc to GDP in FY'03 Saifur tells parliament UNB, Sangsad Bhaban

The industrial sector contributed 27.17 percent to the country's GDP in last fiscal, parliament was told yesterday.

Replying to Golam Habib Dulal (Jatiya Party), Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman said it is not true that now industrial sector's contribution to GDP was below 20 percent. As per Bureau of Statistics, the contribution of industrial sector was 26.75 per cent during fiscal 2001-02.

As a result of reforms undertaken by the present government, this contribution to GDP increased to 27.17 percent in last fiscal, he said.

In reply to Adv Abul Kalam (BNP), the finance minister said the unrealised outstanding agriculture loan was Tk. 8,608.26 crore until November 2003. The government has set procedures to realise the loans.

During the current fiscal year, the government disbursed Tk 287.63 crore in small credits until December 2003, which is an increase of Tk 69.38 crore compared with the corresponding period of the previous year, he told the House replying to Moulana Abdus Sobhan (Jamaat-e-Islami).

## Banoful opens bread factory in Sylhet with ATDP support

Banoful and Company Ltd has set up a fully automated bread factory in Sylhet with support from ATDP (Agro-based Industries and Technology Development Project).

The factory will maintain international codes of cleanliness and quality. USAID-Bangladesh mission Director Gene George inaugurated the factory recently, says a press release.

The factory will help Banoful improve product quality, raise consumer trust and satisfaction.

ATDP provided Banoful with consultants, overseas training and helped establishing backward and forward linkages. Under the terms of an agreement with ATDP, Banoful has agreed to unannounced inspection of the factory by ATDP experts to ensure transparency.

## POULTRY SECTOR Stakeholders form crisis management committee UNB, Dhaka

Scientists, veterinarians, breeders and producers of poultry in the country have formed a coordination committee for crisis management and promotion of meat and eggs on domestic as well as overseas market.

President of the World Poultry Science Association Bangladesh Branch (WPSA-BB) Moshir Rahman has been made convener of the newly formed 10-member Bangladesh Poultry Industries Coordination Committee (BPICC).

Besides dealing with the present adverse situation, in the wake of the pestilence of bird flu in some Asian countries, the BPICC will identify the scopes and promote export of broiler meat and eggs from Bangladesh.

It will hold a seminar on "Bird Flu-free Bangladesh" soon.

Nearly 1.5 lakh poultry farms of the country directly or indirectly involve 60 lakh people and produce 500 tons of broiler meat annually.

The country's poultry industry, with a Tk 2000 crore investment, has an annual turnover of Tk 5500 crore.

## Japan begins checking farms after 2nd bird flu case confirmed AFP, Tokyo

Japanese officials began inspecting farms housing some 6.8 million birds in southwestern Japan Wednesday after a second outbreak of bird flu was confirmed 24 hours earlier.

The second case came more than a month after Japan's first confirmed outbreak and just two days before the nation was to declare itself free of the disease.

The new case was confirmed in a timber yard, in Kokonoe town, Oita prefecture, some 800 kilometers southwest of Tokyo, that was home to a duck and 13 bantams raised as pets.

# Japan's envoy urges govt to clear investment irritants

### STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Urging the government to solve problems facing Japanese investors in Bangladesh, the ambassador of Japan in Dhaka said it will not only increase investment from Japan but from other countries also.

However, the Japanese are satisfied with the action taken so far by the Bangladesh government to remove investment irritants here, Matsushiro Horiguchi said yesterday referring to a study conducted by Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Bangladesh. The study submitted to the government last year depicted a bleak investment climate in Bangladesh.

"We welcome the government as it has waken up to investors' call by forming a national taskforce to better investment climate and remove sufferings of investors," he

told a business promotion meeting at Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI).

"I met Board of Investment executive chairman who is chairman of the taskforce. He told me that government is serious about plight of foreign investors and their problems will be solved in phases," the envoy said.

The government has also drawn up uniform guidelines to issue work permits to foreigners and set up of foreign business establishments, he said.

He however pointed out that infrastructure is an area where Bangladesh has to work on. "We still hear investors saying they face water and gas problems even in export processing zones," he said exposing dearth of basic infrastructure in Bangladesh.

The government must develop infrastructure if the country is to

pull more foreign direct investments from Japan and other countries. Agriculture and industrial sectors apart, Bangladesh holds potential in tourism but it needs to improve infrastructure, he said.

"A group of Japanese tourists, who met me few days back, expressed satisfaction over tour management and praised the places they visited," he said.

He said Japan has identified agriculture and rural development, infrastructure, health and education and disaster management as focal areas of assistance for Bangladesh.

Presiding over the meeting, DCCI President Fazle RM Hasan proposed Japan can set up an exclusive export processing zone to take benefit from Bangladesh's duty free facilities to EU, Canada and Australia.

