

STOCKS		COMMODITIES		ASIAN MARKETS				CURRENCIES				
DGEN	CSCX	Gold	Oil	MUMBAI	TOKYO	SINGAPORE	SHANGHAI	USD	EUR	GBP	JPY	
0.01%	0.17%	\$1,643.62 (per ounce)	\$103.11 (per barrel)	0.74%	0.28%	0.46%	1.19%	81.25	106.10	129.49	0.97	
5,367.19	10,011.57			17,373.84	9,561.36	2,994.48	2,406.86	BUY TK	82.25	110.08	133.51	1.04
								SELL TK				

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star BUSINESS

DHAKA MONDAY APRIL 23, 2012, e-mail:business@thedailystar.net

Indian eggs threaten Bangladesh poultry Sector people warn of looming danger



Bird flu cuts poultry production and threatens to ruin the sector.

MD FAZLUR RAHMAN

Egg imports from India, a bird flu-infected country, could destroy Bangladesh's entire poultry industry, sector people warned yesterday.

In November 2011, the commerce ministry allowed Dhaka-based Faria Enterprise Ltd to import one crore pieces of hatching eggs from India.

In October 2010, the ministry allowed the same company to import one crore pieces of day-old chicks from India and other countries. The firm was told to complete the import by June last year. The minister later extended the deadline to June 30 this year.

The entry of eggs from the neighbouring country has created worries among experts, who said such imports from a

country not free from bird flu widen the risk of spread of avian influenza locally.

"Being a bird flu affected country we cannot export our poultry products. On the other hand, we are importing poultry products from another bird flu-affected country," said Moshir Rahman, convener of Bangladesh Poultry Industries Coordination Committee.

He said the livestock ministry is the main authority to deal with the poultry sector, which has directly employed around 70 lakh people, mostly in rural areas, and another 30 lakh people indirectly.

"We understand that the commerce ministry gives permission for imports, but it should have discussed with the livestock ministry on the issue," he told The Daily Star.

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Default loans at state banks still high: BB

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

State-run commercial banks are running with 11.27 percent default loans, double the industry average, although they were corporatised about five years ago to make a turnaround, the central bank said yesterday.

Sonali Bank, the country's largest bank, has the highest percentage of non-

performing loans at 17.89 percent or Tk 5,705 crore.

Janata Bank has 10.7 percent bad loans compared to the 6.12 percent industry average.

"The amount of default loans at the state banks is still high despite being corporatised," said Bangladesh Bank Governor Atiur Rahman.

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Biman gets acting MD



Sheikh Nasiruddin Ahmed

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Sheikh Nasiruddin Ahmed has recently been appointed acting managing director and chief executive officer of Biman Bangladesh Airlines. He will take over on Wednesday, the national carrier said in a statement yesterday.

Ahmed, now director for planning of Biman, replaces Air Commodore (ret'd) M Zakiul Islam.

The change in the top Biman post came at a time when employees of the carrier have been demonstrating to press home their demand for resignation of all board members, including the chairman, "for their inefficiency and incurring a loss of Tk 1,000 crore".

In a brief phone interview with The Daily Star, Ahmed pledged to turn Biman around.

About the ongoing protests, he said he would take necessary steps to solve the problems soon.

In its meeting on Friday, Biman's Board of Directors decided to appoint an acting MD until the appointment of an MD through newspaper advertisement.

Zakiul Islam has been serving as Biman MD and CEO for nearly three years. His tenure was supposed to end in July.

But he sought to resign on April 1 in a letter to Biman Chairman Air Marshal (ret'd) Jamal Uddin Ahmed.

Private airlines too weak to fly

SAYEDA AKTER

Frustrations deepened over the local airlines' failure to sustain business, at a time when air travel on local routes witnessed a boom riding on the boost in business activities and inbound tourism.

The situation worsened when the country's oldest private carrier -- GMG Airlines -- halted its operations from March 30 for an indefinite period.

Analysts said inadequate investment and a lack of skilled manpower grounded the airlines, one after another.

Before GMG, some other local ventures, including Aero Bengal, Air Parabat and Royal Bengal Airways, also shut down their operations.

Another private airline, Best Air, has been out of operation for long, although it says it will start flying soon.

Destiny Group bought an 80 percent stake in Best Air for Tk 66 crore in November 2010, according to a financial report of Destiny.

At present, two private airlines -- United Airways and Regent Airline --

are in operation.

United Airways flies on both domestic and international routes, while Regent operates domestic flights.

The analysts said private airlines in Bangladesh also lack planning and operational expertise that forced some of them to fold wings in recent years.

Moreover, local private airlines lack managerial skills, experience, and expertise at large, they added.

It is unfortunate that local carriers are folding business at a time when the number of air travellers increased manifold in the past decade, said Imran Asif, chief executive of Regent Airways.

The main reasons behind such unsustainability include a lack of intention, planning and investment, he said.

These three factors are essential to initiate an aviation venture and make it successful in the long run, said Asif.

"The first and foremost factor is that an entrepreneur must have the intention to make an airline operational. After that, it has to be sup-

ported by efficient planning, and then comes the obvious part -- the venture must have enough investment."

In 1993, the government decided to allow private airlines to operate in selected domestic routes with 'short take-off and landing (STOL)' aircraft.

Local entrepreneurs showed interest then for the first time in aviation business, and GMG Airlines launched its flights forming the country's first ever airline venture in April 1998.

In 2003, the government opened regional and international routes for private airlines.

The last decade saw the launch of some private airlines: Best Air, United Airways and Royal Bengal Airways in 2007, and Regent Airways in 2010.

Some other initiatives -- Aero Bengal and Air Parabat -- also came into being but were grounded soon after their launch.

As local carriers offered competitive fares and services compared to the national flag carrier, the number of air travellers marked a rise.

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