

NEW VAT PLAN

Govt may back off for now

In the wake of criticism, policymakers may continue existing system, set a fresh deadline for implementing new system

REJAUJ KARIM BYRON and SOHEL PARVEZ

The government may backtrack on its plan to implement the new VAT law from July this year, in the face of pressure from a section of businesses and lobby groups, a highly placed source said yesterday.

Instead, the government may choose to continue collecting the indirect tax under the existing VAT Act of 1991 and announce a fresh deadline to enforce the much-talked-about VAT and Supplementary Duty Act 2012.

The new law seeks to impose a 15 percent single and uniform VAT. Revenue officials have already got a hint of the government plan to postpone implementation of the 2012 law, according to the source, who asked for anonymity.

But Finance Minister AMA Muihith remains mum, declining to comment on the matter yesterday when reporters asked him to clarify government's position.

"You will come to know when I speak on June 28 and when the prime minister speaks the same day [in parliament]. She will cover some areas. I will cover some area. There is no chance to know about it before that," he said. Finance ministry sources said things began to change after Muihith placed the proposal for implementing the new VAT law from July and putting an end

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A railway gateman stops traffic spreading his arms at the level crossing in the capital's Khilgaon. The gate for this side of the level crossing has been out of order for months but the authorities concerned are yet to fix it. The photo was taken on Saturday.

Govt lowers rice import duty to 10pc

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to reduce the duty on rice imports by more than half the existing rate to encourage the private sector to import the staple and thus help stabilise the volatile rice market.

The import duty will be 10 percent, down from 28 percent, Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed told reporters at his office yesterday afternoon. Agazette will be issued soon in this regard.

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The Daily Star will publish a series of reports on ponds of Dhaka city from tomorrow depicting how these important water bodies have ceased to exist or are being filled up on a regular basis. Stay with us.



RANGAMATI LANDSLIDE

Victims not getting rice meant for them

HASAN JAHD TUSHER and ANVIL CHAKMA, from Rangamati

The sack of rice supposed to be given to her has been taken by political leaders of her neighbourhood in Rangamati.

Fatima Begum, 45, affected badly in the landslide that claimed at least 118 lives, broke down in tears at Bangladesh Betar shelter yesterday when she was told that someone already took her rice.

She, along with 130 others, has been living at the shelter at Ward-6 of the town after their neighbourhood Natun Para was devastated in the landslide.

"These correspondents met at least 20 people at the shelter also said their rice, a 30 kg sack for each, was misappropriated by leaders of local Awami League, who are also leaders of Society Development Committee.

They said the sacks were eventually given to close relatives and neighbours - some of whom are not affected - of the political leaders while those affected really bad didn't get anything.

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NEWS ANALYSIS

Yet another wake-up call

SHAKHAWAT ULTON

The law protecting the hills is tough. It allows nobody to cut or raze even his or her own hill or hillock. If any body does so, he or she would commit a criminal offence and could be sentenced to jail and fined.

There is, however, an exception in the law - Environmental Conservation Act 1995 - that allows cutting of hills for national interest, like prevention of loss of life or property.

If a hill needs to be cut for such a reason, one must take permission from the

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Road construction cost way too high

Bangladesh spends much bigger amount than India or China; WB cites time overrun, lack of competitive bidding as major reasons

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh spends much higher amounts than India and China on construction of roads particularly because of time overrun and lack of competitive bidding, says the World Bank.

The estimated cost of construction is \$6.6m a kilometre of Rangpur-Hatikumrul four-lane Highway, \$7m of Dhaka-Sylhet

four-lane highway, \$11.9m of Dhaka-Mawa four-lane highway and \$2.5m of each of Dhaka-Chittagong and Dhaka-Mymensingh four-lane highways, according to the WB. But a four-lane highway costs \$1.1m to \$1.3m a km in India and \$1.3m-\$1.6m in China.

The global lender compared the cost of construction in Bangladesh with that in

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“এখন নগদ টাকা ছাড়া ক্রিসেন্টের পণ্য পরিবারের সকলের জন্য”

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