

Activities back, incomes not

FROM PAGE B1
Those who managed to stay above the poverty line came under financial strains. Their incomes squeezed, but their expenses did not.

On the upside, the sales of consumer durables such as washing machines, cooking utensils, microwaves and trimmers rose significantly. Home delivery saw a sharp rise in demand.

E-commerce firms said to have leapfrogged by three years, meaning the pace of expansion they were expecting to see by 2024 has already taken place in 2020 because of the demand.

There has been a surge in demand for digital services. Those who did not have internet connection have jumped on the digital bandwagon.

Bank deposits of more than Tk 1 crore skyrocketed between March and December as the rich were flushed with cash. This means the situation has improved for some people. This reminds us of a K-shaped recovery, which occurs when different parts of the economy recover at different rates, times, or magnitudes, following a recession.

After the lockdown was imposed, the economy came to a sudden halt. But when the restrictions were partially lifted, it did not return to its usual shape strongly.

But we can see some signs of gradual recovery. People returned to work. Employment has come back to close to the pre-pandemic level.

The Google Mobility Report shows that its benchmarks on mobility have exceeded the pre-pandemic level. But in the case of incomes, we are yet to reach that level perhaps. Activities are back, incomes are not. Income for the workers in the informal services sectors has recovered by around 60 to 70 per cent on average.

The indicators at the macroeconomic level also gave a message that there has been recovery. Exports are recovering although it has not sprinted back to the pre-crisis level. The exports, however, were in the negative region even before the pandemic.

The growth is significantly negative in the case of import of capital machinery. The expansion in the domestic collection of value-added tax, which is an indicator of consumption expenditure, is still weak. Income tax contributed most to the revenue collection.

Demand recovery is happening. But it is still below pre-pandemic benchmarks. Another component of the demand is public expenditure. The outlay of the annual development programme fell in terms of money spent, not in terms of growth, during the July to January period compared to a year ago. The government's borrowing has declined. What is more, the authorities repaid loans to the central bank. The borrowing target may fall behind the target this fiscal year.

The growth of investment and exports will bank on the return to pre-pandemic normalcy and how the global recovery plays out. The global recovery is now a matter of time. The odds of another recession are slim because of the mass rollout of coronavirus vaccines in many countries. Lockdowns have been reinstated in many countries in Europe because of the new variants. If the immunisation moves faster, the lockdowns will not last longer. Now the question is: When will the economic recovery start taking hold? My hunch is the global recovery will start making a turnaround in the third quarter. The less optimistic view is that it would begin growing in the fourth quarter. The world would not just stop by lifting the growth to the pre-pandemic level. There might be a very strong growth in Europe and North America for a year or two. If global growth roars, Bangladesh will not be left behind.

The author is an economist.

Remdesivir proves pharma strength

FROM PAGE B1
"We started using remdesivir mostly in the third week of May last year at Armed Forces Hospitals," Islam said.

Although patients with more risk factors, such as diabetes, still had a comparatively higher mortality rate, the overall loss of life decreased significantly due to the advent of remdesivir and other supportive treatment methods. The use of remdesivir was also found to generate symptomatic and prognostic improvements, he added.

Eskayef was the first in the world to successfully produce the drug, said its director for marketing and sales, Mohammad Mujahidul Islam. Not only patients in Bangladesh but also those in 32 countries were saved by the drug. "Remdesivir emerged as a light in the dark during the pandemic both at home and abroad," Islam said.

He went on to say that the successful manufacture of remdesivir helped enhance Bangladesh's image in the global arena. Beacon exports remdesivir under the brand "Pandovir".

"Local drug makers fast decided to manufacture the drug to save the lives of Covid-19 patients," said Monjurul Alam, director for global business at Beacon. Other than remdesivir, local pharmaceutical companies have also manufactured a variety of drugs related with Covid-19 treatment to help

the country in its ongoing fight against the pandemic.

According to Alam, the companies took this initiative not just to do business but also to save lives amidst the global crisis.

"It was possible to control the spread of Covid-19 as the companies, government and doctors worked together to fight against the pandemic," he said.

After catering to local demand, Beacon shipped more than Tk 130 crore worth of the product to 21 destinations while 18 other countries, including some in Latin America, the Middle East and Africa, are currently in negotiations for supplies.

While the Covid-19 fallout has had an adverse effect on most industries, it came as a blessing for pharmaceuticals as local drug makers used it to demonstrate their efficiency and quality to the international market.

"It is really a benefit for the country's image to be the first to provide remdesivir globally," Alam added.

Rabbur Reza, chief operating officer of Beximco, earlier told The Daily Star that his company was exporting remdesivir to 10 countries, including some in Latin America and the Middle East.

