

Star BUSINESS

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New tax return form on cards

UNB, Dhaka

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) has sent a draft of a simplified income tax return form to the law ministry for vetting.

The existing tax return form containing several pages will be made one-page for the convenience of taxpayers.

An NBR official yesterday told the news agency the existing income tax return form is complicated and many of the taxpayers fail to understand how to fill it up.

"The taxpayers often feel helpless in filling up many sections of the form," he said.

Two types of forms will now be introduced, one for companies and the other for individuals.

NBR sources said the simplified form will encourage new taxpayers as well as the old ones to pay income tax in due time.

The NBR has been trying to introduce the new system for submission of tax return.

The government has introduced universal self-assessment system for income tax return. The taxpayers will not be questioned for anything about their income tax return.

"The tax officials won't question the income of any individual if he/she has documents in favour of claim. The official will submit the documents to the NBR and if NBR is not satisfied it will give permission to go for further examination of the tax file," the NBR official said.

BB governor for Islamic banking guideline

StanChart launches Shari'ah-based banking brand

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The central bank governor has called for a guideline on Islamic banking in Bangladesh.

"Time has come to formulate a Islamic banking guideline," Dr Salehuddin Ahmed told the launching ceremony of Islamic banking brand by Standard Chartered Bank in Dhaka on Wednesday night.

He urged the Islamic thinkers, economists and bankers to come forward to outline such a guideline.

Standard Chartered Bank has launched its new Islamic banking brand, Saadiq, offering a range of Shari'ah-compliant financial solutions through the bank's service.

The bank also introduced two credit cards -- Saadiq Gold and Saadiq Green, the first-ever Shari'ah-compliant interest-free credit cards in Bangladesh, which the Bangladesh Bank (BB) governmentally launched.

Presently, banks have their own Shari'ah councils and there has been a central Shari'ah council to look into whether Islamic banking as a whole is in line with the Islamic principles.

The BB in February last year finalised a new guideline on Islamic banking, but it could not issue a circular with regard to this due to last minute pressure from different Islamic groups, including a certain partner in the ruling alliance as well as Bangladesh Shari'ah Council, and others.

The BB chief said successful ventures of Islamic banking linked to specialised skills and clear understanding of profit-sharing methods of financial transactions that meet the basic requirements of the Quran and Shari'ah.

Imparting training on distinctive features of Islamic banking principles and techniques to the practicing bankers is therefore of paramount importance, Dr Salehuddin.

He said there are more than 300 Islamic banks operating all over the world - from Africa and Europe to Asia and America. "I am told that the Islamic banking industry is worth more than \$ 200 billion and is growing at 15 percent annually, a rate much higher than that of conventional banking," he said.

Speaking at the function,

Standard Chartered Bank Chief Executive Officer Osman Morad said StanChart's global Islamic business has more than doubled since 2006, and continues to grow at a rapid pace.

"With the launch of our global Islamic banking brand, Saadiq, we aim to capitalise on all future worldwide growth in this emerging industry for the benefit of our customers and stakeholders alike, and lead the way with our innovative, best-in-class Shari'ah-compliant financial products," he said.

The bank's new brand is offering Saadiq current account, Saadiq savings account, Saadiq term deposit, Saadiq personal finance and Saadiq auto finance services. All Saadiq customers will also enjoy the bank's ATM network, online banking and call-centre facilities.

Shah Abdul Hannan, chairman of executive committee of Central Shari'ah Board, Bangladesh, and Standard Chartered Bank Head of Consumer Banking Vikram Issar and Head of Islamic Banking Abida Ali also spoke at the function.



PHOTO: STAR
Standard Chartered
saadiq

Dr Salehuddin Ahmed (R), governor of Bangladesh Bank, Shah Abdul Hannan (2-L), chairman of executive committee of Central Shari'ah Board of Bangladesh, and Osman Morad (L), chief executive officer of Standard Chartered Bank Bangladesh, among others, show off two credit cards -- Saadiq Gold and Saadiq Green, the first-ever Shari'ah-compliant interest-free credit cards in Bangladesh introduced by Standard Chartered Bank at a function in Dhaka on Wednesday.

Islamic banking set to continue growth in Asia

AFP, Singapore

Islamic banking and finance is likely to continue growing in the Asia Pacific region but the real test of its sustainability will be how the system reacts to a major financial crisis, a report said Thursday.

The industry is set to develop its own identity separate from conventional banking as new Islamic financial products are rolled out, said the report by Financial Insights, a company under market research and analysis firm International Data Corp (IDC).

"The future for Islamic banking and finance in Asia looks bright and continued support by government authorities should ensure this future is grounded in strong, sensible regulation," said Financial Insights analyst Abhishek Kumar.

Addressing the function, Information Adviser Barrister Mainul Hosein expressed his hope that the training programme would strengthen press reporting and highlight the contribution that the media professionals and business community can make towards development efforts of the economy.

He said the programme will not only enhance the participants' knowledge about private sector affairs, but also enable them analyse the impact of business decisions in a more profound manner. "All information and no right knowledge is not journalism. In the context of our country, we have to prepare the media for effectively advocating pro-poor growth and development strategies," he said, urging the business leaders to come forward and help the media and civil society organisations to meet the need of effective economic reporting.



Sadeq Khan, chairman of the Press Institute of Bangladesh, said special training is required for business reporting, as there is a lack of specialised knowledge on banking, capital market and others.

Mahtuz Anam, editor of The Daily Star, said the journalists, especially the young ones, should know what business and business journalism are. He advised the journalists to read international business magazines and journals.

"Your reporting creates public confidence in a product, institution and service," he said, adding that balance between public interest and private interest is also needed.

He also said business journalism should be taken as a career, not as a beat.

Farooq Sobhan, president of BEI, said the objective of the training is to strengthen the role of media for private sector development where media acts as a watchdog.

Stressing research for business reporting, Mir Nasir Hossain, president of Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), said there is a tendency among the reporters that they try to somehow establish an issue without analysing it.

First Solution scam, taka appreciation unlikely to hurt remittance: BB

UNB, Dhaka

The recent remittance scam by a UK-based money transfer firm or the recent appreciation of local currency against foreign exchange is unlikely to affect remittance inflow that rose close to \$6 billion last fiscal year that ended on June 30.

"The exchange rate won't affect the remittance. There is no alternative to formal channel for remitting money amid the current anti-money laundering drive," Bangladesh Bank Governor Dr Salehuddin Ahmed told reporters yesterday, replying to a question after a workshop at Sheraton Hotel.

According to Bangladesh Bank figures, the Taka-Dollar exchange rate declined to Tk 68.80 to a dollar as on July 4 from Tk 69.72 on the same day of the last year. The rate went as high as Tk 70 to a dollar during the just-out fiscal year.

On the impact of remittance scam, the governor said the scam was an isolated one that took place suddenly. However, he said, Bangladesh Bank is trying to resolve the problem while considering the formulation of a guideline in this regard to avert future problem regarding remittance.

He said the central bank has already asked the commercial banks to inform it at the very beginning of any such problem so that immediate remedial measures could be taken.

First Solution Money Transfer Ltd, which had money transfer arrangement with the local banks, reportedly closed down all its branches immediately after misappropriating a huge amount of money remitted by the expatriate Bangladeshis in the UK.