

TAMING CORONAVIRUS RAMPAGE

Paramount Textile: a textile firm with a conscience

MUHAMMAD ZAHIDUL ISLAM

When workers enter Paramount Textile's plant in Sreepur, Gazipur, they would need to go through a temperature testing procedure using a thermal scanner, wash hands properly and disinfect their shoes.

Wearing hand gloves has also been ensured as part of strengthening safety measures and all the facilities that have been put in place by the owners of the company are not quite normal in the garment and textile industry in Bangladesh.

Weaving operator like Sazzad Hossain, who left Gazipur on March 26 after the government declared a countrywide general holiday, had to stay in 14 days quarantine after he returned to the factory. The facilities were too provided by the factory owners.

"After the mandatory quarantine, I joined the work on Sunday and we need to follow doctors' advice as well," said Hossain, who has been working at Paramount Textile for five years and seven months now.

His colleague Nazmul Haque, who lives adjacent to the plant, has got masks and three pieces of soaps and hand sanitisers from the factory to keep himself clean.

The same was provided for each of the company's 2,000 employees.

What is more, they have received much-needed advice from the doctors about hygiene, how to ensure safe distancing and improve immunity to keep the coronavirus at bay.

"The factory provides free medical check-up to my family members and some free medicines during usual times and now the facilities have been enhanced," Haque said.

The company's efforts are aimed at fighting the spread of the highly contagious COVID-19 as the government allowed reopening of some factories and industries subject to maintaining strict hygiene measures.

"We are looking at the spending needed for the facilities as capital expenditure," said

Shakhawat Hossain Kollool, chairman of Paramount Textile.

Paramount has put in place a complete arrangement of coronavirus testing kits, medical facilities and equipment and clinical support containing oxygen.

Six doctors used to attend the employees even before the novel coronavirus hit the shores of Bangladesh and the medical facilities have been enhanced now to ensure additional care.

"Washing hands while entering the factory is a must. We have directed the workers to do it during the intervals and if they leave the machines even for a brief period during the shift," said factory in-charge AHM Abdur Rahman Hasnat.

The factory has set up 40 makeshift basins and put in place large water containers after the coronavirus situation worsened across the country.

Paramount Textile did not stop there. It brings in vegetables from Kurigram, which is at least 300km away from the plant and sells them among the workers at a price much lower than the rates in the kitchen markets in the locality.

"We are getting vegetables only at half prices than the local market," said Haque, who hails from Rajshahi. Rice is sold at Tk 30 to Tk 40 a kilogram depending on the variety.

Other essentials are also available inside the plant and workers can buy them cheaply.

The essentials are being sold at subsidised rates since the first coronavirus cases were reported in Bangladesh on March 8.

One particular incident prompted the recent change in Kollool. Recently, the entrepreneur came across a video clip of a weeping farmer as he could not find buyers for his produce.

The scene shocked him and the farmer seems to be known to him. At once, he decided to send a truck to the farmer and buy all of the vegetables in his disposal and sell them among the employees.



PARAMOUNT TEXTILE

Workers of Paramount Textile in Gazipur go through stringent safety procedures before they enter the factory and they have to maintain it when inside. Thanks to the improved safety measures, the company set an example for others amid allegations that factories are being reopened flouting government-fixed hygiene requirements.

"I knew it will be win-win for both the farmer and my workers."

Later, Kollool recalled that the farmer had won a national award along with him in 2016. The entrepreneur has a farming venture that produces chemical-free vegetables, fish and

livestock.

Bringing vegetables from the northern districts has become regular in the last one month.

"I love to see the smiling faces of my employees. I am quite sure we are getting

return as our employee retention rate is higher than any other plants nearby," Kollool said.

Some of the workers live in the dormitories and most live in the adjacent areas and Paramount Textile's supervisors regularly make a visit to see where their workers live and in what condition so that they can extend as much assistance as possible.

Workers get wages and salaries even before the end of a month -- a rare case in Bangladesh's garments and textiles industry.

Because of the regular wage payment, Paramount Textile had faced the wrath of unidentified people in the past. These people might be from other factories that can't pay workers regularly, said an official of the company.

Paramount Textile was set up in 2006 and commenced commercial production in 2008 and most of the workers have been working since the very beginning.

Set up on five acres of land, it manufactures a diversified range of yarn and solid dyed woven fabrics.

"The plant has to run round the clock and there is no chance to switch off the plant. So, we ran it during the holidays on a limited scale," Kollool said.

The company also faces pressure from the international buyers, who have warned that if the company can't meet their demand, they would move orders to other factories.

