

STOCKS		COMMODITIES		ASIAN MARKETS				CURRENCIES			
DSEX	CSCX	Gold	Oil	MUMBAI	TOKYO	SINGAPORE	SHANGHAI	USD	EUR	GBP	CNY
▲ 0.79%	▲ 0.68%	\$1,638.40	\$26.67	▲ 6.98%	▲ 8.04%	▲ 6.07%	▲ 2.17%	BUY TK 83.95	89.67	98.12	11.69
4008.28	6859.89	(per ounce)	(per barrel)	28,535.78	19,546.63	2,505.47	2,781.59	SELL TK 84.95	93.47	101.92	12.29



Star

# BUSINESS

DHAKA THURSDAY MARCH 26, 2020, CHAITRA 12, 1426 BS starbusiness@thedailystar.net

## TAMING CORONAVIRUS RAMPAGE

### Govt seeks \$1b from IMF, WB



REJAUUL KARIM BYRON

Bangladesh yesterday sought \$1 billion in support from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank as the country looks to support its people, businesses and industries reeling from the coronavirus pandemic.

The government also requested the global multilateral lenders to stand by Bangladesh so that it can tackle coronavirus, which is progressively getting worse in the country.

"A single country can't tackle this type of disastrous situation by itself. We would like to earnestly request the World Bank and the IMF that they would ensure greater cooperation taking into account the risky situation facing Bangladesh," Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal told the global lenders in a video conference yesterday.

The government expects to receive \$750 million from the IMF and \$200 million from the WB.

The coronavirus stands to wipe out 1.1 per cent of Bangladesh's GDP as per a projection of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the minister said.

"It came at a time when Bangladesh is targeting to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and become a higher middle-income country by 2030," said a statement from the finance ministry quoting him.

If the pandemic prolongs, the global economic growth may fall to 1.5 per cent.

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AKM ZAMIR UDDIN

In moments of crisis, holding more physical cash gives some a sense of control over the situation, it is often said.

And as the number of coronavirus cases in Bangladesh continues to rise, besides stockpiling cleaning products and essential foodstuffs many are flocking to bank counters to keep extra cash on hand.

One such individual is Pervez Chowdhury, a banker by profession, who yesterday withdrew Tk 140,000 from another bank fearing the impending health and financial crisis.

Even though banks have assured they would keep an adequate number of branches open during the shutdown from March 29 to April 2 for two hours as per the instruction of the central bank, fear of lenders running out of cash have drove many to flock

to bank counters yesterday, the last full working day.

The Daily Star correspondent yesterday visited five branches of different banks in Dhaka city and spoke with officials of at least six branches located outside of Dhaka. And the situation was same everywhere.

So anxious are people overall that an official of Social Islami Bank told the correspondent yesterday that customers have been cashing out their fixed and deposit pension schemes prematurely.

Anticipating such a situation, the central bank on Monday cut its policy or repurchase agreement rate by 25 basis points to 5.75 per cent.

Besides, it also reduced cash reserve ratio by 50 basis points to 5 per cent in order to supply an additional amount of Tk 6,500 crore to the market.

"There is no cash crisis in the banking sector. Rather the



### Digital banking platforms to remain open

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh Bank yesterday said it would run the National Payment Switch Bangladesh (NPSB) during the general holidays declared by the government in order to settle the inter-bank transaction through credit and debit cards and point-of-sale terminals.

The NPSB also allows customers to transfer a maximum of Tk 2 lakh per day from one bank to another.

The Bangladesh Electronic Fund Transfer Network will remain open between April 1 and April 2 such that the government employees can receive their salaries, said the central bank notice.

BEFTN is used to settle transactions between banks. The platform is usually used to give salary and wage to employees.

But the Bangladesh Automated Cheque Processing Systems (BACPS) and Real-time Gross Settlement (RTGS) platform will remain closed during the holidays.

This means, large volumes of inter-bank transactions will not be possible during the holidays.

rampant withdrawal and use of cash has created a health risk for people," said Zahid Hussain, former lead economist of the World Bank's Dhaka office.

There are fears that the cash itself could be a source for transmission of the lethal, pneumonia-like virus, which is spreading like wild fire all over the globe.

People with access digital banking should not withdraw cash and handle bank notes at the moment, he added.

Ahsan H Mansur, executive director of the Policy Research Institute, echoed the same.

"The local notes are filthier than those of other countries," he said.

A number of central banks of other countries have already taken different measures to disinfect their cash in order to contain the virus.

South Korea's central bank has

quarantined almost all its bank notes for two weeks to remove any traces of coronavirus and even burn them as part of the government's efforts to contain the outbreak.

The Federal Reserve, the central bank of the US, has also taken the same measure fearing bank notes as a vector for the disease, which is said to perish after nine days.

The Chinese central bank took massive initiative since the middle of February to deep clean potentially infected cash with ultraviolet light and high temperature, and in some cases, destroying it, to stop the spread of the virus.

The Bangladesh Bank has yet to take any initiative to quarantine its bank notes although 39 people have so far infected with the virus and 5 of them died until yesterday.

"It is tough for the central bank to quarantine the bank notes as

the country is highly dependent on cash," said a Bangladesh Bank official, who has a strong connection with supplying and mopping up money to and from the market.

Better than Cash Alliance, an entity of the United Nations, carried out a research on Bangladesh's digital and cash transaction system in 2017 and found only 6 per cent of the total transactions are settled through the digital method.

Syed Mahbubur Rahman, managing director of Mutual Trust Bank, whose cash withdrawal pressure surged in the last few days, echoed the same as Mansur and Hussain.

"Excessive use of cash has created an additional risk of spreading the virus. We are repeatedly urging customers to use the digital channels to settle their transactions," he added.

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### Panic-struck people clear out faintly promising malaria drug

MAHMUDIUL HASAN and PALLAB BHATTACHARYA

On Sunday, Salman Islam, a resident of the capital's Panthapath area, rushed to the nearest pharmacy to buy malaria drug hydroxychloroquine after watching on the news that the US President Donald Trump touted it for treatment of Covid-19.

To Islam's surprise, the pharmacist told him that the drugs are not available; they were all taken by a customer a couple of minutes back.

"I searched three other pharmacies only to hear the same words: 'sold out,'" Islam said.

The basis of Trump's claim is a controversial, small study of about 40 patients hospitalised with Covid-19 in France.

In that study, hydroxychloroquine was given with the antibiotic azithromycin to the patients and the medication appeared to help clear the

virus from the bodies of 26 patients, based on samples taken from nasal swabs, reports Bloomberg.

Experts have criticised the design of the study, calling it interesting but far from definitive. Top scientists, including White House coronavirus task force member Anthony Fauci, have called reports that hydroxychloroquine might work anecdotal, and said they need further study before the pill's use is encouraged.

And yet, that has not stopped panic-stricken people from snapping up the drug, leaving genuine patients without supply.

The Daily Star yesterday visited nine pharmacies in the capital's West Rajabazar, Panthapath and Kalabagan areas but none of them had hydroxychloroquine. But azithromycin was available in all the drugstores.

Hydroxychloroquine is used to treat malaria, lupus erythematosus,

rheumatoid arthritis and autoimmune disorder.

"Chloroquine drug was not a top-selling product for us. Some people would buy a few tablets before boarding on a bus to Hill Tracts and some for arthritis," said Md Fariduddin, proprietor of Lopa Pharmacy in the capital's Panthapath.

Chloroquine is a prescription-only drug, said Abid Hasan, a pharmacist of Kalabagan's Lazz Pharma.

And yet, it is out of market, not just in Bangladesh but in neighbouring India too, which is giving more credence to the medicine in treating Covid-19 that has brought the world down to its knees.

