

Parliamentary body recommends special tax cards

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

A parliamentary body yesterday asked the National Board of Revenue to introduce tax cards entitling taxpayers to a number of government services and non-cash benefits to encourage tax payment culture in the country.

The parliamentary standing committee on finance ministry also asked the government to prepare the next fiscal year's budget giving highest priority to checking inflation.

The committee Chief, AHM Mustafa Kamal, came up with the recommendations after a meeting with the leaders of Bangladesh Economic Association, Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, Centre for Policy Dialogue,

Unnayan Shamunnay and Dhaka Taxes Bar Association at Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

"The committee recommended introduction of tax cards in red, blue, yellow, violet and other colours for very big, big, medium, small and very small amount taxpayers," Kamal, popularly known as Lotus Kamal, told reporters.

Explaining the issue, he said, the cardholder taxpayers and their family members might be provided with different non-cash benefits such as admission to hospitals and schools and extra services while using airports.

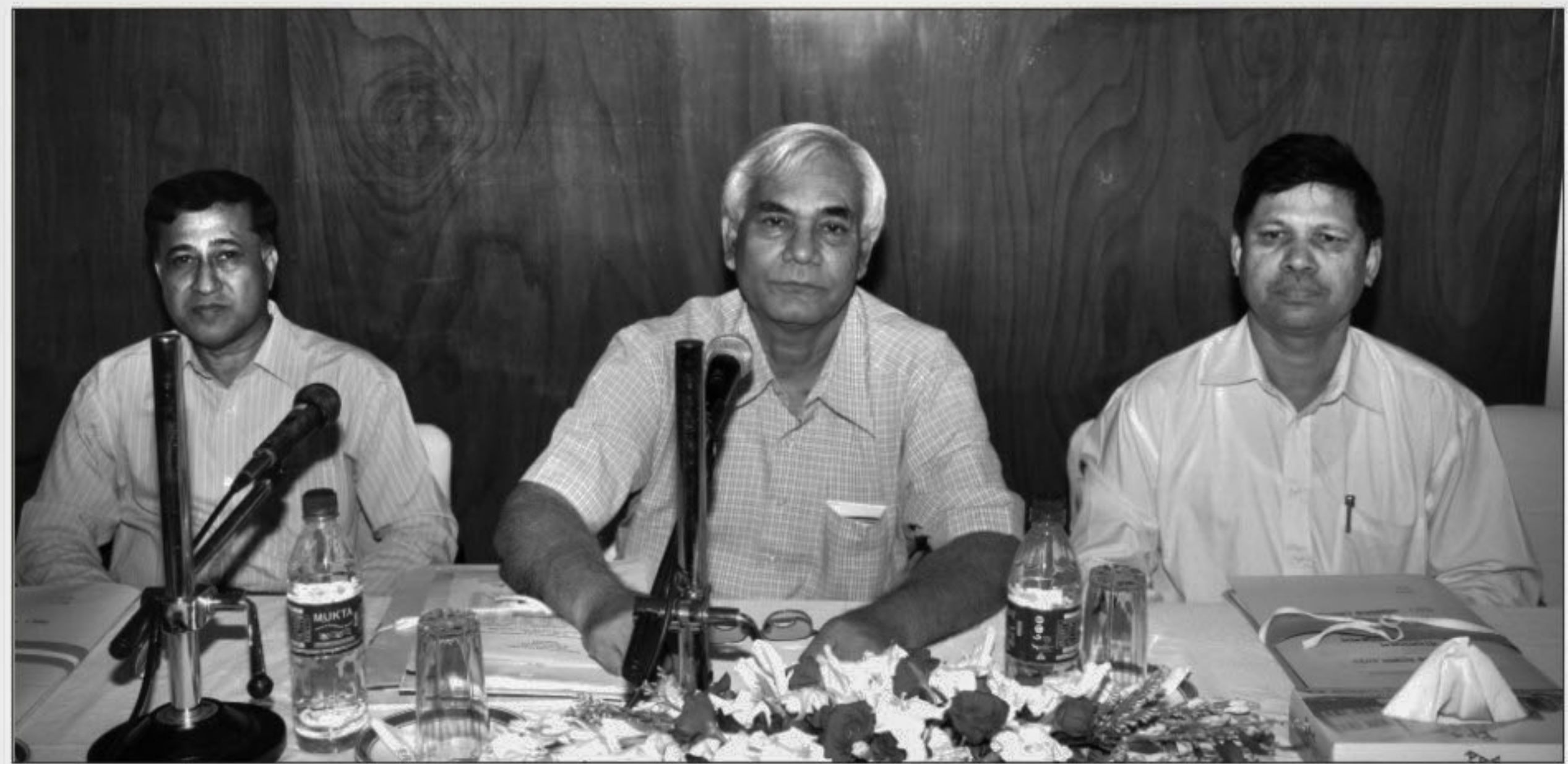
He also said taxpayers in other countries enjoy different benefits from their governments. "But Bangladesh is an exception."

