

Minister takes tough line on consumer rights violators

Faruk Khan visits city kitchen markets

STAR BUSINESS REPORT
The government will take punitive measures against violators of the consumer rights protection law, said Commerce Minister Faruk Khan yesterday.

He was speaking to a group of journalists after a visit to Karwan Bazar, one of Dhaka's biggest kitchen markets, on the occasion of World Consumer Rights Day to make buyers and sellers more conscious.

Although most businessmen are honest, Khan said, some dishonest traders have been cheating consumers by adulterating, weight tampering and selling expired products by ignoring the consumers' rights protection laws.

"The government will take punitive action against such market manipulators and adulterators," Khan said.

These dishonest businessmen have been destabilising the normal market prices of basic commodities, he said.

He said some companies have adul-

terated some essential drugs to make more profits. "We will not spare those who have cheated in the production of lifesaving drugs."

He suggested people to contact him when any such adulterated drug is found in the market, so that appropriate steps can be taken against the manufacturing company and the people responsible.

In response to queries made by journalists, Khan said he would investigate whether some unscrupulous traders are sneaking rice out from the government's open market sale (OMS) operations and selling at higher prices to consumers.

He said all middlemen are not bad, as they are playing an important role in the supply chain management of basic commodities.

"Suppose a section of traders brings tomatoes from farmers in Manikganj to Karwan Bazar for a profit. I cannot blame them as they play a vital role in maintaining the supply of basic com-

modities," Khan said.

He claimed that major basic commodities were being sold at tolerable rates. The coarse variety of rice was selling at Tk 24, potato at Tk 10, beans at Tk 15, bitter gourd at Tk 30, okra at Tk 24, tomato at Tk 10, carrot at Tk 10 and onion at Tk 20 a kilogram at retail levels.

The commerce ministry also sent a team to Dhaka New Market, another team to Kaptan Bazar and a team Mohammadpur Krishi Market and Town Hall Market.

World Consumer Rights Day is an annual occasion for celebrations and solidarity within the international consumer movement to promote the basic rights of all consumers, demand that those rights are respected and protected, and protest market abuses and social injustices which undermine them.

World Consumer Rights Day was first observed on March 15, 1983, and has since become an important occasion for mobilising citizen action.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina hands a national export trophy for leather goods to Picard Bangladesh Managing Director Md Saiful Islam at a ceremony in Dhaka recently. Commerce Minister Faruk Khan is also seen.



Masud Rahman

New office bearers for CanCham

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Masud Rahman, managing director of Crane Ltd, has been re-elected as president of Canada-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CanCham) for the 2010-11 term, a CanCham statement said yesterday.

KM Khaled, managing director GETCO Ltd, has been elected as vice-president, Wali Sattar, chairman of UTAH Group of Companies, as secretary general, Manzur-ur-Rahman Ruskin, managing partner of Rahim Rahman and Agha, as treasurer.

Strategy of microcredit institutions must be reviewed: Muhith

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The high interest rates and sustainability strategies of microfinance institutions should be reviewed to make them truly effective tools to reduce poverty, said the finance minister yesterday.

"The role of microfinance as a tool of poverty reduction is an idea that emerged only last decade. Although it is not a new system to the people of this sub-continent, the number of people coming out of poverty through microfinance is not satisfactory," said AMA Muhith.

"It has to benefit the poor people. There are some problems in microfinance, such as high interest rates and charges, which should be reviewed further."

Muhith was speaking at the launch of a three-day international conference -- Microfinance Regulations: Who Benefits -- organised by the Microcredit Regulatory Authority (MRA) at Sonargaon Hotel in Dhaka.

"The high interest rates and charges of the microfinance institutions often force borrowers to become members of several MFIs simultaneously to pay back loans. And thus, they get stuck in a debt trap," said the minister.

He also stressed the need to find an effective strategy for the MFIs to sustain in the long run.

"The resource mobility of an MFI is another important issue that we have to take into account," said Muhith.

Microfinance is also helpful for the poor in developed countries, like the US and UK, he said.

Dr Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad, chairman of Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF), also stressed a further review of the rates and charges and ensuring transparency in MFI operations.

"Drastic institutional changes are needed to make MFI operations flawless and the interest rate needs to be addressed immediately," he said, adding that the cost of borrowing and ensuring good governance should also be considered.

"A lack of transparency in operations is one of the main problems of the sector. The lack of legal framework to monitor the per-

formance of non-governmental MFIs also needs to be corrected immediately," he said.

Ahmad emphasised the need to establish a micro-credit bank to make operations more transparent.

Dr Atiur Rahman, governor of Bangladesh Bank, suggested that small MFIs merge with larger institutions to overcome potential systemic risks.

"Nurturing and shepherding the numerous small operating MFIs into larger well-functioning regulated entities will warrant more close attention of micro credit regulatory authorities over the medium term," he said.

"Encouraging the larger and more efficient MFIs to subsume operations of the smaller ones as subsidiaries could be among options meriting consideration," he explained.

The higher costs involved in supervising small loans in dispersed locations cannot be regulated away, he said.