The neighbouring country yesterday placed a ban on its export with immediate effect.

The ban comes two days after Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) Director General Balram Bhargava had on Monday recommended the use of hydroxychloroquine for treating healthcare workers dealing with suspected or confirmed coronavirus cases and also asymptomatic household contacts of the lab-confirmed cases of the pandemic.

The treatment protocol recommended by the ICMR-constituted National Task Force for COVID-19 has been approved by the Drug Controller General of India for restricted use in emergency situations.

The Indian government though will allow export of the medicine on humanitarian grounds on case-to-case basis on the ministry of external affairs' recommendation, said the notification from the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), an arm of the commerce ministry which deals with export and import-related matters.

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### Factories rise to the occasion, join hands to make PPE

REFAJAT ULLAH MIRDHA and MOHAMMAD SUMAN

Local production of personal protective equipment (PPE) gained momentum yesterday after a joint initiative got approval from the government about the design and fabrics in a development that would boost morale of the health professionals fighting the coronavirus.

Five garment factories yesterday started producing the PPE under a joint initiative of Pay It Forward, the Manush Manusher Jonno Foundation, the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), British retail giant Marks & Spencer, the Arunachal Trust, and the Buet Alumni Association.

The initiative got an approval from the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) to make the PPE, Navidul Huq, a coordinator of the initiative from the BGMEA, said.

"We are hopeful that we can start distribution of the PPE to hospitals for doctors and nurses from Saturday. We will also distribute the items to other organisations and individuals gradually," said Mohammad Wahid Hossain, executive chairman of Pay It Forward.

"Initially, we will produce 50,000 pieces. We will distribute all of them free of cost," he told The Daily Star by phone.

The initiative plans to produce at least five lakh pieces of PPE.

The five factories are: Urmi Group, Snowtex, Aman Group, Dekko Group and Smartex Group.

Urmi Group said it would not make any profit from making the PPE because people need the safety gears urgently. It will only take fabric charge as it will have to buy the raw materials, said its Managing Director Asif Ashraf.

Snowtex, another leading garment exporter, said it started manufacturing PPE yesterday.

"I will produce 50,000 pieces initially," said SM Khaled, managing director of the company.

"Of the quantity, I will distribute 17,000 pieces free of cost," he said, adding that he would not make any



profit from making the PPE.

There is a lot of work orders from companies and organisations to make the PPE. Banks and hospitals have already placed orders with Snowtex, said Khaled.

The production cost is around Tk 600 per PPE, Huq said, adding that a team from the BGMEA is coordinating the production and distribution of the PPE.

From next week, at least eight more factories will join the effort in producing PPE, according to Huq.

In Chattogram, Smart Jacket (BD)

Ltd, a manufacturer in the Chattogram Export Processing Zone, is making one lakh sets of surgical jackets for doctors to combat the coronavirus after receiving orders from the health ministry.

The company, a concern of Smart Group of Industries, had ready items of 50,000 sets of surgical jackets in its stock and it delivered the items to the

government on Tuesday afternoon.

Another 20,000 sets of jackets, produced by the company's 2,000 workers within a day, were sent to Dhaka through three trucks yesterday, officials said.

"We regularly manufacture surgical jackets for an American buyer. The health ministry on Monday asked us to produce one lakh sets and after receiving the order, we delivered 50,000 sets," Mujibur Rahman, a director of the company, told The Daily Star.

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# India's huge outsourcing industry struggles with work-from-home scenario

REUTERS, New Delhi/Bengaluru

As the coronavirus pandemic pushes India into a lockdown, the call centers and IT services firms that function as the world's back office are struggling to piece together work-from-home solutions and other business-continuity plans.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday ordered 1.3 billion Indians to stay at home for 21 days to stem the spread of SARS-CoV-2, following earlier lockdown orders in many Indian cities and states. As of Tuesday, India had reported over 500 cases of the virus and nine deaths.

Many of the companies that provide business services such as call centers, information technology services and business process automation were not prepared for work-from-home arrangements, according to interviews with more than a dozen employees of several companies.

That raises questions about whether one of India's showpiece industries can function smoothly amid the coronavirus crisis.

"The industry has been scrambling to set up its own business continuity plan," said R. Chandrashekar, a retired federal government official and a former president of India's IT services lobby group, NASSCOM.

In the southern tech hub of Bengaluru, an employee working at a JPMorgan call center said that until last Friday, her managers had repeatedly declined staffers' pleas to work from home.

"Even if I am infected with the virus, I know the death rate for young people isn't very high, but I am very very scared

that I might transfer it to family," she said on condition of anonymity, as she is not authorized to speak to the media.

After a state government order, JPMorgan on Sunday asked its Bengaluru staff to "stay at home until further notice," according to a message to employees, reviewed by Reuters.

In some cases, companies must seek client permission before allowing employees to work on sensitive projects outside the office, a senior human resources executive at a top Indian IT firm said of working remotely.

"These days the challenge is not really the

technology, the challenge is the regulations, and, in case something goes wrong, who's going to take the responsibility," the person said on condition of anonymity.

Indian software services firms, led by Tata Consultancy Services and Infosys gained prominence by giving Western clients low-cost solutions to routine computer problems. Over time, they assumed a major role at many global companies.

Three employees of mid-sized IT services firm Mphasis, in the western Indian city of Pune, said they were all being asked to come

to the office until last Friday, even as some expressed concerns about working in close proximity with roughly 90 other people.

Maharashtra state, where Pune is located, had imposed restrictions on private company employees going to offices in an effort to curb the spread of the virus. But it made exemptions for essential services including some IT companies.

During the past week, security guards barred employees from venturing outside one of the Mphasis offices in Pune to avoid attracting the police, fearing a forced shutdown, two employees said, declining to be named as they are not authorized to speak to the media.

One said a human resources executive told him not to wear a mask as it would "panic people who come to work".

As Maharashtra enforced a curfew starting Monday, some Mphasis employees were being asked to remain home this week, even though they lacked equipment such as laptops, the employees said.

Mphasis said in a statement that not all of its staff were working remotely. But the company said it was speaking with clients and trying to enable as many people as possible to work from home while ensuring employee safety.

An employee of French tele-services provider Teleperformance on the outskirts of Delhi said his company had been reluctant to let staff work from home. But he said employees were finally told on Sunday that the company would begin installing corporate desktop computers at their homes after a wider lockdown in several cities.



Police officers stop vehicles and check their papers on a highway during 21-day nationwide lockdown to limit the spreading of coronavirus disease, in Kochi, India yesterday.

# Cashback on Galaxy Z Flip pre-orders

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Samsung Bangladesh has offered Tk 40,000 in cashback on pre-orders of its folding smartphone Galaxy Z Flip.

Customers placing pre-orders can buy the phone at Tk 149,999 while the regular price of the phone is Tk 189,999. Pre-orders can be placed at www.preorderzflip.com.

"Upon purchasing, customers can also pay Tk 10,500 for a one-time screen replacement. The regular price of screen replacement is Tk 80,500," the company said in a statement yesterday.

"The Galaxy Z Flip has been engineered with a first-of-its-kind foldable glass that features a 6.7-inch display that folds into a stylish and compact form factor that will fit in the palm of anyone's hand," it added.

The device has dual rear cameras—a 12MP ultrawide one and 12MP wide-angle one—which are paired with an LED flash. It also comes with a 10MP selfie camera.

Users can enjoy a versatile camera experience with 4K video capture, Live Focus, and Super Steady recording.

Galaxy Z Flip also features an optimised dual battery of 3,300mAh.