On preparing the next year's budget, the standing committee head said this year they would mark inflation, as its number one enemy for economy. The coming budget will be prepared keeping this issue in mind, he added.

The government should fix high taxes on the number of cars' number-plates, he also said.

"If a car owner wishes to have the number 1 in their car's number-plate, he/she has to pay more," Kamal explained.

Black money holders mostly invested their money in the stockmarket, he said. "The government wishes they'll invest their money in the industries that can generate employment."



Mohammad Hemayet Uddin Talukder, chairman of Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation, speaks at the corporation's 24th Commercial Conference at Hotel Abokash in Dhaka yesterday. Jamal Abdun Naser, finance director, and Ananta Kumar Chowdhury, commercial director, are also seen. (Story on B1)

BB forms refinancing fund for jute

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The central bank formed a Tk 500 crore re-financing fund in an effort to revive the jute industry.

The Bangladesh Bank (BB) board of directors yesterday approved the fund, which will be disbursed among 16 government-owned jute mills, through state-run commercial banks.

The decision came after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina issued a directive to set up the fund at a meeting at her office in January.

BB officials said 16 jute mills have purchased raw jute worth Tk 800 crore in July-January. Despite demand, they could not purchase more raw jute because of a fund shortage.

The central bank officials said the fund-starved jute mills would be able to receive money from the BB re-financing fund.

BMDA to boost fine rice yield

BSS,rajshahi

The Barind Multipurpose Development Authorities (BMDA) is implementing a development programme to boost fine and aromatic rice production in five north-western districts.

According to officials, the three-year programme styled "Fine Rice Production and Marketing" is being implemented in all upazilas of the Rajshahi, Naogaon, Chapainawabganj, Joypurhat and Dinajpur districts at a cost of Tk3.68 crore since July.

The programme mainly targets to produce more fine and aromatic rice in the vast Barind tract along with increase farmers' incomes and earn foreign currency from rice exports.

Programme Director ATM Rafiqul Islam told the news agency that the area is conventionally familiar, as rice growing and high

yield varieties are produced for local consumption.

He said it is excellent that the demand for the rice in local and international markets is increasing by the day.

He viewed that the high price and demand are the major advantages of producing the grain.

To attain the goal, Rafique said the project has been designed to procure and supply quality seeds under the contract farming system.

Moreover, he cited that BMDA has ensured irrigation facilities for producing paddy.

Steps have been taken to encourage some 20,000 farmers to raise 390 demonstration plots through need-oriented field level training for cultivating and producing aromatic rice like Chiniatop, Kalijira, Kataribhog, Jirashail, Basmati, BRRI-34 and BRRI-50.

Dhaka keen on palm oil import from Indonesia

UNB,Dhaka

Bangladesh is keen to import palm oil from Indonesia. In this regard, a commercial delegation from Indonesia will visit Bangladesh soon and a memorandum of understanding (MoU) will be signed between the two countries.

This was revealed at a meeting between Indonesian Ambassador to Bangladesh Zet Mirzal Zainuddin and Commerce Minister Faruk Khan at the minister's office yesterday.

The minister asked the ambassador to facilitate imports of readymade garments, pharmaceuticals, jute and jute-made goods, home textiles and ceramics from Bangladesh.

He also sought Indonesian investment in Bangladesh's tourism industry, as Indonesia has vast experience in this sector.

The ambassador invited the commerce minister to inaugurate a three-day Indonesian Trade Fair, scheduled for May 11 at Sonargaon Hotel.



Mizanur Rahman, treasurer of University of Dhaka, and Bitopi Das Chowdhury, head of corporate affairs for Standard Chartered Bank, sign an agreement in Dhaka recently. The bank will provide financial assistance to five meritorious students from the university's Development Studies Department to support their education.

19 poultry markets up for upgrade to avert bird flu risk

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Some 19 Live Bird Markets (LBMs) will be upgraded in major cities in a couple of months to provide hygienic poultry products to consumers, minimising the risk of spread of avian influenza or bird flu.

