

China’s factory output perks up but consumers stay cautious

REUTERS, Beijing

China’s factories stepped up production for a second straight month in May, as the country shook off the economic torpor of the coronavirus, although the weaker-than-expected gain suggested the recovery remained fragile.

Patchy data on Monday also showed sustained contractions in retail sales and investment, a sign many sectors were still struggling with the effects of heavy shutdowns across the world’s second-largest economy earlier this year.

Global leaders are closely watching China to see how long it takes to get back on its feet as they begin to relax their own stringent anti-virus measures and reboot their economies.

Analysts say signs of improvement continue to be seen in China ranging from steel production and car sales to more lights being turned on in

industrial parks. However, they warn it could take many months for broader activity to return to pre-crisis levels.

“Industrial production is on the whole getting better, but there are still quite a few difficulties and uncertainties,” said Jiang Yuan, an official at the National Bureau of Statistics in a statement.

Industrial output growth quickened to 4.4 per cent in May from a year earlier, the highest reading since December, official data showed on Monday. Analysts polled by Reuters had expected a 5.0 per cent rise from 3.9 per cent in April, the first expansion since the virus emerged in China late last year.

But a collapse in export orders amid global lockdowns has left factories more reliant on domestic demand, which is recovering at a more sluggish pace. Retail sales fell for a fourth straight month. While the 2.8 per cent drop was smaller than the 7.5

per cent slump in April, it was larger than the 2.0 per cent fall tipped by analysts. Heavy job losses and fears of a second wave of infections have kept consumers cautious.

“There are still restrictions in some demand areas, people remain worried and not many are traveling or going to cinemas, plus there are some virus flare-ups, which will have some impact on consumption,” said Tang Jianwei, senior economist at Bank of Communications in Shanghai.

Fixed asset investment fell 6.3 per cent in January-May from the same period last year, compared with a forecast 5.9 per cent fall and a 10.3 per cent decline in the first four months of the year. As in past downturns, Beijing is banking on higher infrastructure spending to lead a recovery, and steel mills have cranked up furnaces to over 92 per cent of capacity.

Private sector fixed-asset investment, which accounts for 60 per cent of total investment, fell 9.6 per cent in January-May, compared with a 13.3 per cent decline in the first four months of the year.

Other data showed real estate investment fell 0.3 per cent in January-May from a year earlier, far less than in previous months.

China’s gross domestic product shrank 6.8 per cent in the first quarter, the first contraction on record. Highlighting the uncertain outlook, the government did not set a GDP growth target at its annual parliament gathering in May, the first time in nearly two decades it has not done so.

Some analysts saw May’s factory data pointing to a more optimistic outlook than previously feared. Bank of Communications’ Tang now expects China’s GDP to return to modest growth in the second quarter, helped by the recovery in property investment.



REUTERS/FILE

People walk past a department store of the Wangfujing Group in Beijing, China.

Taxi driver turns hearse driver as coronavirus cases in India spike

REUTERS, New Delhi

The heat was already suffocating when Mohammad Aamir Khan woke up in his tiny, windowless room with only a sheer curtain for a door. He offered a brief prayer to a picture hanging above the bed of the Kaaba, the holiest site in Islam, and headed down the narrow stairs.

It was time to ferry the dead.

Before the novel coronavirus brought its pandemic to New Delhi, Aamir was one of tens of thousands of people making a living in the Indian capital as a taxi driver.

But that work dried up during the nearly three-month lockdown to

written in permanent marker on their burial shrouds.

Sometimes he is alone in his ambulance and must rely on the relatives of the dead to help him lift the body from the back of the vehicle. Sometimes he has to lift them himself.

“It was strange to me, to be carrying a body instead of a patient,” he said of the first time he did it. “But over time, I got used to it.”

As the job becomes more familiar, Aamir wrestles with how much protective equipment to wear. He could wear a hazmat-like suit, but that isn’t very practical in New Delhi’s ferocious heat.

