

STOCKS		COMMODITIES		ASIAN MARKETS				CURRENCIES				
DGEN	CSCX	Gold	Oil	MUMBAI	TOKYO	SINGAPORE	SHANGHAI	USD	EUR	GBP	JPY	
▲ 1.55%	▲ 1.58%	\$1,620.90 (per ounce)	\$101.84 (per barrel)	Closed	▼ 2.53%	Flat	▲ 1.74%	BUY TK	81.25	104.76	127.22	0.98
5,098.91	9,479.30				9,767.61	2,986.20	2,302.24	SELL TK	82.25	108.78	132.20	1.04

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# Star BUSINESS

DHAKA FRIDAY APRIL 6, 2012, e-mail:business@thedailystar.net

## Egg imports on, bypassing ban

**SOHEL PARVEZ and REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA**

Traders continue to import eggs from India, bypassing a government restriction that prohibits such imports from a bird flu-infected country.

Egg importers take advantage of policy mismatch by the commerce ministry that put in place a general ban but gives special permission for imports.

Rajdhani International, a trader, imported some 77 lakh pieces of Indian eggs through Benapole land port in the last one month, although the neighbouring country suffers from the avian influenza, a customs official said.

India notified the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) of a bird flu outbreak on February 6, according to the OIE website.

Rajdhani received the green light from the commerce ministry in August 2009 to import 10 crore pieces of eggs.

Rajdhani has so far imported more than two crore pieces. On April 4, it imported 6.93 lakh pieces of eggs through Benapole, the customs official at the land port said.

Maksudur Rahman, manager of Rajdhani International, said, "Although the flu prevails in some of the Indian states, so far we know West Bengal (Paschimbanga) is free from it."

"We are importing the eggs after getting certificates from the government authorised surveyors," he said.

The consignments were allowed entry on the basis of certificates from a sur-

veyor, World Wide Service, that the consignments were free from avian influenza, said an official of Benapole Customs, seeking not to be named.

However, Musaddique Hossain, chief veterinary officer of Department of Livestock Services, said even if test reports say the imported products are free from virus or other hazardous matters, it does not guarantee that avian influenza will not transmit.

"Transmission of avian influenza can take place through various ways such as transportation, machinery, trays used for carrying eggs or other poultry products and even through human interventions," he said.

"If any strain of virus enters through import, disease will spread faster," he said, "We can only think of importing from a country when OIE declares the country or a zone free from bird flu," said Hossain.

Margoob Ahmed, commissioner of Benapole Customs, said eggs have been being imported based on special permission of the ministry since 2009.

He said imports were allowed as per rule.

The entry of eggs from India, however, has created worries among farmers and experts that imports of poultry products from a country not free from bird flu widen the risk of spread of avian influenza virus locally.

Import from a bird flu affected country also increases the risk of mutation of viruses, they added.

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**STAR**  
From left, M Amanullah Khan, team leader of PROSPER, a DFID-funded microfinance project; Atiur Rahman, governor of Bangladesh Bank; Sadiq Ahmed, vice chairman of Policy Research Institute (PRI); and Zaidi Sattar, chairman, attend a seminar, jointly organised by the Institute of Microfinance and PRI in the city yesterday.

## Analysts suggest microfinance policy

**STAR BUSINESS REPORT**

The government should make a visionary public policy on microfinance to clear its position as a financial tool and help remove confusion over it, an analyst said yesterday.

"We have rules, regulations and procedures on microfinance. But we do not have a policy," said M Amanullah Khan, team leader of Prosper, a DFID-funded microfinance project in Bangladesh. "We need a policy that will cover insurance, healthcare, savings and money transfers."

"Unless we have a clearly defined

national microfinance policy, our responses to delivering or scaling up low-income financial services will continue to be knee-jerk and piecemeal," Khansaid.

"It is still not late for the government to devise a national policy for microfinance for financial inclusion, a policy that is holistic, futuristic and yet practical," he said.

Khan spoke at a seminar, "Towards a public policy on microfinance in Bangladesh" co-organised by the Institute of Microfinance (InM) and Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh (PRI) at the latter's office in Dhaka.

READ MORE ON B3

## Bangabandhu conference centre to get new operator

**SAYEDA AKTER**

State-owned Bangladesh Services Ltd (BSL) is likely to become the management operator of Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC) in the capital.

The BSL will sign an agreement this month with the Public Works Department (PWD) under the Ministry of Housing and Public Works, owner of the convention centre, said a BSL official preferring anonymity.

The deal will initially be effective for 10 years.

The BSL that also owns Ruposhi Bangla Hotel will pay revenue worth Tk 28 crore in the first year and Tk 33 crore in the second year to the PWD. The revenue will increase by Tk 5 crore each year.

A section of 400 permanent BSL employees who work for Ruposhi Bangla Hotel will be responsible to manage the centre.

"We have the expertise and a proven track record in managing an international brand like Sheraton. So we are the most deserving name that can manage a convention centre like BICC," said the BSL official.

Earlier in February, InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG) signed a deal to take over the operations and management of Ruposhi Bangla.

In the next two years, the hotel will undergo extensive facelifts and then will be handed over to IHG for a period of 30 years.

InterContinental ran the state-owned hotel from 1966 to 1983. Sheraton took over its operations and management in 1983, and its tenure ended on December 2008. Sheraton, however, had to continue operations until April 30, 2011.

Starwood, the owning company of Sheraton, gave BSL a conditional extension offer to terminate all hotel employees during renovation in 2009. The government agency disagreed with the condition, and took over the hotel's operations under the new banner of Ruposhi Bangla.

The BICC is the only convention centre in the country that hosts different local and international events, including fairs, festivals, seminars, political events and weddings, and earns around Tk 4 crore a month.

In 2005, the BICC was privatised and awarded to Agrabad Accom - Consortium Limited, an Orion Group company.

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\*Entry for the event is free for all



**Stocks end the week on a high note**

**STAR BUSINESS REPORT**

Stocks returned to the black yesterday, as investors went on a buying spree. The benchmark index of Dhaka Stock Exchange finished the week at 5,098.91 points, after gaining 78.04 points.

Analysts said investors became optimistic following DSE's reminder to the sponsors and directors of listed firms to increase stakes in their own firms to comply with regulatory requirements.



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