Of the 19 LBMs, eight will be upgraded in Dhaka and 11 in other major cities, including five divisional cities and Bogra and Cox's Bazar.

The renovation works of five LBMs in Dhaka have already been completed.

The move, symbolic in nature, is expected to yield positive benefits by creating awareness among poultry traders and consumers about advantages of maintaining bio-security in LBMs.

It also calls for government initiative to replicate models of these upgraded LBMs in all over the country to provide people access to safe food and minimise the risk of spread of avian influenza from the LBMs, a major source of spreading bird flu.

This was shared at a programme organised to inaugurate an upgraded LBM market at New Market in the capital yesterday.

"This is about healthy life that we can try to provide to consumers," said Ad Spijkers, FAO representative in Bangladesh, adding that clean markets would help reduce the chance of spreading disease to customers, other markets and poultry farms.

Sunil Chandra Gain, director general of

the Department of Livestock Services, and Denise Rollins, USAID mission director in Bangladesh, were also present.

LBMs are being renovated under a USAID funded project on improved bio-security and hygiene production. FAO in collaboration with the Department of Livestock Services run the project.

Under the \$575,000 project, infrastructure of the newly opened market has been developed, while cleaning and disinfections equipment and commodities have also been provided to reduce any chance of spreading disease to consumers, other market and poultry farms.

LBM workers such as cleaners have also been provided training to wash, clean and disinfect the markets regularly, organisers said.

The renovation of LBMs is part of the initiative to prevent possible transmission of highly contagious disease such as avian influenza, outbreak of which caused a huge loss of poultry industry in the months since March 2007.

Referring to the improved market, the FAO representative said the project is a pilot one, hence upgraded LBMs could not be set up in all over the country.

"We cannot do it everywhere. So upgradation of markets should be the part of government initiative to improve hygiene condition," he said.

BTCL moves to cut charges of calls to India

BSS, Dhaka

The government has again taken up steps to reduce charges of land phone calls to India.

"The government has decided to install a 25km optic fibre line spending Tk 1.5 crore from Darshana to Krishna Nagar in India in this regard," said SM Khabiruzzaman, managing director of Bangladesh Telecommunications Company Limited (BTCL), yesterday.

"After installing the line, the call charges will come down surely." He said BTCL has already signed an agreement with Bharat Sanchar Nirgom Limited (VSNL) of India under which the optic fibre line will be installed. VSNL will also install the optic fibre line up to Krishna Nagar, he added.

Khabiruzzaman said the optic fibre line would also work as an alternative submarine cable to establish communications with all over the world.

Khabiruzzaman told the news agency that BTCL has been communicating with India by microwave at Tk 12 per minute, low from Tk 18 until June last year.

"We have already completed the tender formalities and will issue the work order to the lowest bidder soon," said Rafiqul Matin, BTCL director. They hope to complete the installation work in a month, Matin added.

BTCL subscribers have been contacting with 55 countries through land phones at Tk 6 and with 23 countries by mobile phones Tk 16. They can talk to any number from this month by dialling 0121.

The BTCL subscribers can talk to the countries at Tk 6 per minute by both land and mobile phones are -- USA, Canada, China, UK, Saipan, Bahama, Bermuda, Brunei, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea, Uzbekistan, Vatican, Gabon, Guam, Macaw, Malay, San Marino and US Virgin Island.

The subscribers can talk at Tk 6 by land phone and Tk 16 by mobile phone to the 32 countries are: Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Australia, Check Republic, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Japan, Ireland, Mongolia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Poland, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Togo, Turkey, UK, Venezuela and Gambia.

Sharp returns to black

AFP, Tokyo

Sharp Corp. Tuesday said it returned to the black in the financial year to March with a net profit of 4.4 billion yen (46.7 million dollars) on strong sales of liquid crystal display screens in Japan.

The consumer electronics giant, with a product range from cellphones to home appliances, said company-wide cost-cutting measures helped it back to profit after a loss of 125.8 billion yen at the same point last year.

Japan's top manufacturer of liquid crystal display (LCD) TVs, marketed under the AQUOS brand, Sharp said it expected a net profit of 50 billion yen for the current fiscal year to March 2011.

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৫।	ইনসিট্রাউন	৫।	পূর্ব মেগাওয়ার্ড ও হুগলাবন্দর জল
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Lee Peng Kwang, general manager of Bangladesh Edible Oil Limited (BEOL), and Fahad Karim, chief executive officer of Masthead PR, exchange documents after signing an agreement in Dhaka yesterday. Masthead PR will maintain media and public relations management for all BEOL brands and activities.