"Unduly obstructing cost recovery will not only hurt sustainability of the MFIs, but also narrow the access of the poor to microfinance loans."

He however said the regulators and government authorities can encourage and support MFIs in minimising supervision costs by adopting remote loan delivery and recovery mechanisms in partnership with mobile phone companies and IT platforms.

In Bangladesh, MFIs accounted for financial services to around 24 percent of the adult population, against around 44 percent and 10 percent served by banks and cooperatives respectively in 2008, said Rahman.

Chris Austin, country representative of the UK Department for International Development (DFID), and Khandakar Muzharul Haque, executive vice chairman of MRA, also spoke.

DFID sponsored the three-day event joined by some 196 participants -- 146 local and 50 foreign delegates.

The conference will focus on issues like regulations and supervision of microfinance, global practices of microfinance regulations, resource mobilisation and sustainability, ownership and governance.



Ellen Goldstein, country director of World Bank, receives a bouquet from Nasir Uddin, chairman of Pacific Jeans Ltd, during a visit to Universal Jeans, a concern of Pacific Jeans, in Chittagong recently.

Cut in call charge to check illegal VoIP

Says state telecom company

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh Telecommunications Company Ltd (BTCL) yesterday urged a cut in international incoming call charge, which it said will help check illegal call termination through VoIP (voice over internet protocol) technology.

The state-run telecom operator sought a call charge at 1.5 cents, down from existing three cents per minute.

"Price reduction can be one of the best ways to control illegal call termination business," said SM Khabiruzzaman, managing director of BTCL, at a press

briefing in Dhaka.

Landline business apart, BTCL owns an international gateway (IGW) to handle overseas calls. Three other IGWs from private sector are also running IGW business.

Khabiruzzaman said international incoming call charge has come down to one cent in India, and so no illegal voice transmission occurs there. In contrast, he said, such call charge ranges from three cents to 10 cents in Pakistan where illegal VoIP business is rampant.

Presently, illegal VoIP operators charge 1.5 cents to

2.5 cents for handling international incoming calls. Bangladesh's telecom market receives more than three crore minutes' calls a day.

Khabiruzzaman said VoIP is a very handy technology. It is better for the government to open it in a systematic way, he said.

He also suggested giving permission to the existing IGWs to lease E1 connectivity to the VoIP traders so all of them come under a legal framework.

E1 is an all-digital communications line that allows transmission of voice, data, video, and graphics at higher

speed compared to standard communication lines. Illegal VoIP operators handle international calls through E1 devices.

However, private IGW operators earlier opposed the move to cut international call charge, which they said would harm their business.

But the BTCL boss said such a price cut always increases call volume. After the government decision to reduce international incoming call charge from six cents to three cents, incoming international calls went up significantly, he said.

PepsiCo to buy back up to \$15b in shares

AP, PURCHASE, New York

PepsiCo says it will buy back up to \$15 billion shares of its common stock through June 2013.

The world's second-biggest soft drink seller previously said Monday it expects to repurchase about \$4.4 billion shares this year.

PepsiCo also says it's boosting its annual dividend by 7 percent to \$1.92, likely starting on June 30.

WB to fund Kaliakoir hi-tech park

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The World Bank will provide fund to help construct the hi-tech park in Kaliakoir as the first site for special economic zone in the country.

The objective of the project is to create a more sustainable industrialisation model by developing a public-private partnership approach to invest in zones, the WB said in a statement yesterday.

The project will facilitate public sector investment in

infrastructure for the development of serviced land and leverage private financing for zone development, added the statement.

The project will also focus on human resource development and better compliance with environmental and social standards.

Meanwhile, the government has almost completed the construction of basic infrastructure for the hi-tech IT park at Kaliakoir in Gazipur district.

The government itself has undertaken a Tk 270 million (Tk 27 crore) project to develop the hi-tech park.

An administrative building, internal roads, sewerage system were constructed in the IT park while gas, power and water supply, telephone and high-speed internet facilities are being provided.

The park is being developed on an area of 232 acres. The government is also forming authorities for the hi-tech park.



Altaz Hossain Sarker, chairman of Dhaka Bank Ltd, inaugurates the bank's KDS Avenue branch in Khulna recently. Khondker Fazle Rashid, managing director, is also seen.



New MD for SME Foundation

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Small & Medium Enterprise (SME) Foundation appointed Syed Rezwanul Kabir as its managing director, says a statement released yesterday.

Kabir, a science graduate and an MBA from Pennsylvania, USA, held different high-profile positions both at home and abroad, which brings 20 years of professional experience to the foundation.

He has also worked with multinational companies, international NGOs and foreign diplomatic missions in Bangladesh.

Kabir is a life member of the American Alumni Association, member of the Royal Commonwealth Society and is actively associated with many local and foreign professional bodies.



NCC Bank gets new DMD

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Swapan Kumar Das has been promoted to deputy managing director of National Credit and Commerce (NCC) Bank, the bank said in a statement.

Prior to the appointment, he was the senior executive vice president and Chittagong area incharge of the bank.