Customers can purchase the phone availing zero equal monthly instalment for up to 24 months through Standard Chartered Bank and Eastern Bank.

"Galaxy Z Flip is an important next step as we look the foldable category by bringing to consumers a new form factor, new display, and most importantly, a new kind of mobile experience," said Md Mueyeddin Rahman, head of mobile, Samsung Bangladesh.

"With Galaxy Z Flip's unique foldable design and user experience, we are redefining what a mobile device can be, and what it enables the consumer to do."

**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**  
Local Government Engineering Department  
Office of the Upazila Engineer  
Nasimgar, Brahmanbaria  
www.lged.gov.bd

Memo No: 46.02.1290.000.02.001.20-246 Date: 24/03/2020

**e-Tender Notice No: 07/2019-20 (OTM)**  
e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of the following works:

Sl No.	Tender ID	Name of works	Schedule price	Closing & opening (date & time)
1	448218	Construction of Additional Class Room CHANDAR PARA GPS under PEDP4 at Nasimgar Upazila Dist Brahmanbaria	2000.00	20/04/2020 14:30pm
2	450379	Supply of Bench in Secondary and Primary School at Nasimgar Upazila under Brahmanbaria District.	1000.00	20/04/2020 14:30pm

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP web Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches up to 12:00 on 20-April/2020.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

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GD-606

# 'Unprecedented collapse' for eurozone businesses

AFP, Brussels

Businesses in the eurozone suffered "an unprecedented collapse" in March because of the novel coronavirus pandemic, according to a closely watched indicator released Tuesday by IHS Markit.

Provisional data showed the slump in activity in the 19-nation zone in March "far exceeding that seen even at the height of the global financial crisis," with the company's PMI survey diving to 31.4.

A reading below 50 points indicates a contraction. In February, the index had stood at 51.6. The latest reading for March is the lowest since IHS Markit started its PMI survey in 1998.

The indicator reflected a near-shutdown

of eurozone economies as COVID-19 sweeps across Europe.

Major economies Italy, France, Germany and Spain are all deeply affected and have implemented severe social and business restrictions to try to slow the virus's spread, by keeping potential carriers at home.

The eurozone's economic struggle was worsened by some EU member states closing off their borders to neighbours, limiting the flow of goods and people within the single market.

EU countries are starting to deploy massive state spending and loan guarantees to prop up businesses and employment, with the EU dropping its strict rules on budget deficits.

The IHS Markit survey showed the services sector was pummeled the worst, sliding to well

below where it was at during the 2009 global financial crisis.

Manufacturing was also hit, supply chains were being badly degraded, and there was "a record fall in export business as cross-border trade flows seized up".

Employees are being let go at the fastest rate since June 2009.

"Expectations of future output also deteriorated markedly to reach an all-time low, with record degrees of pessimism about the year ahead seen in both manufacturing and services," IHS Markit said.

"Clearly there's scope for the downturn to intensify further as even more draconian policies to deal with the virus are potentially implemented in coming months," chief economist Chris Williamson said.

**গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার**  
উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার কল্যাণ কার্যালয়  
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তারিখঃ ২১/০৩/২০২০ইং

**দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি**

উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য কমপ্লেক্স, খোকসা, কুষ্টিয়া এর ২০১৯-২০২০ অর্থ বৎসরের এমএসআর সামগ্রী ক্রয়/সেবার জন্য দরপত্রের মাধ্যমে এমএসআর সামগ্রী যোগ্য সরবরাহকারী ঠিকাদার/প্রকৃতকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান/প্রকৃত ব্যবসায়ী/সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট থেকে পিপিআর ২০০৬ ও ২০০৮ অনুযায়ী গ্রুপ ওয়ারী পৃথক পৃথকভাবে সীলমোহরকৃত খামে দরপত্র আহবান করা যাবে।

সংখ্যা	বিভাগ	স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার কল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয় (স্বাস্থ্য সেবা বিভাগ)।		
১	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার কল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয় (স্বাস্থ্য সেবা বিভাগ)।		
২	অফিসের এর নাম	স্বাস্থ্য অফিসদপ্তর।		
৩	সংস্থার নাম	উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার পরিকল্পনা অফিসারের কার্যালয়।		
৪	সংগ্রহকারী সংস্থার অবস্থান	উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার পরিকল্পনা অফিসারের কার্যালয়, খোকসা, কুষ্টিয়া।		
৫	সংগ্রহকারী সংস্থার জেলার নাম	কুষ্টিয়া।		
৬	যে কাজের জন্য দরপত্র আহবান	এমএসআর সামগ্রী।		
৭	সংগ্রহ পদ্ধতি	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি।		
৮	বাজেট ও অর্থের উৎস	রাজস্ব বাজেট (ভিত্তিক), স্বাস্থ্য অফিসদপ্তর ও স্বাস্থ্য মন্ত্রণালয়।		
৯	ঠিকাদার/ব্যবসায়ী	প্রকৃত ঠিকাদার/ব্যবসায়ী ও সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান।		
১০	দরপত্র প্রকাশের তারিখ	২১/০৩/২০২০ইং।		
১১	দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ	০৩/০৪/২০২০ইং অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত (সরকারি ছুটির দিন ব্যতিত)।		
১২	দরপত্র সিডিউল দাখিলের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	০৬/০৪/২০২০ইং বেলা ১.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।		
১৩	দরপত্র সিডিউল খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	০৬/০৪/২০২০ইং বেলা ১.৩০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।		
১৪	দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের স্থান	উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার পরিকল্পনা অফিসারের কার্যালয়, খোকসা, কুষ্টিয়া।		
১৫	দরপত্র সিডিউল দাখিলের স্থান	১। সিডিউল সার্বজনিন অফিস, কুষ্টিয়া। ২। উপজেলা নির্বাহী অফিসার, খোকসা, কুষ্টিয়া। ৩। উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার পরিকল্পনা অফিসারের কার্যালয়, খোকসা, কুষ্টিয়া।		
১৬	দরপত্র সিডিউল খোলার স্থান	উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার পরিকল্পনা অফিসারের কার্যালয়, খোকসা, কুষ্টিয়া।		
১৭	দরপত্রাদাতার যোগ্যতা	১। পিপিআর ২০০৬, ২০০৮ অনুযায়ী যোগ্য দরপত্রাদাতা, ২। দরপত্র সিডিউলের সাথে সংযুক্ত শর্তাবলী।		
১৮	ক্র. প.	কাজের বিবরণী	দরপত্র সিডিউলের মূল্য (অফেরতযোগ্য)	দরপত্রের জমানতের পরিমাণ
	ক	ঔষধ (ইউসিএল বর্ধিত)	৭৫০/= (সাতশত পঞ্চাশ টাকা) মাত্র	৫০,০০০/= (পঞ্চাশ হাজার) টাকা মাত্র।
	খ	সার্কিক্যাল গজ, ব্যাজেজ, তুলা	৭৫০/= (সাতশত পঞ্চাশ টাকা) মাত্র	২০,০০০/= (কুড়ি হাজার) টাকা মাত্র।
	গ	সিডেন সামগ্রী	৭৫০/= (সাতশত পঞ্চাশ টাকা) মাত্র	২০,০০০/= (কুড়ি হাজার) টাকা মাত্র।
	ঘ	সার্কিক্যাল যন্ত্রপাতি	৭৫০/= (সাতশত পঞ্চাশ টাকা) মাত্র	৫০,০০০/= (পঞ্চাশ হাজার) টাকা মাত্র।
	ঙ	ক্যামিকেল/রি-এজেন্ট	৭৫০/= (সাতশত পঞ্চাশ টাকা) মাত্র	১০,০০০/= (দশ হাজার) টাকা মাত্র।
	চ	অসবাবপত্র ও কিচেন সামগ্রী	৭৫০/= (সাতশত পঞ্চাশ টাকা) মাত্র	১০,০০০/= (দশ হাজার) টাকা মাত্র।
১৯	দরপত্র আহবানকারীর নাম, পদবী ও ঠিকানা	ডাঃ মোঃ কামরুজ্জামান, উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার পরিকল্পনা অফিসার, খোকসা, কুষ্টিয়া।		
২০	দরপত্র আহবানকারীর সাথে যোগাযোগ	মোবাইলঃ ০১৭১১১১৭৬৪৭।		
২১	বিশেষ নির্দেশাবলী	ক। অত্রী দরপত্রাদাতাগণের দরপত্র প্রক্রিয়া প্রকাশের তারিখ হইতে প্রতিদিন অফিস চলাকালীন সময় সংশ্লিষ্ট গ্রুপের দরপত্র সিডিউলের মূল্য বাবদ অর্থ ট্রেজারী চালানের মাধ্যমে সোনালী ব্যাংক, খোকসা শাখা, খোকসা, কুষ্টিয়া ও সোনালী ব্যাংক, প্রধান শাখা বাবর আলী গেট, কুষ্টিয়া কোড নং ১-২৭১১-০০০০-২৩৬৬ তে জমানাদপূর্বক ট্রেজারী চালানের মূলকপি অত্র অফিসের কাশিয়ার এর নিকট জমা প্রদান ব্যাপকে শর্তে বর্ণিত খ-ঘ গ্রুপের দরপত্র সিডিউল নির্ধারিত তারিখের মধ্যে গ্রহণ করিতে পারিবেন। খ। বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রদানকারী কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন প্রকার কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন দরপত্র আবেদন বা সকল প্রকার দরপত্র গ্রহণ/খতিলা করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন। গ। অনামতস্বত্বপূর্ণ সর্ব নিম্ন দরদাতাকে দরপত্র ক্রয়/সেবার ক্ষমতা দিতে বাধ্য নহে। ঘ। দরপত্রের সহিত অবেশাই ব্যাংক ড্রাফট, হালনাগাদ ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, ২০১৯ সালের চেম্বার অব কমার্স এন্ড ইন্ডাস্ট্রি এর সদস্য সদনপত্র, ২০১৮-২০১৯ অর্থ বৎসরের আয়কর পরিশোধের সনদ যে কোন তফসীলি ব্যাংক হইতে পঞ্চাশ লক্ষ টাকার ব্যাংক লেনদেন সহ স্বচ্ছতার সনদপত্র, সদ্য জোলা ২ কপি পাসপোর্ট সাইজের ছবি, ভ্যাট রেজিস্ট্রেশন সনদপত্র, ড্রাগ লাইসেন্স (ঔষধ গ্রুপের জন্য), জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র, একই পাতায় ৩টি নমুনা স্বাক্ষর, ও বিগত পাঁচ বৎসরের মধ্যে কোন সরকারি প্রতিষ্ঠানের ২,০০,০০,০০০ (দুই কোটি) টাকার এমএসআর সরবরাহের অভিজ্ঞতা সনদপত্র। ঙ। দরপত্রের অন্যান্য সকল শর্তাবলী দরপত্র সিডিউলের সহিত সংযুক্ত।		