"So, we have had to run our plants on a very limited scale," he said, adding that when the government declared the general holidays, about half of the workers had wanted to continue to work, while the other half went home.

The company's net profit after tax was Tk 41 crore in fiscal 2018-19, up from Tk 27 crore a year earlier, according to the company's financial statement.

A listed company, Paramount Textile gave 7 per cent cash and 9 per cent stock dividend to its shareholders last year.

Relief for dressmakers as shops set to open before Eid

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN and MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

Much has been written about the garment sector's export orders hitting a brick wall for the global coronavirus pandemic.

But there is another set of garment manufacturers catering to the country's 16 crore-strong population, and they are in exigency too for the arrival of the novel coronavirus on these shores, which has necessitated a general shutdown since March 26.

Now, they are seeing a glimmer of hope after the prime minister

which represents about 20,000 small garment factories.

The garment makers start manufacturing six months before Ramadan while sales begin 10 days before the beginning of the holy month and ends within the first 10 days of the month, he said.

Take the case of Fazlul Hoque, owner of Riya Garment at East Bengal Shopping Complex in the capital. Like every year, he made about one lakh piece of dresses for children to be sold in wholesale shops this year, too.

After the 20th Ramadan, the wholesalers start paying back Hoque,

70,000 pieces of dresses for Eid. He sold the dresses at Tk 110 to Tk 300 each based on their quality.

But if the dresses are returned, he will have to sell those at an auction for Tk 50 to Tk 80.

"I really don't know how I would cover up the loss," said a despondent Aziz.

Md Faruk, the owner of Satata Collection, whose dresses are sold in different showrooms in Brahmanbaria, Sylhet, Cox's Bazar and Chattogram, says he waits all year round for the month of Ramadan.

"I am now waiting for some miracle



PRABIR DAS

Popular shopping complexes among Dhaka's middle-class demographic like the New Market have been shut since March 26 for the countrywide shutdown, a move that has left the country's 20,000 small garment factories in dire straits.

yesterday announced that shops would be allowed to open on a limited scale for the Eid-ul-Fitr, the country's biggest shopping festival.

"This will be the last possible way for us to recover some of our losses," said Alauddin Malik, president of Bangladesh Avhantarin Poshak Prostutkarak Malik Samity, which represents about 20,000 small garment factories.

Were the Eid sales missed completely, the garment makers for the domestic market would be staring at losses of about Tk 20,000 crore. And this year, they were hoping to turn in profits of Tk 15,000 crore.

"Forget about profit. This year, many of us may have to sell our factories to repay the loans we have taken to make the clothes," said Alauddin Malik, president of Bangladesh Avhantarin Poshak Prostutkarak Malik Samity,

with which he clears his dues and pays his staff salaries.

"I have invested around Tk 1.2 crore to manufacture dresses by taking a loan of Tk 70 lakh. Things were almost the same since the beginning of my business in the market 10 years back. But this year, all calculations went wrong."

Before the shutdown took effect, he had delivered about 70,000 pieces. But the wholesalers' shops have been shut firmly more than a month now.

"I don't have a single penny in my pocket now. I can't pay my staff unless the wholesalers sell the clothes and clear my bills," he added.

Abdul Aziz, the owner of Asha-Moni garment factory in the capital's Sadarghat area, is in the same boat as Hoque.

He shelled out Tk 60 lakh to make

to happen to save me," said Faruk, who has clothes worth about Tk 30 lakh stockpiled at the warehouse.

The members of Bangladesh Avhantarin Poshak Prostutkarak Malik Samity have invested about Tk 15,000 crore to establish their factories, said MH Mustafa, acting secretary of the Samity.

"There are instances of tailors becoming factory owners thanks to their hard work and enterprise. All these will be destroyed if the government does not pay attention to them," said Mustafa, who is also the secretary of Urdu Road Avhantarin Garments Baboshayee Association.

The association urged the government to give them loans under simple terms and conditions so that they can pay the workers' salaries and clear the bills.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Director
Chattogram Medical College Hospital.
www.cmch.gov.bd

Memo No: CMCH/Tender/2020-21/Non-MSR (Diet / Non-Diet)/3720 Date: 04-05-2020.