In June Beximco exported the drug under the brand "Bemsivir" to Pakistan following a request from the Pakistan high commission in Dhaka.

Cashless transactions get a fillip

FROM PAGE B1
The central bank made this calculation based on a survey by McKinsey & Company, a consultancy firm from the US.

Although Bangladesh Bank is yet to prepare a report on the cost of maintaining cash last year, this expense has surely decreased due to the expansion of DFS, according to an official of the banking regulator.

"The deepening recession caused by the pandemic has taken its toll on the global economy, including Bangladesh, but there is a ray of hope in the upward trend of DFS usage," said Md Arfan Ali, managing director of Bank Asia.

The use of all payment modes under DFS increased significantly throughout 2020 and the trend is still ongoing, he added.

Ecommerce transactions, a vital component of DFS, totalled Tk 598 crore in December last year, up 123 per cent year-on-year.

Transactions through mobile financial services (MFSs) also posted magnificent growth during the same period as underprivileged people are now embracing branchless banking windows in bigger numbers than ever. MFS transaction grew 36 per cent year-on-year to Tk 57,253 crore in January, central bank data shows.

"The banking sector achieved unprecedented success in the arena of DFS amid the pandemic," Ali said. "It has gained the same achievements that the country's financial institutions managed in five years before the pandemic."

"Clients can now frequently use different online tools to settle their transactions and the trend will continue in the days to come," he added.

DFS will not only reduce the cost of keeping cash but also expedite the economy's growth, according to a report by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The study titled, "The promise of Fintech: financial inclusion in the post-Covid-19 era", gave the message that digital financial inclusion would help underprivileged borrowers smoothly manage funds.

Banks would be able to disburse loans through Fintech such as MFS providers, the IMF report said.

Some Bangladeshi lenders and one MFS provider have already taken initiatives to this end. Mahiul Islam, head of retail banking at Brac Bank, said growth in the country's financial sector has advanced by at least five years amid the pandemic as dependency on digital means has increased significantly.

"The use of both credit and debit cards has been on an exceptional rise, meaning that we are moving towards a cashless society," Islam added. The use of both credit and debit cards did indeed hit an all-time high in December last year, Bangladesh Bank data shows.

Total card loans held by lenders stood at Tk 1,561 crore in December, which is a fresh record in terms of the lending amount.

December's figures are up 8.84 per cent from that of a month earlier and 23.78 per cent year-on-year.

Clients also posted a new spending record through debit cards as the figure stood at Tk 18,795 crore, up 8.44 per cent from that of a month earlier and 16.51 per cent year-on-year.

Syed Mohammad Kamal, country manager of MasterCard Bangladesh, said the existing financial transactions made through DFS would witness a tremendous increase if the government paid cash incentives against digital payments.

The Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services, a national trade body for the local software and IT-enabled service industry, recently proposed 5 per cent cash incentives for clients and merchants against payments for goods and services made through digital means.

বাংলাদেশ পানি উন্নয়ন বোর্ড
Bangladesh Water Development Board

নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলীর কার্যালয়
মৌলভীবাজার পত্র বিভাগ
বাপাউদো, মৌলভীবাজার
ফোন: ০৮৬১-৫২২৮২

Office of the Executive Engineer
Moulvibazar O&M Division
BWDB, Moulvibazar
Phone: 0861-52282
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Memo No. DA-1/1193 Date: 07/03/2021

Invitation for e-Tender

Tender ID:	Name of work
DA-1/1188 dt: 07/03/2021 T ID No. 552231	Bank Revetment work along the right bank at Momruzpur from km 51.100 to 51.400 300 with 1 No. R/S stair in C/W Protection Project at Moulvibazar Sadar Rajnagar & Kulaura Upazilla from erosion of Manu river under Moulvibazar O&M Division BWDB Moulvibazar during the FY 2020-21 & 2021-22. Package No. MR-PW-12.
DA-1/1186 dt: 07/03/2021 T ID No. 552230	Bank Revetment work along the right bank at Ujipur from km 30.095 to 31.045 950m in C/W Protection Project at Moulvibazar Sadar Rajnagar & Kulaura Upazilla from erosion of Manu river under Moulvibazar O&M Division BWDB Moulvibazar during the FY 2020-21 & 2021-22. Package No. MR-PW-48.
DA-1/1187 dt: 07/03/2021 T ID No. 552229	Bank Revetment work along the left bank at Matarkapon from km 48.550 to 48.950 400m in C/W Protection Project at Moulvibazar Sadar Rajnagar & Kulaura Upazilla from erosion of Manu river under Moulvibazar O&M Division BWDB Moulvibazar during the FY 2020-21 & 2021-22. Package No. ML-PW-33.
DA-1/1195 dt: 07/03/2021 T ID No. 552227	Bank Revetment work along the left bank at Khaspremnagar from km 42.785 to 43.285 500m & 43.555 to 43.865 310m in C/W Protection Project at Moulvibazar Sadar Rajnagar & Kulaura Upazilla from erosion of Manu river under Moulvibazar O&M Division BWDB Moulvibazar during the FY 2020-21 & 2021-22. Package No. ML-PW-43.
DA-1/1184 dt: 07/03/2021 T ID No. 552225	Bank Revetment work along the left bank at Volanagar-Mithipur from km 37.135 to 38.085 950m with 1 No. R/S stair in C/W Protection Project at Moulvibazar Sadar Rajnagar & Kulaura Upazilla from erosion of Manu river under Moulvibazar O&M Division BWDB Moulvibazar during the FY 2020-21 & 2021-22. Package No. ML-PW-41.

