France says EU coronavirus recovery fund to be financed by joint debt

REUTERS, *Paris*

European Union finance ministers have agreed to an economic recovery plan for the coronavirus crisis that France's minister said implicitly opens the door to jointly issued debt and which he hailed as a French success.

The agreement was reached only after Germany and France overcame opposition from the Netherlands to the crisis plan during marathon talks.

The final agreement avoids an explicit mention of jointly issued debt, which was anathema to the Dutch, but French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire said it was there implicitly.

Le Maire told reporters after talks with his euro zone counterparts that European Union member states had agreed to mobilise a total 1 trillion euros ($1.09 trillion).

Half of that amount would be made available in the short term and the rest would come from a new joint recovery fund, which France had set as its pre-condition for its approval of the overall package.

Though the fund's details remain to be negotiated over the coming months, Le Maire said the final agreement implied that it would be financed with joint debt as there was no other way to finance long-term economic reconstruction.

"Who's going to raise the debt? There's a lot of uncertainty that remains to be determined. But I have a firm conviction that the fund will see the light of day and there will be debt raised jointly in a form that remains to be determined," Le Maire said.

He added that the agreement document's reference to innovative financial instruments, which was the subject of negotiations during 15 hours, opened the door for the first time to jointly issued debt.

"It means what it means. The only instrument that does not yet exist in European financing is joint debt," Le Maire said.

Indo-Pak border

FROM PAGE 12

the virus.

"The increase in ceasefire violations is an indication that Pakistan is trying to push militants into the Kashmir valley," said one of the officials, who all sought anonymity because they were not authorised to speak to media.

India has 5,734 new coronavirus infections, including 166 deaths, while Pakistan has reported 4,072 cases and 58 deaths, with the military of each helping its government's efforts against the virus.

As summer approaches, infiltration into Kashmir typically picks up. An Indian security official said between 250 and 300 militants were estimated to be ready to cross over from Pakistan, citing intelligence reports.

"This is the time when our (border) fence is the weakest," with damage caused by winter snows, said the official, who sought anonymity.

On Monday, the Indian Army said in a statement it killed five Pakistan-backed militants at the LoC during a firefight in heavy snow, with five of its special forces soldiers also killed.

Pakistan denies giving material support to militants in Kashmir but says it provides moral and diplomatic backing for the self-determination of Kashmiri people.

Coronavirus appears to strike men, overweight people harder

AFP, *Paris*

In the emergency rooms of virus hotspots around the world, medical staff are seeing a greater number of men than women suffering severe symptoms of COVID-19, with obesity emerging as another potentially aggravating factor. But experts are still unsure why.

What first began to appear as a pattern in China, where the virus emerged at the end of last year, has echoed through hospitals in Europe and the United States as the pandemic spreads.

"More men than women have serious problems, and patients who are overweight or have previous health problems are at higher risk," said Derek Hill, Professor of Medical Imaging Science at University College London.

Early statistics from Britain's independent Intensive Care National Audit and Research Centre on people treated in intensive care for the virus confirm this phenomenon: 73 percent are men and 73.4 percent are classed as overweight.

VAT offices

FROM PAGE 12

coronavirus crisis.

Sheikh Fazle Fahim, president of FBCCI, said, "We requested extension of deadline without penalty and believe that our request will be accepted considering the prevailing realities."

Contacted, NBR Member VAT Implementation Jamal Hossain said banks, ports and import-export related offices remained open. Plus, many businesses wanted to submit their VAT returns.

It is necessary to keep the VAT offices open as a fine of Tk 10,000 has to be paid by businesses in case of failure to furnish returns within the first 15 days of the month, he said.

If VAT offices are not open, businesses will complain that NBR kept the offices closed and blame us for the fine, he added.

Kazi Mostafizur Rahman, project director of VAT Online Project (VOP), said the NBR offered scope for businesses to submit online VAT returns from October and the number of submission from 150,000 VAT registered entities had been rising since January.