: INVITATION FOR TENDER :

Sealed Tenders are hereby invited from experienced Importers/Contractors/Suppliers/Distributors to supply Non-MSR (Diet / Non-Diet) Goods for CMCH in the fiscal year 2020-21. As per PPA-2006 & PPR-2008; Terms and conditions are as follows:

KEY INFORMATION	
1 Ministry/Division	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
2 Agency	Chattogram Medical College Hospital, Chattogram.
3 Procuring Entity Name, Designation & Contact details	Brigadier General S M Humayun Kabir, Director, Chattogram Medical College Hospital. Telephone: +88031630179, Fax No.: 88-031-610022, e-mail address: cmch@hospi.dghs.gov.bd
4 Procuring Entity Code & District	GOB, Chattogram.
5 Invitation for	Procurement of Non-MSR (Diet / Non-Diet) Goods for CMCH in the fiscal year 2020-21.
6 Tender Ref. No & Date	CMCH/Tender/2020-21/Non-MSR (Diet / Non-Diet)/3720 Dated: 04-05-2020.
7 Procurement Method	Open Tender Method (National), Item-by-item.
8 Budget and Source of Funds	GOB.
9 Tender Notice Publication Date	04-05-2020.
10 Tender Schedule Selling Starting Date and Time	07-05-2020, During office hours.
11 Pre-Tender Meeting	20-05-2020, 11:00 A.M.
12 Tender Last Selling Date and Time	02-06-2020, 12:00 P.M.
13 Tender Dropping & Closing Date and Time	Dropping date: 03-06-2020, Dropping time: from 09:00 AM to 12:00 PM, Closing time: 12:01 P.M.
14 Tender Opening Date and Time	03-06-2020 at 01:00 P.M.
Name and address of the Office's	
(a) Selling Tender Documents	1. Cashier, Office of the Director, Chattogram Medical College Hospital. 2. Cashier, Office of the Civil Surgeon, Chattogram District.
(b) Receiving Tender Documents	1. Office of the Director, Chattogram Medical College Hospital. 2. Officer in charge, Panchlala Model Thana, Chattogram Metropolitan Police.
(c) Tender Documents Opening Place	Office of the Director, Chattogram Medical College Hospital.
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER	
All Bidders must submit Tender through "Tender Booklet" prepared by procuring entity and abide by the terms and conditions stated in the "Tender Booklet".	
The Bidders shall submit with its Tender the following additional documents :	
A	The tenderer must be a Bangladeshi Citizen and should submit copy of National Identity Card.
B	Electronic TIN (e-TIN) registration certificate.
E	Valid BIN Registration Certificate.
C	Up-to-date Trade License valid for the fiscal year 2019-20.
D	Income Tax Clearance Certificate for the Fiscal Year 2019-20.
F	Bank Statement (Original copy) from 21-05-2019 to 20-05-2020. Bidders bidding for different groups should attach the original copy of the bank statement with one group and attested photocopy of the same with other groups.
16 Bidders Eligibility	Bidders of Group: 01 to Group: 06 should be experienced in supplying diet goods (Experience range stated in tender terms and conditions) and bidders of Group: 07 to Group: 12 should be experienced in supplying similar goods (Experience range stated in tender terms and conditions) to any 800 to 1000 bedded hospital within any of the last 03 (Three) fiscal years. Bidders of Group: 13 & 14 should be experienced in supplying similar goods / performing similar work to any Tertiary level Hospital / Specialized Govt. Hospital / Civil Surgeon Office / Any Government Hospital within any of the last 03 (Three) fiscal years. Bidders of Group: 15 should be experienced in supplying at least 100 persons as Outsourcing manpower to any reputed 800 to 1000 bedded hospital within any of the last 03 (Three) fiscal years. Respective experience certificate and copy of work order must be submitted.
H	02 (Two) Passport size photo of the bidder / representative.
I	Other conditions are stated in Tender Booklet.
17 Description of Groups	Group: 01 (Dried Goods: Rice, Sugar, Flour etc.); Group: 02 (Vegetables: Potato, Papaya, Banana etc.); Group: 03 (Milk & Dairy Products); Group: 04 (Fish & Flesh Products); Group: 05 (Egg: Hen egg); Group: 06 (Bakery Products: Bread, Biscuit etc.); Group: 07 (Cleaning Materials: Soap, Soda etc.); Group: 08 (Miscellaneous goods); Group: 09 (Office Stationary: Paper, Ball pen, Pin, Khata etc.); Group: 10 (Electrical Goods: Bulb, Switch, Tube Light, Electric Fan, Electric Cable etc.); Group: 11 (Dirty Linen goods washing); Group: 12 (Hospital Waste Management); Group: 13 (Computer and Computer accessories); Group: 14 (Internet & Website Related Services); Group: 15 (Procurement of supplying outsourcing manpower).
18 Description of Price of Tender Documents, Tender Security, Related Services etc.	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 whatsoever.
(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.

(Brigadier General S M Humayun Kabir)
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