

New import policy to focus on financial crisis

Says minister

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Commerce Minister Faruk Khan said yesterday the next import policy for 2009-12 would target measures to tackle the global financial crisis, ensuring a hassle-free business atmosphere and protect the local industries.

The government will follow the rules of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in making the new policy to achieve the goals, as the country is an active member of the agency, Khan said.

Terming the government business-friendly, Khan said the policy would take measures to stop harassment of businessmen.

Khan asked the business community not to be profiteers as the profit-maximising mindset goes against the interests of consumers.

The minister was speaking at the "Consultative Committee Meeting on Import Policy 2009" at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel. Secretaries from different ministries, officials from government agencies and departments, businessmen, policy analysts, leaders from trade

bodies and associations, importers, exporters and industrialists attended the meeting to give opinions on the upcoming import policy.

Khan said the upcoming import policy, which is scheduled to come into effect from July 1, after the expiry of the present policy (2006-09), would not follow a direct protectionism policy.

But the local industries will be protected through other alternative measures like lowering the bank interest rates, he said.

The government will tighten restrictions on the import of melamine-mixed milk and tainted-milk and on the "import of the things which go against the moral sentiments of people", Khan said.

The minister said the government would relax the policy options on the import of books and other educational materials.

The government is expected to make a 'specialised' policy on importing computers and computer accessories and solar panels to help

build a Digital Bangladesh, an election pledge of the government, the minister said.

Khan said he would also sit with the officials of the National Board of Revenue, Bangladesh Bank and other agencies to finalise the draft of the import policy.

If necessary, the government will further alter the policy by issuing the statutory regulatory orders to help businessmen, Khan said.

At the meeting, Manzur Ahmed, adviser to the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), urged the government to make basic changes in the import policy, as it is "too liberal".

Commerce Secretary Feroz Ahmed said it is not possible now to adopt a protectionist policy in the free-market economy. "Local industries could be protected through alternative measures," he said.

At the meeting, 295 recommendations from 196 trade organisations, persons and businessmen have been filed for the import policy.

Thai tourism under assault

AFP, Bangkok

Thailand's battle-hardened tourism sector faces being brought to its knees by two fresh blows -- a state of emergency in the capital and a violent end to a beachside summit, experts warned Sunday.

Hopes for a revival in the industry -- so important to Thailand's struggling economy -- evaporated as armed soldiers deployed across Bangkok to quell anti-government protests and tanks took up positions at strategic locations.

"Who will want to come to Thailand now?" said Apichart Sankary, president of the Association of Thai Travel Agents (ATTA), urging the government to end the turmoil once and for all.



US Ambassador James F. Moriarty speaks at the monthly luncheon meeting of the Foreign Investors' Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Ficci) at Radisson Water Garden Hotel in Dhaka yesterday. Ficci President Waliur Rahman Bhuiyan is also seen.

\$739.43m remittances for Islamabad in March

ANN/THE NATION

Pakistan's overseas workers sent the highest-ever amount of \$739.43 million as remittances in March 2009, surpassing the previous record of \$673.50 million received in December 2008.

The amount of \$739.43 million received in March 2009 showed an increase of \$137.22 million or 22.79 percent when compared with \$602.21 million received in March, 2008.

MediaAxis, Carat tie up

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Independent media communications agency network Carat has tied up with MediaAxis to operate in Bangladesh, according to press statement.

The affiliation agreement was recently signed in Singapore between Phil Brook, chief financial officer of Carat Asia South, and Rabeth Khan, chief executive officer of MediaAxis.

A Bhasin, chairman India and CEO South East Asia, was also present on the occasion. The affiliation operations will be fully operational from May 2009 onwards.

Carat is represented in 82 countries and offers clients a range of services. It is a member of the Aegis Group PLC, the world's fastest growing marketing communications group, listed on the London Stock Exchange.

Carat was nominated by RECMA (Media Agency Benchmark) as the world's number one Media Agency Network.

MediaAxis is a wholly owned subsidiary of MACOMM, one of the fastest growing advertising agencies of the country, with a strong portfolio of both local and international clients.

With over 4,000 clients around the world Carat along with MediaAxis commits to bring a wealth of international experiences through extended global network, precision in expertise, and marks of successful client partnerships to Bangladesh.

