

Govt failing to put money where the mouth is

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The central bank asked banks to disburse the targeted fund under the package by June this year.

Salehuddin Ahmed, a former governor of the central bank, said loans should be provided to the farmers and the SME sector at any cost in the interest of the country, or else the economy will face dire straits in the days to come.

The small-scale businesses and farmers usually face more problems than the large businesses in the time of crisis, he said.

The implementation rate is also the same when it comes to the Tk 3,000 crore scheme for low-income professionals, small businesses, and marginal farmers. Banks disbursed 52 per cent of the fund through microfinance institutions as of March.

But the disbursement situation is quite different for the stimulus fund dedicated to the large borrowers: banks lent 95 per cent of the fund, amounting to Tk 33,000 crore.

The Bangladesh Bank also increased the fund to Tk 40,000 crore to provide loans to the large businesses located at economic and export processing zones.

"Banks show interest in giving out loans to the large borrowers all the time.

They have given the emphasis on them this time as well," Ahmed said.

For the export sector, the central bank has allocated Tk 12,750 crore, or \$1.5 billion, by enlarging the export development fund.

Banks have implemented 98 per cent of the fund, meaning that large borrowers bagged adequate support from the package.

The export sector is highly important for the economy. But the importance of the SME and farm sectors are not less as well, according to a number of analysts.

Mansur said that the SME clients would not be able to pay back the loans taken from the stimulus package due to the second wave. The repayment tenure of the loans is one year. "SME borrowers should be allowed to repay the loans from three to five years," he said.

SMEs have to be brought under the loan restructuring facility so that they can tackle the crisis. In addition, the government should take fiscal measures so that small businesses get direct cash support from the budget, Mansur said.

Syed Mahbubur Rahman, managing director of Mutual Trust Bank, said that banks might be edgy in disbursing adequate loans to the SME sector, fearing that they might not be able to

recover the previous credits because of the current spread of the virus.

"Many banks do not have adequate capacity to give out loans to small clients," he said, adding that the government should give importance to its fiscal measures.

Mirza Elias Uddin Ahmed, managing director of Jamuna Bank, said banks were trying to speed up the loan disbursement under the stimulus packages, but the demand from clients was weak.

Banks are still sitting on excess liquidity of Tk 200,000 crore, which is not good at all, he said.

"Jamuna Bank has almost fulfilled its stimulus fund disbursement targets. But we faced difficulties in providing the loans," he said.

In some cases, the interest rate on working capital, the short-term loan whose maximum repayment tenure is one year, has nosedived to 3-4 per cent, he said.

"So, why will clients take loans from the stimulus packages as they have to count an interest rate of 4 to 5 per cent?"

"Time has come to revisit the interest rate on the stimulus packages to make the funds attractive for clients," Elias said.

Floor price removed for 66 listed firms

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The order to scrap the floor price was issued yesterday. In it, the BSEC said that it took the decision in the interest of investors and the development of the capital market. The companies were selected from all the sectors.

A merchant banker said a floor price could not remain in place all the time. It was criticised by foreign investors too. On the other hand, examples of floor prices are rare in the world, so this cannot be expected anymore, he said.

"As our investors are sensitive, lifting the floor price will be done in several phases. This is a good decision," the merchant banker said.

An asset manager echoed the same, saying that floor prices could not

continue year after year.

"The market should be run on the basis of demand and supply. When stock prices fall sharply, some investors will definitely come to invest."

"The BSEC should not show the index higher artificially," he added.

However, stock investor Sogir Ahmed urged the BSEC to consider whether the time was right to remove the floor prices.

"As Covid-19 is spreading fast again, the BSEC should not have lifted the floor price now. It could have been done in a normal time," he added.

The DSEX, the benchmark index of the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE), rose 55 points, or 1.05 per cent, to 5,337 yesterday. The index gained for the third consecutive day yesterday.

Turnover, an important indicator of the market, rose 14 per cent to Tk 582 crore yesterday.

At the DSE, stocks of 199 companies advanced, 43 declined, and 102 remained unchanged.