ডাঃ মোঃ কামরুজ্জামান  
উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার কল্যাণ কার্যালয়  
খোকসা, কুষ্টিয়া

জিডি-৬০৭

# Big Oil may have to break dividend taboo as debt spirals: investors

REUTERS, London

The world's biggest oil and gas firms should break an industry taboo and consider cutting dividends, rather than taking on any more debt to maintain payouts as they weather the fallout from the coronavirus pandemic, investors say. The top five so-called oil majors have avoided reducing dividends for years to keep investors sweet and added a combined \$25 billion to debt levels in 2019 to maintain capital spending, while giving back billions to shareholders.

The strategy was designed to maintain the appeal of oil company stocks as investors came under increased pressure from climate activists to ditch the shares and help the world move faster toward meeting carbon emissions targets.

Now this strategy is at risk. Oil prices have slumped 60 per cent since January to below \$30 a barrel as demand collapsed because of the pandemic and as a battle for customers between Saudi Arabia and Russia threatened to flood the market with crude.

"Long term, it is appropriate to cut the dividend. We are not in favor of raising debt to support the dividend," said Jeffrey Germain, a director at Brandes Investment Partners, whose portfolio includes several European oil firms.

The combined debt of Chevron, Total, BP, Exxon Mobile and Royal Dutch Shell stood at \$231 billion in 2019, just shy of the \$235 billion hit in 2016 when oil prices also tumbled below \$30 a barrel. Chevron was the only one to reduce its debt last year.

**Government of the people's Republic of Bangladesh**  
Office of the Medical Superintendent  
Chest Disease Hospital, Fouzderhat, Chattogram.  
Telephone: 02-44075211.  
E-mail: cthb@hospi.dghs.gov.bd

Memo no: CDH/Tender/2019-2020/Outsourcing/193

**INVITATION FOR TENDER**

Sealed tender are here by invited from recognized Contractor/Suppliers to supply Outsourcing manpower for Chest Disease Hospital, Fouzderhat, Chattogram in the fiscal year 2019-2020. As per PPA-2006 & PPR-2008 (including all corrigendum) Terms and conditions are follow(s):

KEY INFORMATION																			
1. Ministry/Division	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare																		
2. Agency	Chest Disease Hospital, Fouzderhat, Chattogram																		
3. PE Name, Designation & Contact details	(Dr. S.M. Nurul karim) Medical Superintendent, CDH.																		
4. Procuring Entity Code & District	GOB, Chattogram.																		
5. Invitation for	Tender for procurement of supplying outsourcing manpower for CDH, Fouzderhat, Chattogram in the fiscal year 2019-2020																		
6. Tender Ref. no & date	CDH/Tender/2019-2020/Outsourcing/ Date:																		
7. Procurement Method	Open Tender Method (OTM).																		
8. Budget and Source of Fund	GOB in Bangladeshi Taka.																		
9. Tender Schedule Selling Date & Time	27-03-2020 to 12-04-2020 During office hours.																		
10. Tender Dropping & Closing Date & Time	13-04-2020 9.0 A.M. to 11.00A.M																		
11. Tender Opening Date & Time	13-04-2020 11.30 A.M.																		
12. NAME & ADDRESS OF THE OFFICE'S																			
Selling Tender Document	Cashier, Office of the Medical Superintendent Chest Disease Hospital, Fouzderhat, Chattogram.																		
Receiving Tender Document	Office of the Medical Superintendent Chest Disease Hospital, Fouzderhat, Chattogram.																		
Tender Document Opening place	Office of the Medical Superintendent Chest Disease Hospital, Fouzderhat, Chattogram.																		
13. Bidders Eligibility (Bidders has to submit these certificates/attested photocopy (as applicable) deficiency of any of these document would be counted as ineligibility of the respective bidder)	Must be a Bangladeshi Citizen and should submit copy of National identity card, 02 (two) passport size photo of the bidder/representative, Electronic TIN(E-TIN) registration certificate, Valid Trade license(manpowersupplier) for the fiscal year 2019-20. Up to date BIN(Business identification number) certificate, chamber of commerce certificate the fiscal year 2019-2020, In case of Ltd. company corporation charter, Bank statement (original computer sheet) from 01-01-2020 to 31-03-2020, 20,00000/(twenty lac) Bank Deposit status after 01-03-2020. Financial solvency certificate stating amount 50,00000/(Fifty Lac) from any scheduled Bank with the bidder holding an account (The statement should be issued after 01-03-2020), Solvency certificate should be based on Bank statement attached. Certificate stating sound & solvent is not acceptable and bidder submitting that type of certificate will be rejected.																		
14. Details manpower	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Job Title</th> <th>Category</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Electrician</td> <td>category-01</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pump operator</td> <td>category-02</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Plumber</td> <td>category-02</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gardener</td> <td>category-04</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cleaning staff</td> <td>category-05</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Security guard</td> <td>category-05</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Aya</td> <td>category-05</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ward Boy</td> <td>category-05</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Job Title	Category	Electrician	category-01	Pump operator	category-02	Plumber	category-02	Gardener	category-04	Cleaning staff	category-05	Security guard	category-05	Aya	category-05	Ward Boy	category-05
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15. Description of Group, price of tender document, tender security etc.	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Sl.No.</th> <th>Description of Group</th> <th>Price of tender document in BDT(Only cash, Non Refundable)</th> <th>Tender Security in BDT(In the form of pay order/demand draft)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>01</td> <td>Tender for procurement of supplying outsourcing manpower</td> <td>1000.00(one thousand only)</td> <td>1,50,000.00(one lac fifty thousand only)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Sl.No.	Description of Group	Price of tender document in BDT(Only cash, Non Refundable)	Tender Security in BDT(In the form of pay order/demand draft)	01	Tender for procurement of supplying outsourcing manpower	1000.00(one thousand only)	1,50,000.00(one lac fifty thousand only)										
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16. Description of related services	Detailed description in tender booklet.																		

