

STOCKS		COMMODITIES		ASIAN MARKETS				CURRENCIES				
DSEX	CSCX	Gold	Oil	MUMBAI	TOKYO	SINGAPORE	SHANGHAI	USD	EUR	GBP	JPY	
0.37%	0.24%	\$1,246.90	\$60.97	0.54%	0.34%	0.43%	0.37%	82.95	93.50	103.62	0.72	
5,275.76	9,781.47	(per ounce)	(per barrel)	35,150.01	21,148.02	3,059.28	2,594.09	BUY TK	82.95	93.50	103.62	0.72
								SELL TK	83.95	97.30	107.42	0.76

মুনাফার সাথে আস্থতাও বেশি

বেশি মুনাফা 1%

এসআইবিএল সুপার সেভিংস একাউন্ট

পঞ্চানন-উর্ধ্ব সিনিয়র সিটিজেনদের জন্য। ১৮-উর্ধ্ব মহিলারাও এই হিসাবটি খুলতে পারবেন।

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Star BUSINESS

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Tax waiver widens for firms in hi-tech park

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Firms making goods and providing services from hi-tech parks will not have to pay income tax in the first seven years of their operations, up from three years previously.

After that 70 percent of the tax will be waived in the next three years, said the National Board of Revenue (NBR) in an order on December 4.

The tax collector first started offering the waiver to the parks' developers and investors three years ago in an effort to promote investment and youth employment in the country.

At that time, following the first three years of full waiver, the firms were to enjoy a further 80 percent reduction on the fourth year.

The waiver was then to decline by 10 percentage points on each of the subsequent years till the 10th year, when the amount waived comes to stand at 20 percent.

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Bid to weed out hazardous child labour by 2020

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The government has taken up a Tk 284 crore project to lift one lakh children out of hazardous form of labour by 2020 with a view to brightening the country's image, said a top official of the labour ministry yesterday.

Under the self-funded project, 10,000 children will get Tk 10,000 each as initial capital for skills development and training, said Afroza Khan, secretary to the ministry.

Another mega project is also coming soon to rid 1.28 million children of hazardous labour by 2021, Khan said while addressing a workshop styled 'CLEAR exit strategy and way forward' at the capital's Bangabandhu International Conference Centre.

The ministry and International Labour Organisation jointly organised the workshop to share the findings of a



Under a Tk 284cr project, children will get funds for skills development and training.

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study on child labour conducted under the ILO's Country Level Engagement and Assistance to Reduce (CLEAR) Child Labour project.

The government high-ups, ILO experts, local government representatives, representative from the US Department of Labour, non-governmental organisations and factory owners attended the workshop.

Some eight sectors have been identified as hazardous for those the age of 18, Khan said.

"They are not allowed to work there."

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Int'l incoming calls lowest in nine years

MUHAMMAD ZAHIDUL ISLAM

The international incoming voice call minute has dropped by three-fourths in the last three years, as people progressively switch to internet-based mobile apps that cost nothing to communicate abroad.

At present, 3.20 crore minutes of international incoming calls are terminated every day, which is the lowest volume in nine years.