This is an online tender where only e-Tenders will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copy 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 National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd) (0176262528-31).

মোহাম্মদ আক্তারুজামান
Executive Engineer
Moulvibazar O&M Division
BWDB, Moulvibazar

Bangladesh unlikely to cut subsidy on jute goods export

FROM PAGE B4
Bangladesh has been negotiating for signing of the CEPA to bring Indian investment here and to increase export to the neighbouring country, which enjoys a trade balance.

The signing of the CEPA with India is needed to enjoy trade benefit after 2026 when Bangladesh will be graduated finally to a developing country from the least developed country category, he said.

Moreover, negotiation is underway to sign a Free Trade Agreement with Indonesia and a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) with Nepal.

The government has been taking preparations to sign either CEPA, FTA or PTA with 11 countries to continue enjoying duty privileges after its economic graduation. Bangladesh will lose \$4 billion worth of business after the graduation to a developing country due to an erosion of duty preferences, the minister said.

Munshi said Bangladesh will also discuss the problems faced by the local exporters when India will frame new customs rules at the commerce secretary level meeting to be held at a Dhaka hotel today.

He said three more border haats would be opened up soon along the Bangladesh and Indian border areas. Another border haat may be opened up along with Bangladesh and Mizoram of India in near future as the Mizoram provincial government has expressed interest for it, he said.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Bangladesh Police
Police Telecommunication Organization
Police Telecom Bhaban, Rajarbag, Dhaka
www.telecom.police.gov.bd

Invitation for International Tender

Memo No. 44.01.0000.057.11.011.20/1533/Betar Date: 07/03/2021

Sealed tenders are hereby invited from the Manufacturers/Suppliers in their official pad for supply of following items as required by Bangladesh Police in FY 2020-2021.

1. Ministry/Division	Ministry of Home Affairs.
2. Agency	Bangladesh Police.
3. Procuring entity name	SP (Logistics), Police Telecom Organization.
4. Invitation for	Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of DMR Trunking (Tier-3) System on Turnkey Basis for Bangladesh Police.
5. Invitation Ref. No.	44.01.0000.057.11.011.20/1532/Betar
6. Date	07/03/2021.

KEY INFORMATION

7. Procurement method	One Stage Two Envelope (International).
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FUNDING INFORMATION

8. Budget and source of funds	Revenue Budget (GOB).
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PARTICULAR INFORMATION

9. Tender publication date	08 March 2021.
10. Tender last selling date	25 April 2021.
11. Tender closing date and time	26 April 2021 at 11:00hrs.
12. Tender opening date and time (Technical offer only)	26 April 2021 at 11:30hrs.

Name & address of the office

13. Name & address of the office	Bangladesh Police, Police Telecommunication Organization, Rajarbag, Dhaka.
Selling tender document	SP (Logistics), Police Telecommunication Organization, Rajarbag, Dhaka.
Receiving tender document	Police Telecommunication Organization, Rajarbag, Dhaka.
Opening tender document	Police Telecommunication Organization, Rajarbag, Dhaka.

14. Place/date/time of pre-tender meeting (optional)
14 March 2021, at 11:30hrs at Police Telecom Conference Room (1st Floor), Police Telecommunication Organization, Rajarbag, Dhaka.