Note:

a) Corrigendum if necessary in future will be a part of this notice. The competent authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tender without assigning any reason what so ever.

b) If the date of selling, receiving & opening of tender is disturbed under any unavoidable circumstances the next working day will be applicable for the same respectively.

(Dr. S.M. Nurul karim)  
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GD- 603



# DCCI wants cuts in corporate tax

*The chamber places its budget proposals to NBR*

STAR BUSINESS DESK

The Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry in its budget proposal for the next fiscal year has called upon the revenue authority to slash corporate tax.

The National Board of Revenue should bring down the corporate tax from fiscal 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23 at a progressive rate of 5 per cent, 7 per cent and 10 per cent respectively, the chamber's President Shams Mahmud said.

He also requested the NBR to cut the tax rate on income of corporate dividend from 20 per cent to 10 per cent, according to a statement.

The chamber placed the budget proposals to the NBR yesterday. Md Alamgir Hossain, member for tax policy of the NBR, received the proposals on behalf of NBR chairman. NKA Mobin, senior vice president of the DCCI, was also present.

Mahmud urged the NBR to increase the limit of income tax return for individual from existing Tk 2.5 lakh to Tk 3 lakh and reduce the least tax return rate to 5 per cent which is now 10 per cent.

Besides, the DCCI president recommended implementing the fully automated and online tax return submission system to attract more taxpayers.

At present those who pay VAT return at a rate of 15 per cent can enjoy tax rebate, but Mahmud requested the NBR to allow the same facility to those who pay VAT return at a rate of 5 per cent, 7.5 per cent and 10

per cent as well. There is no specific definition of "material" both in the VAT Act 2012 and VAT Law 2016. The definition of material should be included in these act and policy, he said.

He also suggested withdrawal of all advance tax imposed on raw materials and machineries used in the manufacturing-led industries in order to encourage export oriented manufacturing and export diversification.

Mahmud also wanted the turnover limit for small and medium entrepreneurs to be increased from existing Tk 3 crore to Tk 4 crore. Rebate-less VAT implementation may fuel inflation, he said.

"One of the basic rules of VAT calculation is to fix the VAT rate as per the ratio of value addition of the product."

The private sector should get the chance to participate in the transmission and distribution of power across the country, he said.

Special tax exemption facility on local manufacturing of sub-station machineries and other related accessories should be allowed in order to facilitate import substitute backward linkage industry in the power sector.

He finally requested the NBR to keep the effects of the coronavirus outbreak in consideration while formulating the upcoming budget to bring out the best of instrumental policies and revenue management for inclusive growth.

# edotco Bangladesh gets new MD

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Telecommunications infrastructure service provider edotco Group Sdn Bhd has announced appointing Ricky Steyn as the new country managing director of edotco Bangladesh, stating that it was to solidify its presence in the country and grow its footprint across the region.



Steyn was previously the director of engineering in Myanmar for the past four years.

Under the new leadership, edotco is set to reinforce its commitment and grow its presence through innovative next generation telecommunication solutions and continued service delivery excellence, the company said in a statement yesterday.

"With over 24 years of telecommunications experience, Ricky specialises in service delivery for both active and passive infrastructure across three different continents," it added.

"We will continue to push for the adoption of next generation technologies such as smart city solutions across the country, infrastructure that is 5G ready and able to meet increasing capacity requirements. We are fully committed to partnering the country towards meeting its digital ambitions," said Ricky.

# Dhaka stocks find no takers

FROM PAGE B4

Yesterday, DSEX, the benchmark index of the DSE, rose 31.71 points, or 0.79 per cent to close at 4,008.28.

Turnover rose 150 per cent to Tk 348 crore. However, of the sum, Tk 237.7 crore was traded in the block market and Tk 110 crore in the main board. ACI Formulations was the topped the gainers' list with its 9.9 per cent rise, followed by One Bank, National Life Insurance, Standard Bank and ICB Islamic Bank.

Premier Cement was the worst loser, shedding 6.4 per cent. It was followed by CAPM BDBL Mutual Fund, Bangladesh National Insurance Company, NCC Bank and Mutual Fund One.

# Truckers left idle as EPZ shipments put on hold

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, Pabna

Over the past few years, Md Khasru Miah, a truck driver of the Baba Solaiman transport agency in Ishwardi, typically made at least five trips per month to deliver materials used for manufacturing export-oriented products in Ishwardi export processing zone.

However, with the coronavirus pandemic taking its toll on businesses across Bangladesh, the 50-year-old has endured a massive downturn in fortune as of late.

"During times of natural disasters or even political crises such as floods or shutdowns, we often carry export materials safely. However, the recent coronavirus outbreak has cut down my work. As of March 20, I have received only one order to carry export goods this month," Kashru said.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Md Hira Pramanik, a lorry operator of Nasir Transport Group, echoed the same.

"I was fortunate to have been ordered to carry a bundle of thread from Chattogram port to a Japanese export-oriented garment factory in Ishwardi EPZ. This is the single trip for me this month," he said.

Following the global outbreak of coronavirus, shipments for all kinds of products have been put on hold for the last few weeks, he added.

Most transport workers of Ishwardi EPZ are enduring similar experiences due to the COVID-19 pandemic, leaving them with little to do other than sleep away the time.

"At least 40 to 50 goods-laden trucks were dispatched from Ishwardi EPZ daily before, but now no more than 5 to 10

trucks are sent out. Many drivers, helpers and loading-unloading labourers are waiting for work," said Md Sumon Hossain, another truck driver of the Baba Solaiman transport agency.

However, production is going on in Ishwardi EPZ despite the small amount of shipments being made.

"Most factories are operating according to work orders. Safety measures are in place for factory workers so there is nothing to be worried about," said Md Abdul Alim, general manager of the EPZ.

Seeking anonymity, an official of Nakano International, a Japanese garment producer in the EPZ, said that the company does not have a sufficient supply of raw materials due to the lack of shipments and so, is unable to hand over products to their respective buyers on time.