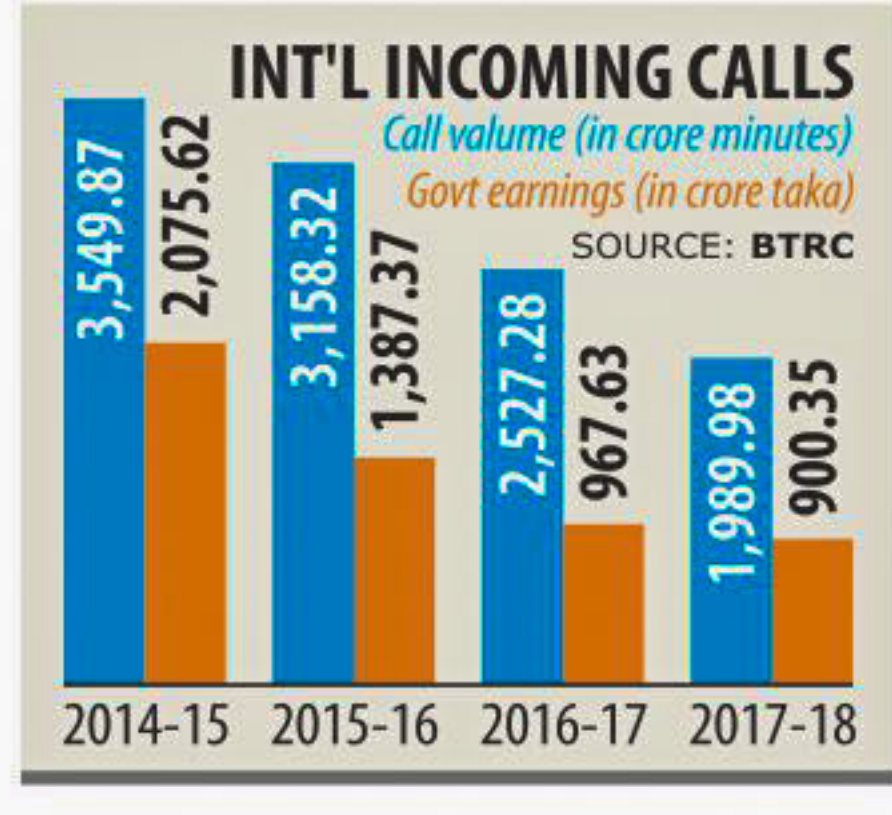
At the beginning of the year the incoming call volume was 5.5 crore to 6 crore minutes a day, while three years back it was about 12 crore minutes, according to officials of the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC).

A significant portion of the international calls are now being made through internet-based platforms such as Skype, WhatsApp, Viber, Imo and WeChat, which cost nothing other than the price of data, said industry experts.

As a result, the government's earnings from the sector are shrinking: in fiscal 2017-18 it got Tk 900.35 crore from the sector, in contrast to Tk 2,075.62 crore four years earlier.

The hiking of international call termination rate, which made making calls home for expatriate Bangladeshis costlier, and allowing a cartel in the system are the other reasons behind the sinking incoming call volume, said industry experts.

In February, the international call termination rate was raised to 2.5 cents from 2 cents, which has resulted in a spike in



international calls through the illegal channels.

"We are taking different measures and running huge raids but the situation is not improving," said a senior official of the telecom watchdog, requesting not to be named.

In the last couple of months, the regulator blocked more than 1 lakh SIMs and seized a huge amount of equipment through which international incoming calls are illegally terminated.

And yet, the incoming legal call minutes are not increasing.

Md Jahurul Haque, acting chairman of the BTRC, said they are trying their level best to improve the situation.

"Increasing call termination rate is not in our hand so I can't comment on it. But it is true that if there is a huge margin between legal and illegal channel, you cannot stop it only by running raids," he added.

Stocks keep falling for political jitters

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

A wait-and-see approach of institutional investors ahead of this month's national election and the deteriorating health of the banking sector have hit investors hard sending Dhaka stocks into the red for the fourth consecutive session yesterday.

The benchmark index of the premier bourse, DSEX, declined 19.93 points, or 0.37 percent, before finishing the day at 5,275.76. It lost 85.35 points in the last four days.

The spiralling non-performing loans—which rose 24 percent year-on-year to Tk 99,370 crore at the end of the third quarter this fiscal year—are taking a toll on the banking sector.

Most of the institutional investors now prefer to wait to see how the market behaves after the polls, market insiders said.

Even foreign investors are shrinking investment fearing political tensions centring the elections, they said.

Turnover, one of the important indicators of the market, dropped 14.83 percent to Tk 483.46 crore with 11.29 crore shares and mutual fund units changing hands on the DSE.

Big investors always become cautious ahead of national elections, said a top offi-



cial of an asset management company, requesting not to be named.

Banks and non-bank financial institutions continued falling in the last few days thanks to the rising NPL, pulling down the market, he said.

"The stock brokers who have availed tax advantage on the proceeds of their DSE stake sale on condition of investing the money in the market are now making investment. Otherwise, political jitters might have left a much worse impact on the market."

The stock brokers are bound to invest the proceeds in the stockmarket and place their portfolio to the National Board of Revenue within six months.

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Yarn prices slide on supply glut

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

The fall in yarn prices by at least 12 percent in the last two months has made Bangladesh's 430 local millers uneasy, industry insiders said.