“We will faint in half an hour if we

training, no health insurance and long working hours. Cases in India are surging, with nearly 323,000 infected, four times that of China’s official infections. The peak is still weeks, if not months, away, experts say, even as the government eased almost all curbs on movement on June 8.

“We are supposed to work for 12 hours a day – but 12 hours is never 12,” Aamir said. “Earlier, there used to be one or two bodies. But now the mortuary is full.”

India’s federal government, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, maintains it has the virus under control. The number of deaths in the country, at 9,500, is so far limited compared to countries with a similar number of cases.

Like his father, Aamir trained as a stonemason, but found it too difficult to earn a living. He later found work as a taxi driver for a string of companies, including Ola and Uber.

Sometimes, he was able to save as much as 1,000 Indian rupees (about \$13) per day after expenses – enough for him and his wife, Rubi, to enroll their 7-year-old daughter, Hamda, at a local private school. But after the lockdown began, the owner of the taxi he drove said he was no longer required because of slack demand.

Aamir has kept his ambulance work a secret from his neighbors in Mandawali, a low-income, illegally built colony in the east of the capital that was only recognized by the Delhi government in 2012.

He worries what they’ll think if they find out. Doctors, nurses and other medical staff treating patients across India say they have been attacked and spat at, with some ostracized by friends and relatives as the virus spread across the country.

“They still think I am unemployed,” said Aamir, who doesn’t even have the comfort of his wife and child during this time of global troubles. They left to visit the family’s ancestral village days before the lockdown and haven’t been able to return.

Aamir’s pay, 17,000 Indian rupees (about \$220) per month, is better than being unemployed, but it doesn’t compensate for the risks, he said.

“It’s not enough for the work,” he said. “I’m fed up. But what other choice do I have?”



REUTERS/FILE

Mohammad Aamir Khan, an ambulance driver, wears his personal protective equipment at a mortuary, before transporting bodies of people who died of the coronavirus disease, to a graveyard in New Delhi, India.

prevent the spread of the virus. With cases rising in India even before the government lifted the lockdown last week, a friend suggested perhaps the only business now booming in the country – driving a private ambulance.

Reporting on his first day, the 38-year-old said, he hadn’t even realized he would be transporting coronavirus patients until he was handed a set of overalls.

It wasn’t long before his ambulance became a hearse. Now his days are spent transporting corpses from the hospital to cremation pyres and cemeteries, sometimes stacked on top of each other six at a time, their names

wear the kit and work,” he said. He and his fellow drivers are much more comfortable wearing a thin hospital gown. But there might be a price for their comfort: “We are always worried that we might catch the infection.”

Government-run ambulances are scarce in India. Most people resort to calling private ambulances, some little more than converted vans with mobile numbers written on the side, in the hope a passerby will note it down and call if they fall sick.

Unlike in many other countries badly hit by the virus, ambulance drivers and other vital health workers in India are poorly paid, have minimum

Nokia to deliver around 10pc of China Unicom’s 5G core network

REUTERS

Finnish telecom equipment maker Nokia said on Monday that China Unicom had selected it to supply around 10 per cent share of its 5G core network, confirming an earlier statement to Reuters by Nokia CEO Rajeev Suri.

“China Unicom has chosen Nokia to support the buildout of its 5G SA Core network in China, marking

an expansion of Nokia’s existing 4G working relationship with the Chinese communication service provider,” Nokia said in a statement, adding the deal corresponded to a 10 share.

At the end of April, Nokia’s Suri told Reuters in an interview that Nokia had won a 10 per cent share of China Unicom’s 5G core network, alongside rivals Huawei and ZTE.

“The core network performs

a variety of functions, including setting up connections, bandwidth management, scaling and securing the network, and, now with 5G, opening up the network to support new, software-enabled use cases such as network slicing,” Nokia said.