An MSc of Chittagong University, Das started his banking career as probationary officer for Janata Bank in 1979 and later joined National Bank in 1983 and NCC Bank in 1985.

International Exhibition on Agriculture, Horticulture, Dairy, Poultry, Live Stock and Agriculture Products & Technology Trade Show of Bangladesh.

Visit 4-6 April 2010 Dhaka Sheraton Hotel

Organized by: ExpoNet Exhibition (Pvt) Ltd. 01191616803, 01191616805, 01191616806

SUNCO Solar Irrigation pump Presents AgriTECH Bangladesh

বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিব মেডিক্যাল বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়
Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University
শাহবাগ, ঢাকা, বাংলাদেশ

নং-বিএসএমইউ/২০১০/২৭৮২ তারিখঃ ১৪-০৩-২০১০ইং

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এই বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের নিয়োগবিধি অনুযায়ী নিম্নে বর্ণিত পদগুলো পূরণের জন্য বাংলাদেশের নাগরিকদের কাছ থেকে আবেদন আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছেঃ

| ক্র নং | পদের নাম ও বেতন স্কেল | পদের সংখ্যা | শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতা |
|--------|--|-------------|--|
| ০১। | নার্সিং ইনস্ট্রাক্টর-২(দুই) বেতন স্কেল: টাঃ ১১,০০০-২০,৩৭০/- | ০২(দুই) | ক) সকল পাবলিক পরীক্ষায় ন্যূনপক্ষে ২য় শ্রেণী/বিভাগসহ স্বীকৃত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় থেকে নার্সিং বিষয়ে ৪ (চার) বছর মেয়াদী স্নাতক (সম্মান) অথবা স্নাতকোত্তর ডিগ্রি। খ) ন্যূনপক্ষে ০৩(তিন) বছরের শিক্ষকতার অভিজ্ঞতা আবশ্যিক। |
| ০২। | ইংরেজি ভাষার শিক্ষক-২(দুই) বেতন স্কেল: টাঃ ১১,০০০-২০,৩৭০/- | ০২(দুই) | ক) সকল পাবলিক পরীক্ষায় ন্যূনপক্ষে ২য় শ্রেণী/বিভাগসহ স্বীকৃত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় থেকে ইংরেজি বিষয়ে ৪(চার) বছর মেয়াদী স্নাতক(সম্মান) অথবা স্নাতকোত্তর ডিগ্রি। খ) ন্যূনপক্ষে ০৫(পাঁচ) বছরের শিক্ষকতার অভিজ্ঞতা আবশ্যিক। Spoken English জানা প্রার্থীকে অগ্রাধিকার দেয়া হবে। |
| ০৩। | কম্পিউটার ইনস্ট্রাক্টর-১(এক) বেতন স্কেল: টাঃ ১১,০০০-২০,৩৭০/- | ০১(এক) | ক) সকল পাবলিক পরীক্ষায় ন্যূনপক্ষে ২য় শ্রেণী/বিভাগসহ স্বীকৃত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় থেকে ৪(চার) বছর মেয়াদী স্নাতক(সম্মান) অথবা স্নাতকোত্তর ডিগ্রি। খ) কম্পিউটারের প্রোগ্রামসমূহ যেমন- Windows, MS Word, Excell, Power Point and Internet ব্যবহারে কমপক্ষে ৩(তিন) বৎসরের প্রশিক্ষণের অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে। |

শর্তাবলীঃ

- প্রার্থীগণকে রেজিস্ট্রার, বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিব মেডিক্যাল বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়-এর অনুকূলে পূর্বানুষ্ঠিত পত্রিকা, ঢাকার শাহবাগ এডিনিউ শাখার উপর ৫০০/- (পাঁচশত) টাকার অফেরতযোগ্য ব্যাংক ড্রাকট/পে-অর্ডারসহ নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারীর অফিসে প্রাপ্তব্য নির্দিষ্ট আবেদনপত্রে ০৮(আট) কপি আবেদন, পাসপোর্ট আকারের ৮ কপি ছবি এবং ৮(আট) সেট সকল সার্টিফিকেটের কপি আগামী ৩০-৩-২০১০ইং তারিখ বেলা ০২-৩০টার মধ্যে নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারীর অফিসে পৌছাতে হবে।
- চাকরিরত প্রার্থীগণকে যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের মাধ্যমে আবেদন করতে হবে।
- অসম্পূর্ণ আবেদন বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে।
- নির্দিষ্ট সময়সীমার পর প্রাপ্ত আবেদন সরাসরি বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে।
- মুক্তিযোদ্ধা ও তাঁদের সন্তানদের ক্ষেত্রে সরকারি নীতিমালা অনুসরণ করা হবে।
- বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ওয়েব সাইট (www.bsmmu.org) থেকে নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি ও আবেদনপত্র সংগ্রহ করা যাবে।

মুহাম্মাদ আবদুল গফুর রেজিস্ট্রার

জিডি-১২৬৩