Debutant Index Agro Industries topped the gainers, rising 50 per cent. Securities rules allow a debutant to go up as high as 50 per cent on its first trading day.

Northern Insurance came second in the list, rising 9.97 per cent, followed by Rupali Insurance, Bangladesh National Insurance, Sonar Bangla Insurance, and Islami Insurance.

The CASPI, the general index of the Chattogram Stock Exchange, rose 173 points, or 1.13 per cent, to end the day at 15,434.

Rice stock still scarce

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On March 3, the government took the initiative to import 5.5 lakh tonnes of rice through an international open tender.

To expedite this import, the Economic Affairs Committee approved a proposal to shorten the bidding process from 42 days to 10 or faster.

On March 10, the government approved three proposals to import a total of 3.5 lakh tonnes of rice from India, Thailand and Vietnam under state-to-state arrangements.

The purchase committee then approved two more proposals with each involving the import of 50,000 tonnes of rice on March 24 and March 31.

During a press briefing yesterday, the finance minister said that the government approved the proposals to import rice in quantities that are required by the country.

"But when a supplier fails to provide the shipment in a timely manner, we change it and proceed for another source," Kamal said, adding that the food ministry is aligned with the agricultural ministry to decide on how much rice the country requires.

The decisions are taken based on the country's current requirement as well as keeping the next harvest in mind.

"We will not purchase more than what is required because that will be harmful for local farmers and we won't buy less either so that the consumers don't suffer," Kamal said.

Earlier on April 4, the finance minister informed during a parliament session that the government aims to import one million tonnes of rice this year to ensure food security.

He also said that the government had allocated sufficient funds in the

budget to this end.

"We have already finalised agreements to import five lakh tonnes of rice, of which 1.5 lakh tonnes has been imported and the remaining is on the way," Kamal said while presenting a report on budget implementation in the first six months of the current fiscal.

However, the rice imports have yet to gain momentum.

The government has so far managed to import only 2.16 lakh tonnes of rice from July 1 last year to April 5 this year, according to the Food Department.

The proposals approved to import rice under a G-to-G basis have yet to be finalised while those proposals have not been placed before the purchase committee.

Food Secretary Mosammat Nazmanara Khanum could not be reached for a comment in this regard despite repeated attempts by the time this report was filed.

Rice and wheat stocks at public storages dipped to 4.88 lakh tonnes, of which 3.99 lakh tonnes was rice as of April 5, data from the food ministry shows.

On July 1 last year, the country's food stock stood at 11.88 lakh tonnes while it was 16.74 lakh tonnes on July 1, 2019.

The stock started falling in June last year as distribution under the social safety net and other government programmes continued despite sluggish procurement.

Farmers and millers refrained from selling food grains to the food office at the government-fixed rates as the prices were soaring.

An increase in distribution of cereal among those affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and recurring floods also contributed to the drop in stocks,

food ministry officials said.

The depleting stock and the failure to procure sufficient quantities of paddy directly from growers forced the government to pay cash under its Test Relief and Food for Work programmes.

More LNG purchase approved
The cabinet committee on purchase also approved a proposal to purchase another 33.6 lakh MMBTUs of liquefied natural gas from the spot market.

The proposal, submitted by Petro Bangla, a corporation of the energy and mineral resources division, was to purchase the LNG from AOT Trading AG, Switzerland, at a cost of Tk 243.30 crore.

Each MMBTUs will cost \$17.28.

Finance Minister on support for low-income people
Asked about what steps would be taken for the low-income people who lost their jobs during the recent countrywide lockdown, the finance minister assured that necessary and timely measures would be taken to ensure the safety and security of the people.

However, the finance minister did not mention any such step in particular.

"Another wing of the government works on it and they can inform about it," he added.

When it was mentioned that all stimulus packages announced last year were implemented through the finance ministry, Kamal said that the prime minister fixed those packages and the ministry implemented them on her behalf.

"The ministry will work for the people's welfare and do things so that people of the country are not harmed," he added.