"Our factory is still running but we are not sure how we will continue production if the situation continues," he said.

Foreign investment in Ishwardi EPZ has rapidly increased over the past two decades due to the availability of smooth transport facilities. Besides, workers are readily available in the area.

Ishwardi EPZ started its journey with \$5 million in foreign investment during fiscal 2004-05, Alim said, adding that the investment in the EPZ now amounts to \$144.95 million (as of fiscal 2018-19), most of which is foreign funds.

If the situation deteriorates further, the Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (BEPZA) will take a decision about closing operations of the EPZ, which employs over 12,000 workers, according to its website.

# DBL Pharma, now second biggest seller of muscle pain medicine in the US

STAR BUSINESS DESK

DBL Pharma, a concern of one of the top Bangladeshi business groups DBL Group, has recently become the second biggest shareholder in the methocarbamol generic tablet market in the US, occupying 14.2 per cent share of the market.

Methocarbamol is a widely used medicine in the US for muscle pain, DBL Group said in a statement yesterday.

US-based IQVIA, a leading global provider of advanced analytics, technology solutions and contract research services to the life sciences industry, shared the info in its recent report.

Among 13 companies, Indian company Granules Pharma's partner entity in the USA has the biggest share, according to the statement.

By the end of 2018, DBL Group and Beximco Pharma of Bangladesh received go-ahead from the US Food and Drug Administration to market the medicine in the US.

DBL Group has already invested Tk 700 crore and DBL Pharmaceuticals' factory at Kashimpur in Gazipur will start producing medicines for Bangladesh market by the end of this year.

In the 10-acre factory, European machineries are being set up for making tablets, capsules, syrup, injection, inhaler along with other types of medicines.

Moreover, DBL purchased the production and quality control technology and machineries of cream and ointment of GlaxoSmithKline Bangladesh's recently closed factory in Chattogram, to produce the substitutes of Betnovate and Bactroban, two widely sold items of GSK.

DBL will also produce other medicines maintaining the quality of GSK in Bangladesh, according to the statement.

# Only cash in hand can give them comfort

FROM PAGE B1

City Bank has taken preparation to keep adequate cash at its ATM booths during the general holidays, said its MD Mashrur Arefin.

"We have also asked our customers to use our dedicated app Citytouch to settle their transactions," he added.

Standard Bank will keep 120 of its 138 branches open during the general holidays, said its MD Khondoker Rashed Maqsood.

"Customers will get their required cash any time," he said, while also calling for using the digital modes to settle transactions.

But for those who are leaving Dhaka for their villages because of announcement of general holidays by the government, that is not an option, Hussain said. "People feel secure during any type of crisis if they can keep cash handy."

Chowdhury echoed the same. "Cash provides a certain level of control and certainty that digital and electronic payments don't," said the mask-clad banker.

# Car mechanics staring at lay-offs

FROM PAGE B4

"The transport sector is always an essential component for keeping the economy vibrant as it is directly involved with the manufacturing sector."

According to him, the government should take up initiatives to ensure that the automobile service sector does not lose work orders as it plays an important role in providing logistic services to the transport sector.

NB Auto Servicing in Taltola area is another workshop that would remain closed for an indefinite period for the impending coronavirus pandemic in Bangladesh.

"During this period, I will have to pay the salaries of 25 employees, including diploma engineers," said Neuton Chakma, its managing director.

He said the payroll bill is upwards of Tk 2 lakh every month, while other expenditure, including space rent, will set him back by another Tk 4 lakh.

"If the situation prolongs, I will face serious challenges," he said, adding that his workshop's revenue had also dropped drastically since February 15 for the absence of customers.



Officials of Bidyanondo Foundation and SMC Enterprise Ltd pose at a deal signing ceremony recently for distributing SMC Enterprise's Orsaline-N, Taste Me Instant Soft Drink Powder and SMC Purified Drinking Water among the underprivileged people through the foundation's project, Ek Takay Ahar.

# Factories rise to the occasion, join hands to make PPE

FROM PAGE B1

"Our workers are very happy to be able to contribute to the nation in this crucial moment," he said, adding that factory workers are also interested to work even two shifts if needed.

Shahana Khatun, a worker of the factory, said, "We have so far worked for foreign buyers and this will benefit our country indirectly. Now, it seems like I'm working for my country and it will probably save thousands of people from coronavirus. It's a different feeling."

The health ministry has asked Smart Jacket (BD) to make as many jackets as possible, Rahman said.

"We are not concerned about the profit for this consignment since it is an urgent need for the country,"

he said, adding that the health ministry assured it of bearing the manufacturing cost.

As of Monday, there were around 2 lakh PPE in stock and the consignment of another 2 lakh PPE, procured from different countries, would arrive this month, said Health and Family Welfare Minister Zahid Maleque.

The ministry is distributing 20,000 to 30,000 PPE a day to hospitals across the countries.

As the number of people dying from the deadly virus rose, the government has taken measures to prepare the country's health professionals to tackle it.

The National Board of Revenue has withdrawn all forms of import duties

and taxes to encourage quick import of PPE, raw materials used in hand sanitisers, coronavirus testing kits and re-agents.

Health workers need PPE because if they don't wear the gears they are at increased risk of getting infected by the virus and spreading it to other patients.

Health workers' demand for PPE rose sharply after the first Covid-19 case was confirmed in the country.

Many public hospitals across the country set up isolation units for possible coronavirus patients but they had a dearth of necessary resources and equipment. As a result, doctors, nurses and hospital staffers were finding it hard to keep working, experts say.

# Germany assures support to Bangladesh's garment exporters

FROM PAGE B4

The BGMEA's German counterparts fear that almost a third of the country's textile industry is under threat of total collapse.

What makes the situation even more difficult is that it remains uncertain when the coronavirus pandemic will subside.

"Let me assure you that I share your concerns regarding the social distress and the threat to garment factories and their workers in Bangladesh."

I response to your letter, I am informing you about my intent to pass your urgent request to the representatives of the German textile industry," Muller said.

Earlier this week, the BGMEA issued a letter to the Prime Minister's principal secretary, seeking banking and policy support to help face the challenges brought on by the pandemic.

In the letter, the BGMEA said that due to work order cancellations, the apparel manufacturers will find it very difficult to make payments on letters of credit, wages and utility bills.

Therefore, the BGMEA seeks all forms of government support, including the provision of an interest-free loan with a tenure of three years within the next six months.

In a notice, the BGMEA said that member

factories are continuing production.

Besides, the head offices of those factories are also open to aid production and support workers.

Garment factories are excluded from the purview of the government declared general holiday, the BGMEA notice said.

However, the BGMEA also urged companies to take adequate safety measures if they keep their factories operational during the ongoing coronavirus outbreak.

In a separate notice, AKM Salim Osman, president of the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA), suggested that member factories should shut down if they do not have enough work orders.

Factory owners should make wage payments to their workers in a timely manner to avoid any kind of labour unrest, Osman added.

Huq also expressed her gratitude to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for announcing a Tk 5,000-crore stimulus package for export-oriented industries.

"Thank you, honourable prime minister, for paying heed to our request for a lifeline at the most challenging time ever in the history of RMG," the BGMEA president shared in a message.

# Govt seeks \$1b from IMF, WB

FROM PAGE B1

Bangladesh has already started to feel the heat of the coronavirus. "We are worried that the Covid-19 crisis may deal multi-faced blows to our economy," Kamal said.

Garment shipments, Bangladesh's main export earner, are being affected following the fall in demand for apparel items owing to lockdown in the US and Europe. The country's infrastructure projects are set to face delays.