In March, 34,400 VAT returns were submitted online, going up by 56 percent from 22,000 in February. The number of online submission would have been 50,000 had situation been normal, he said.

As per the rules, businesses have to submit details of transactions of previous month and deposit VAT paid by ultimate consumers to the state coffer within 15 days of the next month.

Businesses have to pay Tk 10,000 as penalty if failed to submit VAT returns within the scheduled time.

Firms can also seek time for delayed furnishing of returns but they have to pay 2 percent simple interest monthly for delayed submission, according to the rules.

Singapore to give food

FROM PAGE 12

Of the five Bangladeshis diagnosed in the past few weeks, four have recovered and one is being treated, said a ministry statement.

Bangladesh Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen and his Singapore counterpart Vivian Balakrishnan talked over the phone on Thursday, according to the statement.

"All sorts of construction activities have been halted in Singapore. However, the wages and other related facilities of Bangladeshi workers have been kept up. Besides, all workers have been provided with food and medical treatment free of cost," Balakrishnan told Momen during the conversation.

In the video message posted in social media, High Commissioner Mustafizur Rahman said the Singapore government has asked residents of the dorms to maintain social distancing, stay inside the rooms as much as possible, and minimise contact from one block to another.

The workers' time for leisure and meals have been scheduled separately, he said.

"These may be difficult, but must be followed for the sake of your and all of our health and safety."

If needed, food will be sent to the workers' rooms, he said.

The Singapore government decided to bear the treatment costs of anyone infected with coronavirus.

The country's health ministry has formed medical teams at the dormitories. Any Bangladeshi migrant worker can approach the team members, he said.

2 girls raped

FROM PAGE 12

he said.

The OC added that legal action would be taken against Liton if the victim's family filed any written complaint against him.

The girl is undergoing treatment at 250-bed Brahmanbaria General Hospital.

In another incident, an 11-year-old girl was allegedly raped by her relative in Gaidghat village of Jashore's Bagharpara on Thursday evening.

The accused is Abu Zafar Mollah, 60.

The girl and the accused are living in the same house. Zafar raped her when she was alone at home, said police.

The victim then notified her family of the incident. Her father filed a case against Zafar with Bagharpara Police Station at night.

Syed Al-Mamun, OC of Bagharpara Police Station, said the girl was sent to Jashore General Hospital for medical tests.

Police arrested Zafar after the case was lodged.

Our Brahmanbaria and Benapole correspondents contributed to this report.

Hard times for expat workers

FROM PAGE 12

its social media page a notice about the food assistance initiative and asked those are in need to submit their iqama numbers along with locations so that the mission officials can reach them in person and provide them with the food packages.

As of Wednesday, some 1,600 Bangladeshi migrant workers sought food assistance via social media, Moshi added.

Besides, the Saudi government informed the mission that they would not impose any restriction for the undocumented workers from getting the assistance, he further said.

Moshi, also Bangladesh's permanent representative to the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), said he was informed that Bangladesh missions in Jordan, Kuwait and UAE have undertaken similar initiatives to help several thousand Bangladeshi migrant workers in those countries.

Besides, local Bangladeshi communities in those countries have also come forward to help the migrant workers, he added.

"Although it is a big challenge to reach the food assistance to the Bangladeshi workers amid current situation, the missions are trying their best to help the workers," he added.

Italy is one of the hardest hit countries of coronavirus pandemic while cases of the virus infection in many Middle Eastern and Southeast Asian countries are also on the rise.

Following the Covid-19 outbreak, the authorities in some of the countries took some unprecedented measures to contain the virus transmission.

The measures included curfew, countrywide shutdown, ban on commercial passenger flights, closure of land borders, suspension of on-arrival and tourist visas and ban on cruise ship docking.

Some of these countries have also deployed security forces to strictly enforce law, aiming to preventing unwanted movements of citizens.

Bangladesh also took some precautionary measures to contain the virus transmission.

