

Lift 'discriminatory' tax, duty on used vehicles

BARVIDA leaders urge govt

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Reconditioned car importers have urged the government to withdraw 'discriminatory' tax and duty on used vehicles.

In last year's budget, the government levelled tax and duty on reconditioned and new car imports to discourage imports of used cars, blaming them prime producer of black smoke.

At a press conference yesterday in Dhaka, Bangladesh Reconditioned Vehicles Importers and Dealers Association (BARVIDA) President Abdul Mannan Chowdhury Khosru said the emission rate of new cars is high because they do not have in-built three-way catalytic converters, which reduce carbon monoxide emission.

Quoting a study, which was done under the auspices of World Bank, the importers said reconditioned cars are less polluter than new ones.

According to the study, the rate of carbon monoxide emission of most petrol and diesel-run new cars is nearly 8 per cent against the acceptable rate of 4.5 per cent, they said. But the study, jointly conducted by Air Quality Management Project of Environment and Forest Ministry and Society for Urban Environmental Protection, an NGO, reveals the emission rate of reconditioned cars is only 0.05 per cent, the BARVIDA leaders said.

BARVIDA president said the 'so-called' brand new cars are ordered to assemble with poor quality engines to keep price competitive.

He said cheap cars like Maruti-Suzuki and Tata Gati of India and Hyundai of South Korea are pouring into Bangladesh, taking advantage of reduced tax and duty structure for new car imports.

As the special rebate has been given to new taxicab import, some traders are raking in money out of the new tariff structure. The unscrupulous traders are importing low quality cars especially from

India, which do not have catalytic converters.

"The new cars look good from outside but their insides are fragile as they are built with old model engines," he said.

He said the price of brand new cars should be much higher than what they are selling now. Local distributors can offer at this lower rate because these cars are not actually brand new, as the engines are old models.

He also said the motor show being held in Dhaka is not displaying some particular cars because of their high emission levels.

He said reconditioned cars are more environment-friendly than the 'so-called' new cars because Japanese companies build them for home use and it is mandatory to have three-way in-built catalytic converters for cars to ply on Japanese roads.

Most of Bangladesh's reconditioned cars come from Japan.

Being traditionally affluent, the Japanese tend to change model of cars so the reconditioned cars are so strong and there is little difference between new and old cars, BARVIDA president said.

Considering the economic condition of Bangladeshi buyers, reconditioned cars should be encouraged to keep foreign currency level stable, he said.

"We are yet to afford luxury cars. When the luxury accompanies pollution the government must rethink its decision," he said.

MAH Sharif, chairman of BARVIDA standing committee on budget, tax and tariff, also spoke at the function held at Hotel Purbani International.



PHOTO: RELIANCE INS

Reliance Insurance Ltd Chairman A Rouf Chowdhury presides over the 15th annual general meeting (AGM) of the company held in Dhaka yesterday.

NGOs' 15 proposals for WTO talks

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

International and local NGOs placed a 15-point proposal before the LDC governments for discussion at a WTO meeting scheduled to be held in Cancun, Mexico in Sep-

tember this year.

At a press briefing in Dhaka yesterday, a platform of 15 local and international NGOs placed the proposals aiming to uphold trade interest of poor countries.

The proposals came when a

ministerial conference of least developed countries (LDCs) began in Dhaka yesterday.

They called upon the developing countries and LDCs to reject patents of life forms.

ActionAid-Bangladesh, Consumers International and South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment (SAWTEE) led the platform of the NGOs.

The proposals included a framework agreement on differentiated rights and obligations, non-reciprocal preferences in terms of tariff and quota-free access for all LDC exports with flexible rules of origin.

They, in the proposals, also demanded free movement of natural persons.

They demanded access to affordable medicines for all and voiced against any patenting of life

LDC's policy flexibility in agriculture for food security should be kept in provision, the proposals said.

The NGOs called for debt cancellation of LDCs and greater coherence in global economic policy making.

They demanded investigation into WTO barriers to technology transfer.

S Sothi Rachagan, regional director of Consumers International, Asia Pacific Office, Ratnakar Adhikari, executive director of South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment (SAWTEE), M Anwar Hashim, president of Centre for Sustainable Development, Nasreen Huq, country director of ActionAid Bangladesh, spoke at the press briefing.

Reliance Ins declares 30pc dividend

Reliance Insurance Ltd declared a 30 per cent dividend at its 15th annual general meeting (AGM) yesterday, says a press release.

The AGM, presided over by company Chairman A Rouf Chowdhury, also elected Amanullah Chowdhury and Yasmeen Khan the company's new directors from public shareholders.

After the AGM, the board of directors held a meeting, which elected Rajiv Prasad Shaha and Shamsur Rahman the company's chairman and vice-chairman.