Despite progress in its core network sales in China, Nokia has been on the sidelines for larger China radio network orders, which include masts, antennas and other equipment.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Wage Earners' Welfare Board
Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare & Overseas Employment
Probashi Kallyan Bhaban, 71-72, Eskaton Garden, Dhaka-1000

Request for Expression of Interest (EOI)

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH			
1	Mjistry/Division	Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare & Overseas Employment	
2	Agency	Wage Earners' Welfare Board	
3	Procuring Entity Name	Director General, Wage Earners' Welfare Board (WEWB)	
4	Procuring Entity Code	Not used at present	
5	Procuring Entity District	Dhaka	
6	Expression of Interest (EOI) for Selection of	Consulting Firm for feasibility study, survey and analysis, preparing drawing/design etc. and construction of a top notch Modern and International Standard Hospital (incl. Diagnostic Centre) Complex on 167.28 katha land at Vatara (North-Baridhara), Gulshan, Dhaka.	
7	EOI Ref. No.	49.04.0000.009.14.002.2017 - 103	
8	Date	Date: 15.06.2020	
KEY INFORMATION			
9	Procurement Method	Quality & Cost Based Selection (QCBS)	
FUNDING INFORMATION			
10	Budget and Source of Fund	Wage Earners' Welfare Fund	
11	Development Partners	Not Applicable	
PARTICULAR INFORMATION			
12	Project / Program Code	Not Applicable	
13	Project / Program Name	Not Applicable	
14	Tender Package Name	Not Applicable	
15	Pre-bid Meeting (If Necessary)	-	
16	EOI Closing Date and Time	07.07.2020, 2.00 PM	
17	EOI Opening Date and Time	07.07.2020, 3.00 PM	
NAME AND ADDRESS OF THE OFFICE (S)			
18	Receiving of EOI	Director (Admin. & Development), 71-72, Level-9, Probashi Kallyan Bhaban, Eskaton Garden, Dhaka-1000.	
INFORMATION FOR APPLICANT			
19	Brief Description of Assignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Short listed firm will prepare a proposal (technical & financial) that provides idea about construction of a top notch Modern and International Standard Hospital (incl. Diagnostic Centre) Complex for expatriate wage earners.• Finally selected consulting firm will prepare detail architectural drawings, 3D perspective views, 3D animation, structural drawings with details, design & drawings of elevator, car parking with drive way, walk way, common facilities fit for the project, electrical, mechanical sanitary & plumbing etc.• Submission of detailed working drawings for inbuilt cable, TV system, telephone line, auto fire fighting system including provision of modern facilities like A/C room, hot & cold water supply system, intercom, calling bell, mike announcement system, internet (with Wi-Fi), close circuit camera, furniture layout, fire & security alarm system, canopy type auto gas/diesel generator, energy efficient electrical solar panels systems etc.• Submission of all drawings in readable printed form at least 05 sets along with soft copy.• Prepare BOQ, tender documents, 3D physical model etc.	
		Phasing of Services	Location
20	i) First Phase: Short listed firms will submit proposals with feasibility study, by visiting site, observing existing architectural and structural drawings, design for preparing a comprehensible viable construction of a top notch Modern and International Standard Hospital (incl. Diagnostic Centre) Complex for expatriate wage earners' on 167.28 katha land at Vatara (North-Baridhara), Gulshan, Dhaka. Please note that proposals should include conceptual architectural design. For this preliminary works no payment will be made. ii) Second Phase: (a) On the basis of proposal in the first phase, one consulting firm will be selected and awarded the work. The selected consulting firm will prepare detailed architectural drawings, 3D perspective views, 3D animation of total project, structural drawings with details, design & drawings of elevator, car parking with driveway, walkway, common facilities fit for the project, electrical, mechanical sanitary & plumbing etc. (b) Submission of detailed working drawings for inbuilt cable, TV system, telephone line, auto fire fighting system including provision of modern facilities like A/C room, hot & cold water supply system, intercom, calling bell, mike announcement system, internet (with Wi-Fi), close circuit camera, furniture lay-out, fire & security alarm system, canopy type auto gas/diesel generator, energy efficient electrical solar panels systems etc. (c) Submission of all drawings in readable printed form at least 05 sets along with soft copy. (d) Prepare BOQ, tender document, 3D physical model etc.	C.S Plot No- 131, 137, 138 (Part) P.S-Gulshan, Mouza- Vatara (North Baridhara), North- East side of United Hospital. Dist.- Dhaka.	