Remittance sent by migrant workers have kept the economy dynamic to some extent so far, but the flow would see negative impact soon as a significant number of migrant workers returned to Bangladesh because of outbreak of the virus, the minister said.

Changyong Rhee, IMF's director for Asia Pacific; Hartwig Schafer, vice-president of the WB for South Asia; Nena Stoilkjovic, vice-president of the International Finance Corporation for global partnerships; and Ceyla Pazarbasoglu, vice-president of the WB for equitable growth, finance and institutions, also spoke during the video-conferencing.

Abu Hena Md Rahmatul Muneem, chairman of the National Board of Revenue; Md Ashadul Islam, senior secretary of the Financial Institutions Division; Abdur Rouf Talukder, finance secretary; and Fatima Yasmin, secretary of the Economic Relations Division, were present.

# Boeing plans 737 MAX production restart by May

REUTERS, Seattle

Boeing Co plans to restart 737 MAX production by May, ending a months-long halt triggered by a safety ban on its best-selling jet after fatal crashes, people familiar with the matter said on Tuesday.

Boeing's planning hinges on the scale of disruptions from the fast spreading coronavirus, and US regulators clearing the 737 MAX to return to service, a milestone Boeing still expects to reach in mid-2020. One industry source said Boeing has asked some suppliers to be ready to ship 737 parts in April. Another person said production was planned to restart in May. A third person said coronavirus is throwing a wrench in Boeing's plans - they had initially hoped for April, but that fell to May.

"It'll be a very slow, methodical, systematic approach to warming the line up, and getting crews back in place," Boeing Chief Financial Officer Greg Smith told Reuters on Tuesday when asked about the May restart goal.

"Priority number 1 is getting customers' fleets back up," Smith said, adding that a production ramp up will be paired with clearing the MAX backlog. "We don't want to add to inventory."

# Panic-struck people clear out faintly promising malaria drug

FROM PAGE B1

Some research suggests antimalarial medication and antibiotics could be beneficial to Covid-19 patients, said Sitesh Chandra Bachar, chairman of the department of pharmacy of Dhaka University.

"But these drugs should be only used by severely ill patients and only with doctor's consent," he said, while warning that the use of hydroxychloroquine for preventive measures could cause severe damage.

Md Mahbubur Rahman, director general of the Directorate General of Drug Administration (DGDA), echoed the same.

The government though has adequate stock of hydroxychloroquine, which it is supply to healthcare institutions. And some select drugstore will be stocked next week.

"But we have prohibited its sales without the advice of physicians."

And to ensure smooth supply of drugs to treat Covid-19 patients, the DGDA on March 19 asked the Bangladesh Association of Pharmaceutical Industries to allow the eligible pharmaceuticals to manufacture them.

The approval was given as per the recommendation of the Bangladesh Society of Medicine and in accordance with the national guide line for Coronavirus treatment, Rahman added.

The necessary active pharmaceutical ingredients have been collected and Beacon will be able to deliver the medicines by the end of this month, he said.

ACI has long been making the tablet of chloroquine phosphate in the name of Avloquin and the company has a capacity to produce 13 crore pieces a year in its two plants.

"It is a very old drug. And it is in the market but it may be that pharmacies are not giving anyone who is asking for the medicine without prescription," said M Mohibuz Zaman, managing director of ACI Healthcare.

This is a prescription drug and one should not buy or consume without prescription. There are some predisposing ailments based on which doctors may or may prescribe to a particular patient. It should not be self-medicated drug like paracetamol or vitamin.

"We are producing it and there is no question of increasing the prices now," said Zaman, adding that ACI is also not exporting the drug so it can meet all domestic demand.

He said the prices of the drug is less than Tk 2 each.

Other than ACI, Incepta, Delta and Zenith Pharmaceuticals make hydroxychloroquine. Incepta has been selling the drug in the local market under the brand Reconil for the last 18 years, said a senior official of the company wishing not to be named.



**TAMING CORONAVIRUS RAMPAGE**

# Remote work: productivity without compromising safety



SHAMEEM AHSAN

this trend every day to stay productive during this challenging time without compromising on the health and safety of their employees and their families.

This is not only helping to restrict unnecessary transmission of the disease but also enhancing employers' branding and goodwill among employees and potential employees.

However, there is still a large number of companies that are unable to make the decision to work remotely for lack of proper tools and structure.

Before asking employees to start working

performance.

Given that the policy is ready for implementation, here are some productivity tools that can be used to ensure seamless communication and collaboration between team members to keep them productive from the safety of their home.

**WHATSAPP AND SLACK FOR MESSAGING**

WhatsApp is a very popular instant messaging app that is available on both mobile and desktop platforms. It offers messaging, audio/video calls and document sharing among its users.

It also has features like group calls and

and share files between them.

Google Docs is an online word processor, Google Sheets is an online spreadsheet and Google Slides is an online slide making tool to create and give business presentations.

Team members can collaborate with each other in real-time from separate locations using these tools from Google.

**ZOOM AND GOOGLE HANGOUTS FOR VIDEO CONFERENCING**

Apart from messaging, another effective way to communicate with colleagues when working remotely is video conferencing.

Both Zoom and Google Hangouts offer

**MICROSOFT TEAMS WITH OFFICE 365: ALL-IN-ONE**

Microsoft Teams, which is part of Microsoft's Office 365 suite, is like a Swiss Army knife. It combines all the best features of the apps and tools mentioned above.

It offers instant messaging like WhatsApp; channel and group communication like Slack; video conferencing and screen sharing like Zoom and Hangouts; Google Drive-like file storing and sharing through OneDrive; online version of industry standard productivity tools such as Word, Excel and PowerPoint with real-time collaboration; Trello-like project management and planning through Microsoft Planner, brainstorming and note taking through OneNote; and many other integrated tools to achieve business collaboration.

After the COVID-19 outbreak took place in Wuhan, Microsoft Teams usage soared 500 per cent in China as many Chinese companies opted for working remotely.

Microsoft also came forward to help businesses during this global crisis by offering a limited version of Microsoft Teams for free for six months.

Adaptation is the key to survival. The coronavirus pandemic is fundamentally changing the way many organizations operate for the foreseeable future.

As governments and businesses around the world tell those with symptoms to self-quarantine and everyone else to practice social distancing, remote work is our new reality.

Winning against this virus will come with endurance and that will be the defining moment of our generation.

At the same time, it has given us an opportunity to bring about digital transformation to our businesses with the right tools, technology and process re-engineering, not only to survive in the coming days but also to thrive under any future threat.

*The writer is the chairman of eGeneration, general partner of Pegasus Tech Ventures and former president of the Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services*



Will coronavirus bankrupt more people than it kills? Well, economists are predicting that it will, in various industries, by the end of 2020.

The International Labour Organisation said that nearly 25 million jobs will be lost globally due to the coronavirus pandemic.

For countries like Bangladesh, dependency on garment export and foreign remittance means we should embrace ourselves for serious economic strains.

Governments around the world are imposing lockdown to reduce the spread of the virus. Many businesses' operations are at halt.

However, staying productive during this crisis period may save companies from going out of business in the near future.

Remote work is now the safest way to achieve the highest level of productivity in this situation.

With the right mindset and tools, in this digital era, anything can be done remotely.

As the pandemic has reached local transmission level in Bangladesh, a growing number of companies in Dhaka are asking their employees to work from home.

Grameenphone, Unilever and Banglalink were some of the firsts to ask their employees to work from the confines of their homes.

Other multinational and local companies, including Robi, Nestle, eGeneration, NewsCred, Magnito Digital, JoomShaper, HandyMama, Sheba.xyz, JoBike, Adcomm, MGH and Cisco, soon followed suit.