As Bangladesh is a member of South Asian Preferential Trading

Arrangement which is going to be transformed into South Asian free Trade Area by 2006, investment in Bangladesh will give Japan, the ninth largest investor in Bangladesh, access to South Asia's market of 1.2 billion people, he said.

The export from Bangladesh to Japan increased from \$96.07 million in 2001-02 to \$108 million in 2002-03 while import from Japan decreased from \$655 million to \$400 million over the same period reflecting unbalanced trade relations, he said.

Sabur Khan, president of Bangladesh Computer Samity, said as Bangladesh is blessed with skilled IT professionals, Japan can make outsourcing from here and take IT manpower from Bangladesh.

Matiur Rahman, immediate past president of DCCI, M Abu Horaira, vice-president, and K Atique-E Rabbani, director of the chamber, also spoke at the meeting.

# Pacific Motors plans car assembling plant in Ctg

## Signs agreement with Nissan

### STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Pacific Motors Ltd (PML), a local car distributor, plans to set up a motor vehicle assembling plant in Chittagong in a couple of years in collaboration with Nissan Diesel Motor Company Limited of Japan.

The PML has also become the sole distributor of Nissan Diesel, manufacturer of a wide range of vehicles including bus, minibus, truck, covered van, log carrier, construction equipment carrier and chassis for heavy-duty crane.

An agreement to this effect was signed between the two companies in Dhaka yesterday. PML Managing Director Faisal Morshed Khan and Nissan Diesel Executive Officer Suichita Sugita signed the deal on

behalf of their respective sides.

Under the agreement, PML will import bus, minibus and truck and assemble them initially at Bangladesh Machine Tools Factory (BMTF) at Gazipur.

The first assembled vehicle at the BMTF is expected to run on the streets in April this year, according to Faisal Morshed Khan.

Nissan officials who visited the BMTF said the factory is capable to assemble motor vehicles. However, some experts from Japan will provide training to the BMTF technical staff and officials for few months, PML officials said.

Khan said Nissan experts are also working on setting up an assembling plant in Chittagong with

a capacity of assembling 1,500 vehicles a year. The plant may be set up in two or three years, he added.

"We are also looking for CNG driven vehicles," the PML managing director said. Nissan Diesel is the lone CNG vehicle manufacturer of Japan.

Khan said his company contributed \$7 million to the government exchequer in duties and taxes last year. The annual turnover of the company was \$13 million in 2003, he added.

He said PML having thirty years of operating experience is currently in the process of building a car showroom and modern service centre to be opened next month.

### Microcredit Summit

## Marjan van Lier sees hope in microfinance programme

### STAR BUSINESS REPORT

"Microfinancing programme in Bangladesh is very hopeful as far as my perception goes," a Dutch participant of the Asia Pacific Region Microcredit Summit told The Daily Star Monday.

"People are so poor but willing to make their lives better," Marjan van Lier, a member of Ecological Management Foundation of Holland, said, adding, "They live an isolated life in faraway rural areas with hardly any access to and awareness of the issues that concern uplift of their lives."

As to the environmental concerns, Marjan said the functions of Bangladesh's microcredit institutions among the poorest of the poor are by and large in keeping with the environmental conservation norms.

"Yet there are some companies, which do things they shouldn't have been doing, as they violate norms of ecological conservation," she noted.

She said her organisation focuses on environmental degradation in the context of poverty alleviation. The Foundation gets involved with international corporate bodies and persuades them for ecological conservation to prevent environmental havoc in the way of poverty eradication.

"We only play an advocacy role, as we don't have enough power to exert upon corporate organisations. We help the bodies build awareness of the environmental cost."

The Foundation intends to place a negotiation at the Summit concerning ecological issues in the process of functioning of the corporate bodies and making use of microcredit, she said.

## US panel says shrimp imports harming producers

### REUTERS, Washington

The US International Trade Commission Tuesday gave preliminary approval to antidumping duties on shrimp imports from six countries in Asia and Latin America, saying there was a reasonable indication that the low-priced competition was harming US producers.

The 6-0 vote cleared the way for the US Commerce Department in coming months to impose preliminary anti-dumping duties on billions of dollars of shrimp imports from Brazil, China, Ecuador, India, Thailand and Vietnam.

Kevin Dempsey, an attorney representing US shrimp producers, said the trade panel's unanimous vote boded well for the industry's efforts to get anti-dumping duties ranging from 30 per cent to 300 per cent on shrimp from the six countries.

The current schedule calls for the Commerce Department to issue its preliminary ruling in early June but it is possible that deadline could slip a bit if Commerce officials decide they need more time.

The case pits the US industry, which harvests shrimp from the ocean, against foreign producers who mainly grow shrimp in ponds. US producers say that low-cost imports from the six countries are driving them out of business.