INFORMATION FOR TENDERER

15. Eligibility of tenderer	1) Up-to-date export licence 2) Written confirmation authorizing the signatory of the tender in accordance with the Memorandum of Association and Articles of Association of the Principal 3) Affidavit confirming the legal capacity and financial capability 4) Original full brochure of products of the Principal 5) Other requirements described in the standard tender document (PG 5A).		
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Sl. No.	Description of good	Price of tender document (non-refundable)	Tender security	Completion time
1.	Lot-1: Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of DMR Trunking (Tier-3) System on Turnkey Basis.	15,000/-	Tk 1,19,00,000/- or USS 1,40,000.00	120 days from the date of opening LC

PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS

17. Name of official inviting tender	Md. Anwar Jahid.
18. Designation of the official inviting tender	SP (Logistics), Bangladesh Police, Rajarbag, Dhaka-1217.
19. Address of official inviting tender	Police Telecom Organization, Rajarbag, Dhaka-1217.
20. Contact details of official inviting the tender	Phone: +880-2-8301253, Fax: +880-2-8301404, Mobile: +88-01320-020041, E-mail: splog.telecom@police.gov.bd

21. The tenderers shall submit their Technical and Financial offer in separate sealed envelope. Furthermore both envelopes shall be covered by an outer envelope which is sealed.

Special instructions

22.	a) No tender will be received after the deadline of submission time & date.
	b) The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all tenders or annul the tender process without assigning any reason.
	c) The procuring entity also reserves the right to omit, increase and/or decrease the quantity of any item(s) of the tender.
	d) If not possible to receive/open the tender on the scheduled date for any unavoidable circumstances, the same will be received/opened on the next working date at the same time & same venue.
	e) Evaluation will be on item by item basis.
	f) Date of financial offer opening will be duly informed to the Technically Responsive Tenderers and their local agents.
	g) The tenderer must comply with all requirements as per the tender data sheet provided with the tender schedule.
	h) The tender security shall be in the form of an Irrevocable Bank Guarantee issued by an internationally reputable bank and shall require to be endorsed by its any correspondent bank located in Bangladesh.
	i) The procurement will be performed according to the Public Procurement Act-2006 and Public Procurement Regulation-2008.

M. Anwar Zahid
SP (Logistics)
Police Telecom, Rajarbag, Dhaka
Ph: 8301253, Fax: 8301404
E-mail: splog.telecom@police.gov.bd

GD-458

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Ministry of Water Resources
Water Resources Planning Organization
72 Green Road, Dhaka-1215

Request for Expression of Interest (EOI)

1. Ministry/Division	Ministry of Water Resources
2. Agency	Water Resources Planning Organization (WARPO)
3. Name of Procuring Entity	Project Director, Operationalizing Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) in compliance with the Bangladesh Water Rules, 2018 Project
4. Procuring Entity District	Dhaka
5. Expression of Interest for Selection of	Individual Consultant (National)
6. Title of Service	Individual Water Management Expert
7. EOI Ref. No.	42.02.0000.005.14.005.20-02
8. Date (dd/mm/yyyy)	08/03/2021
9. Procurement Sub-Method	Individual Consultant Selection (ICS)
10. Budget & Source of fund	Development Budget Grant
11. Development Partner	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)
12. Project/Programme Name	Operationalizing Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) in compliance with the Bangladesh Water Rules, 2018
13. EOI Closing Date & Time	22/03/2021 at 2.00 pm
14. Brief Description of the scope of work	Water Management Expert: He/she will be responsible to assist in aquifer mapping and hydrological modelling activities as well as PRA activities of the project. He/She will also be responsible to review all the output of PRA and Hydrological Modelling tasks done by the PRA and Modelling Consulting firms. He/she will give input for 9 man-months from the date of contract signing throughout the project period. Details are furnished in the Terms of Reference (ToR), which can be obtained from the office of the Procuring Entity as well as in the website of WARPO: www.warpo.gov.bd
15. Experience, Resources & Delivery Capacity Required	Water Management Expert: • He/she must have a Bachelor's degree, preferably a Master's degree, in Civil Engineering/Water Resources Engineering/Water Resources Management from a well reputed university. • Minimum 20 (twenty) years working experience in water resources planning and management and capacity development related activities.
16. Other Details	The Proposal shall be submitted in sealed envelope, delivered to the address of the under signed and clearly marked "Expression of Interest for Selection of Water Management Expert". Necessary documents in support of educational qualifications and experience & skills shall have to be submitted.

Procuring Entity Details

17. Name of the Official Inviting EOI	Md. Rezaul Karim
18. Designation of the Official Inviting EOI	Project Director, Operationalizing Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) in compliance with the Bangladesh Water Rules, 2018 Project
19. Address of the Official Inviting EOI	Water Resources Planning Organization (WARPO)Bhaban, 72 Green Road, Dhaka-1215
20. Contact Details of the Official Inviting EOI	Phone: +88-02 44819003 Email: rezaul.warpo@gmail.com

The Procuring Entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the EOI's or annul the Eoi process at any stage without assigning any reason(s) whatsoever and without incurring any liability to the affected application(s)

(Md. Rezaul Karim)
Project Director