21	Qualification and Experience	This Invitation for consulting firm is open to all eligible as mentioned below: a) Interested consulting firms are invited to provide information indicating that they are qualified to perform the services. The consulting firm should be experienced and reputed in the similar field. Interested firms should submit sufficient detail including brochures, description of experience in similar assignments, summaries of firm's technical and managerial capabilities, availability of appropriate skills among key staffs with short biographies, availability of resources etc. b) The firm must have successful completion experience on similar assignment/project within last 05 years counting from the date of submission of EOI in Govt./Semi-govt./Autonomous bodies/private sector. c) Having experience in successful completion of similar nature of works including civil, sanitary, electrical, mechanical works worth not less than Tk. 50 Crore (Fifty Crore) in a single work order in Govt./Semi-govt./Autonomous bodies/private sector. d) In case of a work done under PWD, the certifying and authenticating authority shall be the concerned Executive Engineer under whom the work has executed. e) In case of a work done under any Govt./Semi-govt./Autonomous bodies organization other than PWD, the certifying authority shall be an officer of the organization (not below the rank of executive engineer). f) In case of a work done under any private sector organization other than PWD, the certifying authority shall be Chairman/MD of the organization. g) The financial capability should be shown as financial turn over supported by a registered Audit Firm for the last three years.	
22	Basis of review/ documents to be submitted	The EOI would be reviewed on the basis of the following submitted documents: ➤ Registration of firm (including up to date vat, tax & other certificates). ➤ Availability of key professionals. ➤ Availability of resources & equipments. ➤ Turnover of the consulting firm. ➤ Experience of the firm (s) in similar task. ➤ Experience of the firm (s) in other works. ➤ Financial capability ➤ Other support services of the firm (s).	
23	Other details	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Special Instructions:<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Incomplete/partial EOI will be rejected.➤ Interested firm(s) must provide focused information demonstrating that they are qualified to perform the services.➤ If the consulting firm submits any false/incorrect or forged certificate the application will be rejected.• In the first phase, the proposals in 02 (two) sets (1 original + 1 duplicate) shall be submitted in sealed envelope & delivered to the address of the under signed up to 2.00 PM by __.06.2020 & clearly marked "Request for Expression of Interest" for the Consultancy services for feasibility study, survey and analysis, preparing drawing/design etc. and construction of a top notch Modern and International Standard Hospital (incl. Diagnostic Centre) Complex on 167.28 katha land at Vatara (North-Baridhara), Gulshan, Dhaka".• Full description of present situation of the site is given in TOR.• The proposal that will be submitted must be conceptualized considering the present condition of the site.	
24	Present condition of the site (Brief)	i) Almost 90% of piling work completed in 2006. ii) One building (block-2) partially completed in 2006 up to level-4. iii) Another building (block – 5) partially completed in 2006 up to level-2.	
25	Foreign firms	Applicable	
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS			
26	Name of Official Inviting EOI	Shoaib Ahmad Khan	
27	Designation of Official Inviting EOI	Joint Secretary Director (Admin. & Development), Wage Earners Welfare Board	
28	Address of Official Inviting EOI	71-72 Old Elephant Road, Level-9, Probashi Kallyan Bhaban, Eskaton Garden, Dhaka-1000	
29	Contact details of Official Inviting EOI	Tel. No.-02-9343247	Fax No-8331117 Email: d.ad@wewb.gov.bd
30	The authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the EOI or annul the EOI process at any stage without assigning any reasons whatsoever and without incurring any liability to the affected applications		

GD-996

(Shoaib Ahmad Khan)
Joint Secretary
Director (Admin. & Development)
Wage Earners' Welfare Board
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