PHOTO: STAR  
Pacific Motors Limited Managing Director Faisal Morshed Khan and Nissan Diesel Motor Company Limited, Japan Executive Officer Suichita Sugita exchange documents after signing an agreement in Dhaka yesterday. Under the deal, Pacific Motors will import vehicles from Nissan and then assemble them in Bangladesh Machine Tools Factory. The company will also set up an assembling plant in Chittagong in a couple of years.

# Prices of essentials up on strikes

### STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Prices of flour, edible oil, green chilli, onion and fish soared in different kitchen markets in Dhaka in the last five days.

Wholesalers and retailers have attributed the price-hike to the three countrywide general strikes enforced by main opposition Awami League and its youth front -- Jubo League -- in the last five days.

Traders said transport disruption caused by the strikes led to supply shortage and price-hike.

In different markets in the capital yesterday, loose soybean oil was selling between Tk 58 and Tk 60 per litre while it was selling at Tk 56 a week ago. Price of a five-litre can of soybean oil has also shot up to Tk

300 against Tk 285 of four days ago, market sources said.

Coarse flour (atta) was selling at Tk 17 to Tk 18 per kg against Tk 15 to Tk 16 last week. Fine flour (moyda) was selling between Tk 20 and Tk 21 per kg while the price was between Tk 18 and Tk 19 the last week.

All kinds of fish continued soaring by 10-20 percent against the price of a week before.

Onion was selling between Tk 22 and Tk 24 per kg, showing an increase of Tk 2 per kg. The price of onion was Tk 20 to Tk 22 a week back, according to market sources.

Green chilli was selling at Tk 28 per kg against the price of Tk 20 a week ago.

# Tommy Miah in Dhaka as Heritage Restaurant opens

### STAR BUSINESS REPORT

A good news for the food connoisseurs in Dhaka. Master chef Tommy Miah has come to his homeland with some mouth-watering dishes.

The famous Bangladeshi-born British chef's special cuisine is now available at the Heritage Restaurant in Dhaka's Gulshan area.

Gourmets can enjoy Tommy's signature dishes and 'Bangla fusion cuisine', along with Indian, Pakistani and curry classic from the UK at the restaurant.

Commerce Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury on Tuesday evening inaugurated the new restaurant located at house-10, road-109 in Gulshan section 2.

A host of invited guests tasted some delicious items in presence of the master chef who was born in Moulvibazar district and move to England at his boyhood.

Tommy said it was his dream to open a restaurant in Bangladesh. "Today I'm delighted," he told the opening function.

Popularly known as 'Curry King', Tommy has been running the International Indian Chef of the Year Competition for the last 13 years. Some of the winning dishes are also available at the Heritage Restaurant.

The restaurant aims to project the rich diversity of Bangladesh heritage, art, craft and exquisite food, said Rizwan Bin Farouq, managing director of Heritage Restaurant. "That's why our slogan is -- Proud to be a Bangladeshi."

The 200-seat restaurant has nine corners named Mahasthangarh, Mainamoti, Paharpur, Gaurh, Sonargoan, Panam Nagar, Sundarbans, Ahsan Manzil, Lalbagh and Buriganga -- all of them carry the country's rich heritage.

The nicely decorated restaurant has paintings, photographs, terracotta and artworks on its walls and at entrance. Artist Jamal Ahmed's 28-foot long painting on the Buriganga for the restaurant is the largest painting in Bangladesh.

Former international fashion model Bibi Russell designed dresses for the restaurant staff.

Inaugurating the restaurant the commerce minister appreciated the effort to uphold the culture and heritage of the country.

British High Commissioner David Carter said Tommy is also well known as a charity worker in the United Kingdom. He hoped Tommy will do the same in Dhaka.

Nasir Rahman, member of the parliament from Tommy's Moulvibazar district, also spoke at the function.

Some leading businessmen, bureaucrats, diplomats, journalists also attended the function.

Tommy is the author of several recipe books. Queen Elizabeth-II wrote foreword for Tommy's book 'Favourite Recipes of the Raj'.



PHOTO: STAR  
Commerce Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury unveils the plaque of Heritage Restaurant in Dhaka's Gulshan area on Tuesday evening as among others Rizwan Bin Farouq, managing director of the restaurant, and Tommy Miah, master chef of the restaurant, look on.

# Ctg int'l trade fair opens

### BSS, Chittagong

Inaugurating the 12th Chittagong International Trade Fair 2004 (CITF-2004) here yesterday, Commerce Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury called upon traders and entrepreneurs to help government attain economic prosperity taking advantages of liberal policy support for trade promotion.

"Government is trying relentlessly to create enabling environment for trade and investment in the country by taking various pragmatic steps and reform measures to this effect," Khosru told the inaugural function at Railway Polo ground.

State Minister for Environment and Forest Jafurul Islam Chowdhury also spoke at the function.

Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) has organised the month-long mega-trade fair in the port city.

This year's exhibition features 4 mega-pavilions with an equal number of mini mega-pavilions, 42 pavilions and 400 booths covering the total area of 4 lakh square feet.

Besides Thailand, which is the 'partner country' of the fair, USA, Canada, Sri Lanka, China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Iran, Pakistan

and India are participating in the exposition.

With CCCI President Amir Humayun Mahmiud Chowdhury in the chair, the inaugural function was also addressed by CCCI vice-presidents Ershadullah and Manjural Amin Chowdhury.

The commerce minister said that business people and entrepreneurs should come forward in a bigger way to invest more in prospective fields and expand the existing trade areas through outsourcing and capacity building by taking advantage of the opportunities created following the execution of reform measures and formulation of policies in the field of trade and investment.

"Government will act as a facilitator and have no intention to do business. It is the duty of private sector people to do trade and make investment taking advantage of a conducive environment," the minister said adding that government would do everything needed for the expansion of trade and business.

Handing over of government land for the World Trade Center free of cost, projects taken to increase infrastructural capacity of

Chittagong sea port, steps to upgrade and empower Export Promotion Bureau, Board of Investment and offices of Export Import Comptroller in Chittagong together meant that present government has sincere intention to make the port city a vibrant economic hub of the country, the minister said.

In this context, Amir Khosru who is also the district minister in charge of Chittagong district assured that work of the much-talked-about Kamaphuli bridge would start soon through laying of foundation stone of the bridge by the prime minister. The government has a plan to construct the bridge within the tenure of present administration.

Jafurul Islam Chowdhury said that CITF-2004 like in the past would play a significant role in the promotion of trade and investment. He hoped that traders and entrepreneurs of the port city will be able to link up with their foreign counterparts in making business deals and attract foreign investment during their visit at the fair by utilising their skills.

The state minister called upon the businessmen to plant trees and contribute to in improving the environment of the country.

## Russia keen to help develop energy sector

### UNB, Dhaka

Russia, which was once a key partner in developing Bangladesh's energy and power infrastructure, is keen to resume assistance for further development of the booming sector.

Both sides in a meeting here yesterday discussed the areas of cooperation in the energy sector and decided to form a joint working committee to find out a roadmap for the required assistance.

State Minister for Energy and Mineral Resources AKM Mosharraf Hossain in the meeting with a Russian delegation sought cooperation, particularly in the exploration sector.

"There will be no PSC (production sharing contract). But you can help our exploration sector through joint venture, joint technical collaboration, seismic survey and study," he told the delegation.

Hafiz M Salikhov, the Trade and Foreign Economic Cooperation Minister of Tatarstan, a state of Russian Federation, led the delegation. Also present was Russian Ambassador in Dhaka Oleg S Malginov.

Tatarstan is well known for its expertise and experience in the exploration sector, particularly in oil exploration. It is also well equipped for deep-sea exploration.

## New variety of clone tea evolved

### UNB, Moulvibazar

The Bangladesh Tea Research Institute (BTRI) has evolved a third variety of clone tea following 11 years of experimentation.

BT-16, cloned from an Assam variety, is soon to be released to the tea gardens for commercial production.

Research on the Assam variety, planted in a garden in 1940, began in 1986 after selecting the variety by the BTRI.

After seven years of research, the variety was planted on trial basis in 1992. And through 12 years of observation, BT-16 was found suitable for production and its yield should be 3,629 kg per hectare.

Tea specialist Mukul Jyoti Dutta told UNB that the production that began nine years after the plantation was satisfactory.

He said the leaves of BT-16 are big in size and light green in colour and the species has strong and rapid growing quality.

BTRI released BT-14 and BT-15, last year.

## StanChart clients to get insurance service from Alico

Standard Chartered Bank has signed an agreement with American Life Insurance Company (Alico) to provide insurance facilities to its clients.

According to the deal, accountholders of the bank's monthly savings scheme will enjoy life insurance facilities from Alico, say a press release.

M Sajidur Rahman, head (Consumer Banking) of Standard Chartered Bank, and Akhlaqur Rahman, chief operating officer of Alico, signed the agreement on behalf of their organisations, says a press release.

Among others, Subroto Som, regional head of Consumer Banking, Middle East and South Asia, Standard Chartered Bank, Muklesur Rahman, head of Liabilities, Standard Chartered Bank, Bangladesh, and Mahavir Patil, group manager of Alico, were present.



PHOTO: STANDARD CHARTERED BANK  
M Sajidur Rahman, head (Consumer Banking) of Standard Chartered Bank, and Akhlaqur Rahman, chief operating officer of American Life Insurance Company (Alico), exchange documents after signing an agreement in Dhaka recently. Under the deal, monthly savings scheme accountholders of the bank will get life insurance service from Alico.