

STOCKS		COMMODITIES		ASIAN MARKETS		CURRENCIES	
DGEN	CSCX	Gold	Oil	MUMBAI	TOKYO	SINGAPORE	SHANGHAI
4.29%	3.08%	\$1,719.33	\$98.78	0.46%	0.61%	0.71%	0.10%
4,010.79	7,470.14	(per ounce)	(per barrel)	17,748.69	8,947.17	2,960.00	2,351.98
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				SELL TK	84.50	113.20	134.14

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# Business

DHAKA SUNDAY FEBRUARY 12, 2012, e-mail:business@thedailystar.net

## BTRC urges ministry to rethink plan for 85 gateway licences

**ABDULLAH MAMUN**  
 The telecom regulator has requested the telecom ministry to reconsider its decision to give 85 new licences for international call transferring gateways, internet gateways and interconnection exchanges.

The situation in the telecom sector will no longer be stable if the proposed number of licences is issued, said Zia Ahmed, chairman of Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC).

A letter was sent to the ministry Thursday.

BTRC predicts that the large number of new entrants will complicate connectivity among operators.

The telecom ministry has approved 85 new licences -- 25 for international gateways (IGWs), 21 for interconnection exchanges (ICXs) and 39 for international internet gateways (IIGs) -- and sent the list to the regulator on Wednesday to issue the licences.

The IGWs deal with overseas call transferring, while the ICXs offer interconnectivity service to telecom operators and IIGs supply bandwidth to internet service providers.

The BTRC chairman told The Daily Star on Thursday that the Bangladesh telecom market does not support 85 new licences and they will not be able to make business. Nine such licence holders

already exist in the market, he said.

He said according to guidelines, all the telecom operators will have to connect with the new licence holders, and that will become too cumbersome.

Moreover, he said around 4.5 crore international call minutes will be daily distributed among the IGWs that will not be a viable business for them.

Telecom Minister Rajiuddin Ahmed Raju said the ministry approved the issue of 85 new licences to be transparent and imperial.

"We want to make a competitive market. Those who will do good will survive and the poor performers will phase out," he said.

**READ MORE ON B3**

## Nano to be launched in Bangladesh this month

**SAJJADUR RAHMAN**  
 Nitol Group, distributor of Tata Motors in Bangladesh, will start marketing the Nano car this month.

"We will import 100-200 cars and move forward depending on market demand," said Abdul Matlub Ahmed, chairman of Nitol.

One of the smallest as well as low-powered (624cc) cars in the world, the Nano was designed to be the cheapest car in India. However, the price of the car for the Bangladesh market is yet to be determined, Ahmed said. He hinted that it might be between Tk 6 lakh and Tk 6.5 lakh.

Used cars from Japan are most popular in Bangladesh for the high quality and reliability of the cars. Cars made in India were not able to enter

the Bangladesh market for years. But this time, the Nano distributor hopes they would be able to grab market share for its cost effectiveness, a rising middleclass in the country and a rise in the prices of Japanese cars.

"We'll import all models and look at market response. Then we'll decide on the import programme on the basis of demand," the Nitol Group chairman said. He does not want to set any sales target before understanding the market response.

The Nano was scheduled to be launched in Bangladesh in October last year, but the pricing issue delayed it.

When Tata Motors launched the Nano in 2008, it was one of the most-talked-about car projects. The low cost car was also the cheapest that money could buy and hopes were

floating. Initially, bookings were big and stayed big for some time, until things began to look rather steep.

The Nano was bogged down by a few cases of cars failing and wiring or electrical defects, according to Tata Motors. People began to cancel their bookings and the Nano was in trouble and the carmaker failed to achieve its target of selling the Nano at even the 'one lakh rupees' price tag.

"Recently, Tata has updated a lot of things in the Nano and made it an appealing one," Ahmed said.

The Indian automaker began exports of the Nano to Sri Lanka and Nepal last year. Tata Motors exported 1,728 units of the small car between April and November 2011.

[sajjad@thedailystar.net](mailto:sajjad@thedailystar.net)

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### Current account balance turns positive in Dec

**REJAUL KARIM BYRON**

The country's current account balance returned to the black in December due to a slowdown in imports, after a month in the red.

In December, the current account balance, a broad measure of trade and other flows, logged a surplus of \$409 million.

It slipped into the negative territory in November, for the first time in five months since July, as the country's import spending went up. The balance ran a deficit of \$14 million until November, according to data from the Bangladesh Bank.

In December, imports fell by 2.47 percent, while exports grew by 3.45 percent. In the first half of the current fiscal year, the growth of import and export was the same.

Opening of letters of credit for imports dropped by 6 percent in the same month, strengthening the current account balance.

Remittances sent by the migrant workers rose by 18 percent in December and by 25 percent in January.

As a result, the foreign currency reserves, which went down to \$9 billion around a month ago, stood at \$9.38 billion on February 7.

A BB official said the situation would improve further in January and February, as the imports have continued to come down and the remittances inflow has gone up.

He also said there are signs that the foreign currency reserve has improved in the last couple of days. The exchange rate, which had been going up everyday, has come to a halt.

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