Between June and July, the widely consumed 30 carded yarn sold between \$3.40 and \$3.50 a kilogram. But from November onwards the prices of the same yarn dropped to \$3.05 a kg.

If the trend continues, the stock of yarn, which is the main raw material for finished apparel items, may pile up, putting the \$8 billion primary textile industry under threat.

Easy availability of cheap Indian yarn and lower prices of raw cotton worldwide due to the US-China tariff war are to blame for the sliding yarn prices.

"The prices of yarn are falling everyday because of oversupply," said Monsoor Ahmed, secretary of Bangladesh Textile Mills Association, the platform for the spinners and weavers.

The oversupply of Indian yarn has been worsening the situation, he said, adding that there is a possi-



bility of yarn's inventory piling up.

The Indian spinners can sell yarn at a cheaper rate because they have their own raw cotton, said Razeeb Haider, managing director of Outpace Spinning Mills Ltd, a yarn supplier.

"A lot of the Bangladeshi knitwear manufacturers are importing the cheaper Indian yarn," he added.

The supply of yarn from both the domestic and Indian market is very high at present, so the prices have decreased between 10 cents and 15 cents per kg, said Bakhtiar Uddin Ahmed, general manager at Fakir Apparels, a Narayanganj-based garment maker.

The price difference between Indian and Bangladeshi yarn is 10 to 15 cents per kg, said Ahmed, who procures up to 40 percent of the yarn required by his factory from the neighbouring country.

The yarn prices have dropped because of the fall in cotton price worldwide, said Momin Mondol, managing director of Mondol Group.

The total demand for yarn is more than 21 lakh tonnes per year.

Of the demand 70 percent is met by local millers and the rest is imported, mainly from India, China, Vietnam and Pakistan.

Bangladesh's 430 spinners can supply nearly 90 percent of the demand for yarn from the knitwear sector and 35 percent from the woven sector.

As a result, Bangladeshi woven garment manufacturers import fabrics worth more than \$6 billion from countries like China, India, Vietnam and Pakistan.

InterContinental opens to guests

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG), one of the world's leading hotel companies, has announced the commencement of commercial operations of InterContinental Dhaka in partnership with state-run Bangladesh Services Limited (BSL).

The opening of InterContinental Dhaka, formerly known as Ruposhi Bangla and Sheraton, came following four years of renovations.

Vivek Bhalla, regional vice president for southwest Asia at IHG, said, "Today is a milestone occasion for us as we announce the opening of InterContinental Dhaka – a stunning property that will offer the guests a luxurious experience with signature facilities and high standards of service that we have become renowned for."