More and more companies are embracing

from home, it is important to have a work-from-home policy in place, which will help management feel comfortable about productivity and set expectations for the employees.

The policy should reflect on who can work from home, admissible working hours, approval process while working remotely, communication channels, responsiveness and availability standards, technology support and requirements, how to ensure data and device security, reporting standards, frequency of team meetings etc.

It is also important to set quantifiable and well-defined key performance indicators for employees to measure their remote work

live location sharing, which can be useful for teams that work remotely.

Slack is essentially a tool for organisations to collaborate through messaging. It has onboarded 7,000 new customers in just seven weeks since February amid the remote-work boom around the globe.

Its workspaces allow any organisation to have communication by channels for group discussions.

Slack also allows private messages for sharing information, files, and more all in one place.

**GOOGLE DRIVE, DOCS, SHEETS AND SLIDES FOR PRODUCTIVITY**  
Google Drive allows users to securely store

## Car mechanics staring at lay-offs

JAGARAN CHAKMA

Automobile garages have joined the growing list of establishments taking a beating from the global coronavirus pandemic, putting in jeopardy the livelihoods of about 5 lakh auto mechanics and technicians.

With people restricting movements to the bare minimum to reduce chances of contracting COVID-19, the use of automobile has significantly gone down.

Subsequently, plans to go over to the mechanics for servicing and repair work have been indefinitely shelved.

"Customer numbers nosedived since last month as most people are refraining from going anywhere, let alone a garage," said Zahirul Hoque, secretary general of Bangladesh Automobile Workshop Malik Samity.

With sparse work available, earnings have plummeted and workshop owners are surely to face a crisis as they tend to have loans to prop up their establishments.

"The loans need to be serviced regardless," he said.

Hoque puts the number of small, medium and large workshops existing across the country at about 20,000. They employ more than 5 lakh skilled and semi-skilled auto mechanics and technicians and annually generate several thousand crores of taka in revenue.

He estimates that about Tk 1,500 crore was spent by vehicle owners in 2019 solely on servicing.

A year's servicing charges for a five-year-old 1,500cc vehicle can amount to about Tk 18,000 on an average and 20 to 30 per cent more for those of higher engine capacities, according to market insiders.

Nevertheless, vehicle numbers have continued to rise, leading to a thriving automobile servicing sector.

Reliable data is hard to come by, but Haque believes the sector expanded by almost 15 per cent annually for the past five to six years.

This growth showcased promises for investors like Syed Samiul Huq, director of Japan SolarTech (Bangladesh).

He poured Tk 20 crore into

setting up Auto Trade International, which boasts state-of-the-art tools and equipment, on a 25,000 square feet space in the capital's Tejgaon Industrial Area.

Huq said he has been running the workshop with 120 technicians who had been provided advanced training on automobile servicing in Japan and Italy.

Despite all this, service requests at his workshop is said to have currently crashed 90 per cent.

A decline in revenue for the absence of customers for the past three weeks has also hit HNS Engineering and Services, a concern of HNS Group that provides auto engineering services.

The entity's monthly expenses, including the salary of its 50-odd staff, is said to be to the tunes of Tk 16 lakh.

As per the government decision, HNS Engineering and Services will be closed until normalcy returns.

But, Mohammed Shahidul Islam, chairman of HNS Group, said he has no intention of going for lay-offs as his staff has been with him for years.

READ MORE ON B3

## Dhaka stocks find no takers

AHSAN HABIB

Globally, stock market investors are looking to cash out their shares. It's the same here in Bangladesh -- except they are not finding any takers.

Yesterday, of the 343 companies, 236's stocks failed to find buyers. The same fate was seen for 242 companies on Tuesday.

Among them are many well-performing companies like Brac Bank, Square Pharmaceuticals, Grameenphone, British American Tobacco Bangladesh and Renata, according to data from the Dhaka Stock Exchange.

As a result, average turnover on the main board dropped to Tk 120 crore this week from more than Tk 350 crore previously.

Some of the investors need money but they are not able to sell shares, which will impact the market in the long run, said a stock broker requesting anonymity.

Most analysts blame the scarcity of buyers on the spot of financial engineering the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) did last week. Last Thursday, the regulator fixed the floor price of all stocks by calculating the previous five days' average prices.

"Bangladesh spoils its stock market by interfering with limit-down prices," said Hasnain Malik, head of equity strategy at Tellimer, a London-based market research firm, in a LinkedIn post.

Market efficiency could be ruined by changing the floor price of stocks

AT THE CLOSE OF TRADING YESTERDAY		
	No. of sellers	No. of buyers
BRAC BANK	89.71 lakhs	0
SQUARE	8.12 lakhs	0
Grameenphone	3.30 lakhs	0
gameenphone	2.54 lakhs	0
SPD	1.32 lakhs	0

to the prior 5-day average (until further notice). It will inhibit efficient price discovery and accurate portfolio net asset value reporting for fund managers.

Citing it as a poor policy, he said this may kill off trading liquidity and efficient functioning of the market, particularly for foreign investors, whose portfolios may have to support daily liquidity and have a requirement to report accurate (realisable) net

asset values and who, therefore, need fully functioning price discovery.

In the current week, most of the stocks were not even traded on the DSE due to dearth of buyers, he added.

Foreign investors dislike illiquid market and the BSEC's price setting have made the market illiquid ultimately, said a merchant banker.

"Such policy will impact the market later on while attracting foreign investors and smart investors. Because, they always keep away from illiquid market."

The BSEC could have left the market to its own devices and it would have corrected itself, he added.

A top official of an asset management company said any artificial price mechanism may not boost the stock market.

However, it impacts the investor's confidence in the long term, he said.

"So, no developed stock market's regulator pulled a stunt like the BSEC's even though bourses around the world are being battered by coronavirus. With the new policy the market has become buyer-less, so investors can't even sell their shares though they want the bare minimum price," he added.

READ MORE ON B3



SK ENAMUL HAQ

Staff of an automobile workshop in the capital's Kamalapur pass idle times yesterday as service requests have declined with people limiting movements to the minimum to stem the spread of COVID-19.

## Germany assures support to Bangladesh's garment exporters

*BKMEA says members can shut factories if they don't have enough work orders*

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDAHA

Gerd Muller, Germany's federal minister of economic cooperation and development, on Tuesday assured that Bangladesh's garment sector will have his country's full support in coping with the coronavirus fallout.

Muller issued this notice in response to a letter from Rubana Huq, president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA).

Huq wrote to the minister on Sunday, urging him to request German retailers to not cancel their work orders with Bangladeshi factories.

Soon after the coronavirus pandemic began, apparel retailers in the west began to cancel their

work orders with Bangladeshi manufacturers.

As of 6:00pm yesterday, the total value for work orders cancelled from 936 factories stood at \$2.58 billion while it was \$2.25 billion the day before, according to BGMEA data.

Work orders for about 800.18 million pieces of garment products have been cancelled so far, affecting the lives of 1.92 million workers, the BGMEA said.

"I greatly hope that we can find an approach that will safeguard the textile industry's survival in both Bangladesh and Germany since millions of people work in that sector," Muller said in a letter.

In order to cushion the pandemic's impact on production-based countries

such as Bangladesh, Germany is currently evaluating a number of support measures aimed at ensuring that firms are able to remain in business and safeguard the jobs and incomes of their workers, the response continued.

In an emergency situation such as this, the demand for apparel products, particularly protective medical clothing, is changing, he said.

"I hope that for the interim, Bangladesh will receive orders for these products," Muller said, adding: "Bangladesh is one of the most important partners to the German textile industry and I understand all of your concerns."

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a particularly hard impact on Germany's garment sector with some companies

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