Talking with this newspaper on Wednesday, Sheikh Mohammed Tauhidul Islam, labour welfare counsellor at Bangladesh embassy in Bahrain, said many Bangladeshis were facing food shortage and the mission was trying reach them door to door to provide with food and other essential commodities.

The Bangladesh mission in Manama has already reached about 150 Bangladeshi expatriates in two days and provided them with rice, lentils, vegetables and other essentials like face masks and hand sanitizers, he told this newspaper over phone.

Tauhidul also said they were expecting to reach about 2,000 to 3,000 Bangladeshis living in Bahrain throughout the month of April with food and other essentials.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh mission in Rome have floated a notice on social media on Wednesday that it received applications from 600 Bangladeshis living in the Mediterranean country for food assistance.

The mission received Tk 25 lakh from the wage earners' welfare board of expatriates' welfare ministry and was working to provide food assistance to the 600 applicants with spending the allocated money, it said.

Expatriates' Welfare Minister Imran Ahmad on April 5 said that the ministry allocated about Tk 4.5 crore as per demands from Bangladesh missions abroad as they had undertaken all kinds of safety measures for expatriate Bangladeshis currently living abroad including food and medical treatment.

All shades of opinion

FROM PAGE 12

not remain confined to the members of the house alone, he adds. The business of the house is conducted in Bangla for the first time in history.

Shah Abdul Hamid and Muhammad Ullah Chowdhury are unanimously elected Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the Bangladesh Ganoparishad.

During its deliberations for two hours and 45 minutes the house adopts a resolution condoling the death of those who laid down their lives for liberation of Bangladesh. The condolence resolution is moved by Bangabandhu. In another resolution the House expresses its complete solidarity with the Declaration of Independence made by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on the night of March 25 last year.

On April 11, 1972 , the Gonoparishad forms four committees which include Draft Constitution Committee, Rules of Procedure Committee, Rights and Privileges Committee and House Committee. The Draft Constitution Committee will submit its report in the form of a bill. This Committee has 35 Members of Constituent Assembly as its members.

BANGABANDHU'S SPEECH AT GONOPARISHAD

Bangabandhu in his twenty-minute speech at the inaugural session (April10, 1972) of the Constituent Assembly of Bangladesh recalls that the hordes of Yahya Khan launched a cowardly attack on the people of Bangladesh.

He says, "I immediately realised that the final [point] had [been] reached, contacted our people in Chittagong through wireless and told them that from that moment Bangladesh was independent and sovereign. I asked them to announce my declaration all over so that they can put up resistance." The prime minister cautions all quarters that there should not be any attempt to misinterpret the history of the Liberation War. If that happens, he fears, future generations will fail to get the correct picture.

Bangabandhu pays glowing tributes to the martyrs of the Liberation War. The blood of the martyrs will not be allowed to go in vain, he declares.

Bangabandhu recalls with gratitude the great help and assistance advanced by the people and government of India and the Soviet Union. He also records his thanks to the people of Great Britain, Germany, France, East European countries and also the US for their support to the cause of Bangladesh.

In conclusion, Bangabandhu hopes that the Speaker will maintain complete neutrality and will help establish a sound parliamentary convention. He assures the Speaker of all possible help and cooperation of the House in this regard.

JAPAN WILL GIVE $8M IN AID

On April11, 1972 Japan decides to give Bangladesh humanitarian aid amounting to eight million dollars. The assistance will be in the form of trucks, ferryboats and other transportation items. A recent Japanese mission to Bangladesh was asked in Dhaka for these "urgently required" items to restore the transportation system.

SOURCES: April 10 & 11, 1972 issues of Bangladesh Observer, Dainik Bangla and Ittefaq and Parliamentary Proceedings of Bangladesh Ganoparishad (April 10, 1972).

Fight against

FROM PAGE 12

two ways -- wrong interpretation of messages and wrong messages.

"So, while delivering any message through any medium, clarity should be ensured," she said.

She said the most important thing is that the credible media houses come forward with credible information to wipe out the rumours.