Gas crisis haunts Gazipur garment factories as well

FROM PAGE B1
"But from Tuesday night my mill has remained almost idle as the pressure is too low now," said Hoque, adding that he was capable of producing 125 tonnes of yarn a day had the supply of gas been normal.

"My buyers are putting pressure on me for delivering the yarn on time as they will also have to make timely shipment of goods. Otherwise they will face work order cancellations and expensive air shipments," he said.

Similarly, Mosharaf Hossain, chairman and managing director of Mosharaf Group, has been making do with producing 50 tonnes to 60 tonnes of yarn a day instead of the usual 130 tonnes under normal gas pressure.

The group has composite facilities at Bhabanipur in Gazipur comprising spinning, dyeing and garment production units.

"So everyday I have been losing money and my buyers are putting pressure on me for quick delivery of goods," Hossain told The Daily Star.

He said his Tk 1,600 crore investment in his composite mill and 10,000 workers would fall in jeopardy if the factories could not be run in full swing.

The views of Hoque and Hossain were echoed by Azahar Khan, chairman of Mithela Textile Industries based at Araihazar in Narayanganj, and Saleudh Zaman, managing director of NZ Textiles, a spinning mill at Bhulta in Narayanganj.

They have also been facing an acute gas crisis in their production units since March 13.

Azahar Khan said he was capable of exporting \$10 million worth of goods from his mills and factories every month. However, the export figure was feared to be very low this month because of reduced production for low gas pressure.

"I also run my mills with rice husk as it is a green factory and I can save 68 per cent of energy. But since it is not the season of rice husking, the old stock of husk has been used up over the past one month," he said.

"So I am in very big trouble now," he added.

"This is gross negligence of the Titas," said Mohammad Ali Khokon, president of the BTMA, the platform for primary textile millers.

"This state-owned company has not been addressing concerns despite repeated assurances over smooth supply of gas to the production units in those industrial belts," he said.

"Even today (Wednesday) the BTMA sent a letter to the Titas demanding fixing the gas problem as soon as possible. But action is yet to be taken by the Titas," Khokon told The Daily Star over the phone.

Every day over the last few months the members of the BTMA have been posting complaints with the association as they are facing losses due to the gas crisis which has severely affected productivity, Khokon said.

"I hope the problem will be solved soon. I hope for the best," said Ali Iqbal Mohammad Nurullah, managing director of the Titas, over the phone without elaborating.

Bangladesh Fisheries Development Corporation
Kaptai lake Fisheries Development & Marketing Center
Rangamati Hill District Phone: 0351-62236