The board of directors of the company now comprises Rajiv Prasad Shaha, chairman, Shamsur Rahman, vice chairman, M Shamsul Alam, managing director, and directors A Rouf Chowdhury, Anwarul Huq, Asadul Huq, Habibullah Khan, Latifur Rahman, Rokia A Rahman, Shahnaz Rahman, Amanullah Chowdhury, Yasmeen Khan, Imran F Rahman, Aliqur Rahman and Romana Rouf Rumea.

Eastern bank's branch manager confce held

A conference of branch managers of Eastern Bank Limited was held in Dhaka on Wednesday, says a press release.

M Ghaziul Haque, chairman of the bank, addressed the conference.

Among others Mohammad Noor Ali, director, and K Mahmood Sattar, managing director of the bank, also spoke at the conference.

It was attended by branch managers of ten EBL branches in Dhaka and other senior executives of the bank.

In his address, the chairman of the bank urged the managers to stress on customer oriented business plans together with services aimed at customer delight for speedy business development.

He expressed his satisfaction at the implementation of the new IT platform of the bank in Dhaka branches and called for full implementation of the platform in all the 22 branches by July 2003.

CURRENCY

Following is yesterday's forex trading statement by Standard Chartered Bank

Selling	BC	Currency	Buying		
			TT Clean	OD Sight Doc	OD Transfer
58.7300	58.7800	USD	57.8000	57.6302	57.5612
70.1295	70.1892	EUR	67.1694	66.9721	66.8919
96.9574	97.0399	GBP	93.6880	93.4128	93.3010
39.2023	39.2357	AUD	37.0787	36.9698	36.9255
0.4963	0.4967	JPY	0.4795	0.4781	0.4776
45.5625	45.6012	CHF	44.0885	43.9590	43.9064
7.6463	7.6528	SEK	7.3717	7.3500	7.3412
43.1965	43.2333	CAD	42.0180	41.8946	41.8445
7.5384	7.5448	HKD	7.4043	7.3825	7.3737
34.0306	34.0596	SGD	33.2222	33.1246	33.0850
16.1213	16.1351	AED	15.6107	15.648	15.5462
15.7859	15.7994	SAR	15.2910	15.2461	15.2278

Exchange rates of some currencies against US dollar

Indian Rupee	Pak Rupee	Lankan Rupee	Thai Baht	Nor Kroner	NZ Dollar	Malaysian Ringit
47.02	57.58	97.23	41.715	6.6904	0.5773	3.80

Local Interbank FX Trading: Bangladesh Bank has declared Taka floating against dollar effective from Saturday.

Through its Exchange Rate Circular No. 01 (dated May 29, 2003), BDT remained stable on the first day of trading. The local FX market was quiet due to international markets being closed yesterday.

Local Money Market: Call money market was very active and demand for overnight borrowing was quite high yesterday. Many commercial banks in an effort to solve liquidity shortage went to the Central Bank for Repo. Bangladesh Bank accepted two-day repo bids of BDT 1,257 billion from various banks and subsequently accepted 7 out of 22 bids at 20 and 21 per cent. Call money rate is set to have ranged between 21 and 23 per cent for the day.

International Market: US dollar rallied against all the major currencies on Friday supported by a strong regional manufacturing news. The news served as a basis for strong growth probability of US economy. US consumer sentiment data also showed an increase in May, comforting the dollar on Friday. Meanwhile, Bank of Japan's yen selling intervention stood at 3.98 trillion yen for the month of May. Japanese monetary authorities are inclined toward a weaker yen to protect its fragile export sector. At New York closing on Friday, euro was at 1.1771/77, GBP at 1.6349/55 and yen at 119.33/39 against the dollar.

ReadyCash Raffle Draw Winners

The latest ReadyCash Raffle draw was held at ReadyCash Bangladesh office at Dhanmondi in Dhaka on Thursday, says a press release.

Prizes	Name of Winners	Card No
China Junction Chinese	Md. Sirajul Islam	504798000047397
Free Lunch for Two		
Meal in the Box Free	Md. Faruk Hossain	5047980010015561
Lunch for Two		
Kena Kata free Gift Box	Ikramul H. Majumder	5047980010015614
Obsession free Gift Box	Md. Zahid Ali	5047980000047408
Liton's Snacks Free Meal Box	Mokter Hossain Rana	5047980000047412
Desh Karupannya Free Gift Box	Niamul Wahab Khan	5047980010047424
Kamal General Store	AKM Shamsuddin	5047980010015546
Swiss Free Meal for Three	Md. Mosharaf Hossain	5047980020002592

Winners can collect their prizes from the Executive, Promotion of ReadyCash within 30 days of this news circulation by producing their ReadyCash card transaction vouchers. ReadyCash encourages its cardholders to read The Daily Star and the Daily Prothom Alo on every Sunday or call our Customer Service at: 8123850; 8130497, and 8125294-7



28th May 2003

PHOTO: UNITREND

M Ghaziul Haque, chairman, Mohammad Noor Ali, director, and K Mahmood Sattar, managing director of Eastern Bank Limited, pose for a photograph at the bank's Dhaka branch managers' conference held in Dhaka Wednesday.

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