Rumours and misinformation are spreading via social media. People have to be careful about credible sources and "we all have to act whenever we see any rumour", she added.

Shabnam said if anyone took misinformation seriously and acted upon it, then the consequences could be dangerous.

"For example, we read that some people in a country died because they drank Savlon [an antiseptic solution]," she said.

Shabnam suggested that a free flow of information should be ensured as rumours and misinformation thrive when there is a crisis of information or there is an ill motive.

The simpler the message the more communicative it will be, she said.

She put importance on reports of credible media outlets and suggested that those could regularly publish articles denouncing the rumours with counter arguments.

Singapore stops teachers using Zoom

Home-based learning

REUTERS, *Singapore*

Singapore has suspended the use of video-conferencing tool Zoom by teachers, its education ministry said on Friday, after "very serious incidents" occurred in the first week of a coronavirus lockdown that has seen schools move to home-based learning.

One of the incidents involved obscene images appearing on screens and strange men making lewd comments during the streaming of a geography lesson with teenage girls, according to local media reports.

Zoom Video Communications Inc ZM.O has been plagued with safety and privacy concerns about its conferencing app which has seen a surge in usage as offices and schools around the world shut to try curb coronavirus infections.

"These are very serious incidents. MOE (Ministry of Education) is currently investigating both breaches and will lodge a police report if warranted," said Aaron Loh of the ministry's educational technology division, without detailing the incidents.

"As a precautionary measure, our teachers will suspend their use of Zoom until these security issues are ironed out."

Loh said that they would further advise teachers on security protocols such as requiring secure log-ins and not sharing the meeting link beyond the students in the class.

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Memo No. 8637 Date: 05/04/2020

Invitation for e-Tender

e-Tender is invited in National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of following work given below:

Sl. No.	Tender ID	Invitational Reference No.	Name of work	Tender closing date & time
01	452338	bari/pwd/Modernization/ Acoustic-38/2019-2020	Modernization of the Auditorium of SBMC including Acoustic works Stage Sound False ceiling & Ancillary works at Barisal.	23-Apr-2020 12:30

This is an online tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in the National e-GP 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. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (Email: helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Gerald Oliver Guda
Executive Engineer
PWD Division, Barisal

GD-733

Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD)
Kotbari, Cumilla, Bangladesh
Development of Physical Facilities of BARD (1st Revision) Project
No. 47.63.0000.033.14.41.19-706 Date: 09-04-2020

Corrigendum Notice
Extending Closing Date of e-Tender ID 438290

Due to unavoidable circumstances, this is hereby inform to all concern that the closing date and time of e-Tender ID 438290, Ref No. 47.63.0000.033.14.41.19-533, Dated: 10 March, 2020, is hereby rescheduled further up to 04th May, 2020 (14:30).

Ranjan Kumar Guha
Project Director

GD-732

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
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Amendment Notice

Name of work: Improvement work of Ekota Bazar to BNS Sheikh Hasina Base Road (Z-1125) (Chainage: 0+000 to 12+300) by Widening road embankment, Widening, Strengthening and Raising of existing road with Surfacing, construction of Rigid Pavement, construction of RCC Box Culvert and other ancillary works under Cox's Bazar Road Division during the year 2019-2020.

Invitation Reference No.: e-GP/Dev/BNS/WP1/CZ-07/Cox/CTG ZONE/2019-2020; **Tender ID:** 444146

This is to notify for all concerned that due to unavoidable circumstances the following amendments made for the abovementioned Tender published in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd). Interested persons/firms can see details by visiting the website **www.eprocure.gov.bd**.

Sl	Field Name	Amendments	
		Existing	Corrected
1	Document last selling date & time	15/04/2020 16:30	26/04/2020 16:30
2	Closing date & time	16/04/2020 11:00	27/04/2020 11:00
3	Opening date & time	16/04/2020 11:00	27/04/2020 11:00
4	Last date & time for tender/proposal security submission	15/04/2020 17:00	26/04/2020 17:00

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GD-734