INVITATION FOR TENDERER

1	Ministry/Division	: Ministry of Fisheries & Livestock.
2	Agency	: Bangladesh Fisheries Development Corporation.
3	Procurement Method	: Open Tendering Method.
4	Budget and Source of Funds	: BFDC's Own Fund.
5	Procuring Entity Name	: Manager, kaptai lake Fisheries Development & Marketing Center, BFDC, Rangamati sadar.
6	Invitation Ref. No. & Date	: 33.03.8487.005.02.002.21-225 Date: 06/04/2021
7	Invitation for	: Building Sustainable Packing shed & Business man office at BFDC Rangamati Sadar
8	Tender documents Selling Date	: From 07/04/2021 To 18/04/2021 in office time (9 AM -5PM)
10	Tender dropping date & time	: Date: 19/04/2021 upto 2.00 p.m
11	Tender opening date & Time	: Date: 19/04/2021, Time: 2.30 p.m
12	Place of Selling Tender Documents	: 1) Accounts Division, kaptai lake Fisheries Dev. & Marketing Center, BFDC, Rangamati sadar.2) Accounts Division, BFDC Bhovon, 23-24, Kawran Bazar, Tazgon, Dhaka 1215.
13	Place for dropping Tender	: Manager office, kaptai lake Fisheries Development & Marketing Center, BFDC, Rangamati sadar.
14	Tender Security	: 2,20,000/- (Two lac Twenty thousand) taka in the form of pay Order/Bank draft shall be submitted in favor of Bangladesh Fisheries Development Corporation.
15	Tender validity period	: 90 (Ninety) days
16	Eligibility of Tenderer.	: This invitation for Tenders is open to all eligible Tenders as mentioned below:-
17	a) The contractor shall be a Bangladeshi national. b) Experience in Government/semi government/Autonomous organization completion of similar/civil construction works of at least Tk. 70 (Seventy) lac under 1 number of contract over a period of last 3 (Three) years shall be required; c) Name, Business Address, Status of the firm with Telephone/Fax No.(if any); d) Tax Identification Numbers (TIN), Up-to-date Income Tax Certificate, VAT Registration e) Certificate and Trade License(Up-to-date); f) Bank Solvency Certificates at least Tk. 60 (sixty) lac. g) Other required eligibility and condition of the tenderers stipulated in the Tender Data Sheet and Tender Documents	
18	work location	: Kaptai lake Fisheries Development & Marketing Center, Rangamati sadar
19	Price of Tender Document	: Tk. 3,000.00 (Three thousand) only in cash (Non refundable).
20	Address of Official inviting Tender.	: kaptai lake Fisheries Development & Marketing Center, (BFDC), Rangamati sadar.
21	Special Instructions: i) No tender paper shall be sold or receive after the abovementioned date & time. ii) The participating tenderer's representative with due authorization will be allowed to attend the opening of the tender.iii) Tenderers shall submit their tender quoting item wise rates quoted rates should not be more than two digits after decimal point are to be fulfilled.	
22	Name of Official Inviting Tender	: Lt. Commander md.Touhidul Islam, (TAS), BN
23	Designation of Official inviting Tender.	: Manager, kaptai lake Fisheries Development & Marketing Center, BFDC, Rangamati sadar.
24	Contact details of Official inviting Tender.	: Telephone: 0351-62236 E-mail: bfdcragamati@yahoo.com
25	The Procuring Entity reserves the right to reject all the Tenders or any of the Tender Proceedings.	

Md. Touhidul Islam
Lt. Commander (TAS), BN
Manager
BFDC, Rangamati

Pabna University of Science and Technology
Office of the University Engineer

Memo No : PUST/Engg Office/e-GP/2020-21/ 03 Date: 07/04/2021

e-Tender Notice (FY/2020-21)

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the Procurement of following works of under "Pabna University of Science & Technology", PUST, Pabna.

Sl No	Tender ID	APP ID	Package No & Invitation Ref. No	Name of Works	Tender Publication Date & Time	Tender Closing Date & Time	Method
1	558756	173160	PUST/Engg Office/e-GP/OTM/Computer/2020-21/1	Supply - Installation and Commissioning Of Lab Equipment for different Department Of Pabna University Of Science And Technology. FY 2018-2019	08-Apr-2021 10:30	01-Apr-2021 12:00 PM	OTM
2	560983	173160	PUST/Engg Office/e-GP/OTM/Pathology Lab 1	Supply - Installation and Commissioning Of Core I9 Customized Computer for Physics & Chemistry Department Of Pabna University Of Science And Technology. FY 2020-2021	08-Apr-2021 10:30	01-Apr-2021 12:00	OTM
3	561667	173160	PUST/Engg Office/e-GP/OTM/Computer/2020-21/2	Supply - Installation and Commissioning Of Core i7 Brand New Computer for Different Department Of Pabna University Of Science And Technology. FY 2020-2021	08-Apr-2021 10:30	29-Apr-2021 11:30	OTM
4	565166	173160	PUST/Engg office/Civil/egp/otm/03	Painting dismantling and others ancillary repair works for BSMR Hall Block A & Block B Partial at PUST. FY 2020-2021	07-Apr-2021 15:00	22-Apr-2021 16:30	OTM
5	559422	173160	PUST/Engg Office/e-GP/Civil/2020-2021/07	Construction of surface drain Ground floor toilet block sanitary line repair emergency dismantling and others ancillary works for BSMR Hall building area at PUST. FY 2020-2021	07-Apr-2021 15:30	22-Apr-2021 16:30	OTM

This is an online Tender where only e-tender 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. Further information and guideline are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

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