Carat was established in 1968 and was the first independent media specialist in Europe.



Mir Nasir Hossain, president of the Telecommunication Infrastructure Operators of Bangladesh, speaks at a press conference in Dhaka yesterday.

Illegal VoIP hurts call handlers

Says TOIB

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The illegal VoIP technology poses a threat to international call handlers, as some big cracks remain in call termination channels, industry people said yesterday.

International call termination through voice over internet protocol (VoIP) is banned in line with the law in Bangladesh.

But VoIP operators handle a high volume of calls to cash in on the lucrative business and affordable nature of the technology.

Two major loopholes were identified at a press conference organised yesterday by international call and data handlers. They are an ineffective monitoring system in Bangladesh

Telecommunications Company Ltd's IIG and a presence of a good number of VSATs operating in the country.

"VSAT and absence of an effective monitoring system in BTCL's international internet gateway are used for illegal international call termination," said Mir Nasir Hossain, president of the Telecommunication Infrastructure Operators of Bangladesh (TOIB).

He said as per the International Long Distance Telecommunication Service (ILDTS) policy, the govern-

ment is committed to limiting the use of VSAT (very small aperture terminal).

"But it did not happen as yet. Apart from corporate use, all other VSAT should be closed as soon as possible to restrict VoIP," the TOIB president said.

Bangladesh has become a lucrative market for illegal VoIP users as a large number of people live abroad and make 23 million minutes of calls per day.

The volume of calls through legal channels jumped from 15 million minutes a day a year ago after the setting-up of the three IGW, two ICX and one IIG exchanges in the country in the middle of last year.

The last caretaker government set up the exchanges through private sector entrepreneurs to keep the illegal VoIP business under check. The international gateway (IGW) and inter-connection exchange (ICX) are responsible for handling voice, whereas the IIG is responsible for handling internet data traffic.

However, the novice international call and data handlers claimed that the illegal VoIP business boomed recently, after the political government came into power. They said around 50 percent of the calls are handled by illegal

VoIP channels at present.

"If the BTCL is able to monitor its IIG traffic and can detect data or voice transferred through the platform (which is only dedicated for data), it will be very easy to stop making illegal calls," said Masud Kabir, managing director of Mango Teleservices Limited.

TOIB members said they provided a free deep packet inspection (DPI) system to BTCL six months ago to detect if anyone uses the data platform for transferring voice.

However, BTCL is yet to install the system. Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, a BTCL high official admitted they did not install the DPI. The official however was not able to say why they did not install the system, which was provided completely free by the TOIB members.

The TOIB president said the government can get Tk 2,500 crore in revenue, if it can stop VoIP business.

He said the TOIB members invested Tk 500 crore so far to develop their infrastructure.

The six private sector calls and data handlers contributed Tk 165 crore in the last six months to the government exchequer.

TOIB is an association of the members of private IGW, ICX and IIG.



A Bhasin, chairman India and CEO South East Asia of Carat, Rabeth Khan, CEO MediaAxis, and Phil Brook, CFO Asia South Carat, recently pose after signing an agreement between Carat and MediaAxis.

MBA Admission

The School of Business of Bangladesh Open University (BOU) is inviting applications in prescribed form for admission into the Master of Business Administration (MBA) program (091 semester). Collection and submission of application forms are to be done by the applicants from April 17, 2009 to June 11, 2009 (except Saturday and Sunday). Application Form and other information can be collected from the following Regional Resource Centers (RRCs) of BOU by paying Tk200.00 (two hundred) only which has to be deposited to the selected Janata Bank branch (name of the branch is to be known from respective RRC). Filled-up application form, along with bank deposit slip of Tk200.00 (two hundred), attested copies of all academic certificates, mark sheets and one recent passport size and one stamp size photographs, is to be submitted to the respective RRC, BOU.