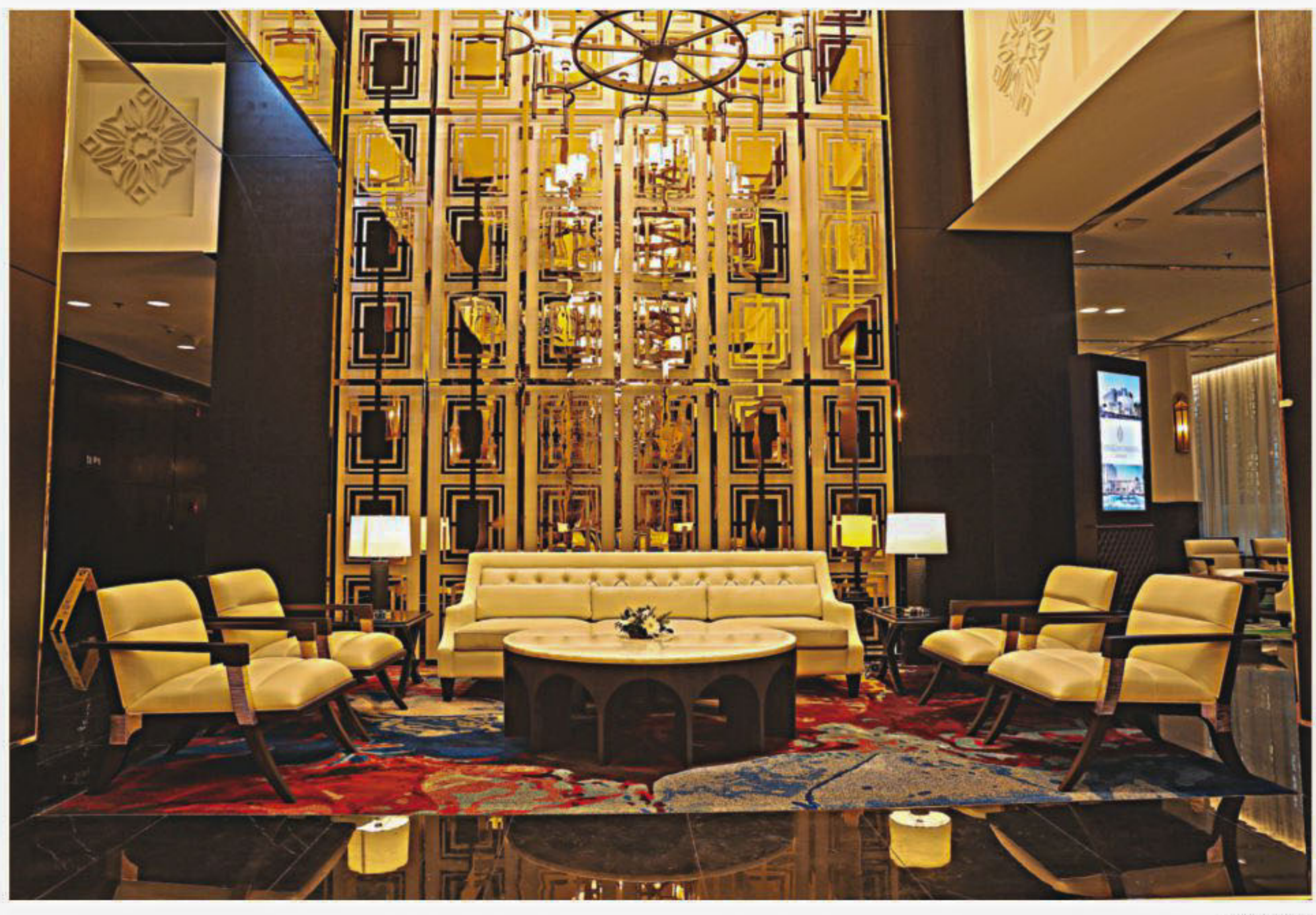
"We are confident that the hotel will be a great success and we look forward to welcoming our guests from around the world. The opening also aligns with our strategy to expand our presence across brands, and key cities in the southwest Asia region," he said in a statement on Monday.

InterContinental had run the iconic Dhaka hotel from 1966 to 1983 before Sheraton took over.

Though Sheraton's agreement ended in 2008, the BSL requested it to continue operations until April 30, 2011 for the ICC Cricket World Cup.

In February 2012, the BSL signed a 30-year deal with IHG, paving the way for the British multinational hospitality company to undertake the hotel's management. The BSL ran it as Ruposhi Bangla Hotel from May 2011 till its closure for refurbishment in September 2014.

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A partial view of the lobby of InterContinental Dhaka that opened to public recently.

NEWS IN brief

- BB to release new notes**
New notes of Tk 2 and Tk 5 denominations will be released from Bangladesh Bank's Motijheel office today. The two new notes will carry the signature of Finance Secretary Abdur Rouf Talukder. The notes will also be released from other offices of the central bank in phases.
- EBL to issue Tk 500cr bonds**
The Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission has allowed Eastern Bank Ltd to raise Tk 500 crore by issuing floating non-convertible subordinated bonds. The bonds will have a maturity period of seven years and a face value of Tk 1 crore per unit. EBL will use the proceeds to strengthen capital base.
- Pacific Denims' directors fined**
The stockmarket regulator has decided to fine the managing director and directors of Pacific Denims Ltd for under-utilisation of IPO proceeds of the company. The newly listed company also evaded banking channel in case of some expenses and transacted money illegally. Each one will be fined Tk 3 lakh.
- Ali Securities fined for breaking rules**
The Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission has decided to fine Ali Securities Tk 5 lakh for deficit in its consolidated customers' account. The broker also provided margin loans to clients through a cash account, instead of a loan account, without any loan contract.