

| STOCKS | | COMMODITIES | | ASIAN MARKETS | | | | CURRENCIES | | | | |
|----------|----------|------------------------|----------------------|---------------|-----------|-----------|----------|------------|-------|--------|--------|------|
| DSEX | CSCX | Gold | Oil | MUMBAI | TOKYO | SINGAPORE | SHANGHAI | USD | EUR | GBP | JPY | |
| ▲ 0.92% | ▲ 0.83% | \$1,272.00 (per ounce) | \$50.92 (per barrel) | ▲ 0.51% | ▲ 0.89% | ▼ 1.31% | ▼ 0.26% | 82.95 | 93.80 | 104.68 | 0.74 | |
| 5,349.18 | 9,894.02 | | | 35,649.94 | 19,327.06 | 3,011.15 | 2,498.29 | BUY TK | 83.95 | 97.60 | 108.48 | 0.77 |

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Star BUSINESS

DHAKA THURSDAY DECEMBER 27, 2018, POUISH 13, 1425 BS • starbusiness@thedailystar.net

Domestic tourism walloped by polls

No new booking at hotels from Dec 28 onwards

MUHAMMAD ZAHIDUL ISLAM

The domestic tourism sector has been hit hard by the escalating tension surrounding Sunday's general elections as visitors stay away from popular tourist destinations such as the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Cox's Bazar and Sylhet for fear of getting stranded.

The slump comes at a time when the sector typically clocks in impressive numbers for favourable weather and school holidays.

The peak season for the tourism industry is from the middle of December to January, but the number of local tourists moving around came crashing down to only 10 percent of last year's at this point, said industry leaders.

Local tourists numbered 70 lakh in 2017, up from 60 lakh a year earlier. Besides, there were 7.78 lakh inbound foreign tourists last year, according to tour operators, hotels, resorts and the Bangladesh Tourism Board.

This huge number of tourists contributed to the country's steady economic growth, but this time might be different, said industry leaders.

Khairul Anam, general manager for sales and marketing at Nazimgarh Resorts, which runs three resorts in the Sylhet region, said occupancy normally stands at upwards of 95 percent in December, but this year it is hardly 10 percent.

"In the previous years, it was very tough for visitors to book rooms from December 30 to January 1 because of New Year celebrations. But this year we have no reservations. In fact, we have no guests from December 28 onwards."

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Banking division cracks the whip on state banks

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The banking division has sought specific plans from the state-owned commercial banks to bring down their huge amounts of default loans, which is progressively posing a threat to the sector's stability.

The six state-owned banks accounted for 48.38 percent of the sector's total default loans of Tk 99,371 crore at the end of September, according to data from the central bank.

The default loans of the six banks amounted to 38.23 percent of their total outstanding loans. Janata had the highest amount of default loans of Tk 14,376 crore, followed by Sonali at Tk 12,271 crore.

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Power import gets easier

Bangladesh can import electricity from Nepal, Bhutan thru' Indian territory

MD FAZLUR RAHMAN

India has issued a new cross-border power trading regulation, which will go a long way in helping Bangladesh import electricity from Nepal and Bhutan using Indian transmission lines to meet growing energy needs, officials said.

India's power ministry approved the "Guidelines for Import/Export (Cross Border) of Electricity-2018" on December 18.

In case of tripartite agreements, cross-border trade of electricity across India shall be allowed under the overall framework of bilateral agreements signed between the Indian government and the government of the respective neighbouring country or countries of the participating entities, it said.

"Now, we can do bilateral power trade with Nepal and Bhutan. It is a big opening on the Indian side," Ahmad Kaikaus, power secretary of Bangladesh, told The Daily Star.

"The amendment ensures the market for Nepalese hydroelectricity in India and

Bangladesh," Barsha Man Pun, energy, water resources and irrigation minister of Nepal, told news magazine New Spotlight on Monday.

Semana Dahal, a lawyer advising the Nepalese government, told the Kathmandu Post, "This will foster power trade between Nepal and Bangladesh, giving opportunity to the former to export surplus electricity that it is on the track to generate within a few years."

Dhaka has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Kathmandu on electricity import. The first meeting of a corresponding joint working group and joint steering committee was held in Kathmandu on December 3-4.

"Under this circumstance, it is now matter of time to import hydropower from Nepal through India," said Bangladesh's power and energy ministry in a statement.

A tripartite agreement between Dhaka, New Delhi and Kathmandu may be signed soon to help Bangladesh import electricity from Nepal, said an official of the ministry.

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J&J BABY POWDER BSTI collects samples for asbestos test

SOHEL PARVEZ

The Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI) has collected samples of Johnson & Johnson's baby powder from the domestic market to test if there is any presence of cancer-causing asbestos in the celebrated product, said an official yesterday.

"We have given the sample to our lab to see if they can test for asbestos," said

SM Ishaque Ali, director of certification mark at BSTI.

Four samples of baby powder have been collected from four different places and tests would be done elsewhere if the BSTI lab cannot do the job, according to the official.

"We hope to get a result within 21 working days," he added.

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২৭ ডিসেম্বর ২০১৮, বৃহস্পতিবার

১৩৭ তম

ছাগলনাইয়া শাখা

ছফুরা আর্কেড, হোল্ডিং নং-১৩৪০, ১৩৪১ কলেজ রোড, ওয়ার্ড নং-৫, থানা ও পৌরসভা-ছাগলনাইয়া, জেলা-ফেনী।

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DSE backtracks on imposing app usage fee

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) has backtracked from its decision to charge Tk 150 per month for trading via its mobile app considering the present situation of the market as well as to reach more users first.

The premier bourse informed investors of its decision yesterday through its website. On December 23 it had decided to impose the fee from January.

"This is not a suitable time to introduce the fee considering the market movement, so we decided to make a U-turn. Already investors have been irked by the news on the imposition of the fee," said a DSE board member, preferring anonymity.

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