Addresses of Regional Resource Centers (RRCs), BOU

Dhaka RRC 4/Ka, College Area (Adjacent to Dhaka Teachers' Training College), Dhanmondi, Dhaka-1205, Phone: 8615393, 9673669	Chittagong RRC C.R.B. Road (to the west side of the stadium), Chittagong Phone: 031/619633
Bogra RRC (East side of BADC Workshop, Banani) Biswa Road, Banani, Bogra-5800 Phone: 051/62794	Jessore RRC Jessore Uposahar (adjacent to the Dhaka Road), B.R.T.C. Campus, Jessore Phone: 0421/68526
Rajshahi RRC Naohata, Poba, Rajshahi Phone: 0721/800008	Mymensingh RRC Mashkanda, Mymensingh Phone: 091/52408
Sylhet RRC Pirijpur, South Surma, Sylhet Phone: 0821/719523	Rangpur RRC R.K. Road (Central Bus Stand), Rangpur Phone: 0521/63593
Comilla RRC Dhaka-Chittagong Trunk Road, Noapara, Durgapur, Comilla Phone: 081/77557	Barisal RRC Rupatoli, Barisal Phone: 0431/2176282
Faridpur RRC (Opposite to River Research Institute), Harokandi, Barisal Road, Faridpur Phone: 0631/62081	Khulna RRC Roshnibag, (West of Khulna University), Khulna-9208 Phone: 041/731795

Minimum requirements to apply: (a) Bachelor degree or equivalent from any discipline, and (b) a minimum of total twelve (12) points, to be calculated in the following manner:

Certificate / Degree	Points for Division / Class	Points for Grading						
		5.0 scale			4.0 scale			
SSC or equivalent	1st 2nd 3rd	4.5-5.0	4.0-4.5	3.0-4.0	3.75-4.00	3.25-3.75	2.75-3.25	Below 2.75
HSC or equivalent	5 3 1	5	3	1				
Graduation General (2-3 years)	6 4 1			6	5	4	2	
Graduation (Hons)/ Engineers	7 5 2			7	6	5	3	
Master Degree	2 1 0			3	2	1		

An applicant will secure 1 (one) more point for each additional recognized academic degree above Master degree, e.g., M.S., M.Phil. and so on. Moreover, an applicant will secure one-tenth (1/10) of his/her total age as additional point.

Details about points calculation for others (e.g., 'O' level and 'A' level, medical, agriculture etc.) will be available in the 'Instructions for MBA Admission' and at the RRC notice board.

List of primarily selected applicants will be published in The Independent and The Daily Samakal within 01-03 July, 2009.

The number of available seats is 350.

Note for the students of Post Graduate Diploma in Management (PGDM) : Applicants who have completed the PGDM/GDM program from the School of Business, BOU with at least 2.75 CGPA will get direct entrance to the 092 (2nd) semester of the MBA program. However, students who have completed PGDM/GDM program with CGPA 2.50 to below 2.75 will get direct admission through viva-voce into the first semester (091) of the MBA program and those who have CGPA 2.00 to below 2.50 in the PGDM/GDM program will get additional 2 (two) points under open competition. In all cases, they have to collect the Application Form and instructional materials by paying Tk200 within the specified time.

In case of any query, contact the Dean, School of Business, BOU (Phone: 02-9291106)

(MD. SHAFIQU ALAM)

Director
Student Support Services Division (East)
Bangladesh Open University, Gazipur-1705

GD-1916

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NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the **Forty Eighth Annual General Meeting** of Reckitt Benckiser (Bangladesh) Limited will be held at Trust Milonayatan, Shaheed Jahangir Gate, 545 Old Airport Road, Dhaka Cantonment, Dhaka-1206 on Thursday, the 4th June 2009 at 10:00 a.m. to transact the following business:

AGENDA

- To confirm the Minutes of the Forty Seventh Annual General Meeting held on 26th June 2008.
- To receive and adopt the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2008 together with the Auditors' and Directors' Report thereon.
- To approve Dividend as recommended by the Board.
- To elect Directors.
- To appoint Auditors for the year 2009 and to fix their remuneration.

By order of the Board
sd/-

Dhaka, 12th April 2009

Wahed Aziz-Ur Rahman
Company Secretary

Notes:

- 20th April 2009 is the RECORD DATE. Shareholders whose name will appear in the Shares Register of the Company or in the Depository Register on that date will be eligible to attend the AGM and receive dividend approved.
- A Member entitled to attend and vote at the Annual General Meeting may appoint another Member of the company as Proxy to attend and vote instead of him/her. A Form of Proxy must be stamped and deposited at the Company's Registered Office or Corporate Office.

