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NEWS BULLETIN

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Improve climate: save the earth

ICC BANGLADESH
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Editor's Note

Climate change mitigation and role of private sector

With global temperatures rising, along with changing weather patterns, sea-level rise, increases in droughts and floods, the world's most vulnerable populations are facing ever-increasing risks, food insecurity and have fewer chances to break out of poverty and build better lives.

While the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), The world business organization welcomes announcements at the U.S. Leaders' Climate Summit and G7 meetings of increased pledges for climate change mitigation and finance, these pledges do not yet place the world on track to achieve committed UN Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC) Paris Agreement actions. According to Climate Action Tracker, the sum of all the targets submitted so far would limit global warming to an estimated 2.4°C by century's end. This is still short of limiting global temperature rise by 2°C – ideally 1.5°C – by the end of the century as per the Paris Agreement.

More than a decade ago, developed countries committed to jointly mobilize $100 billion per year by 2020 in support of climate action in developing countries. But according to UN, the $100bn target is not being met (the latest available data for 2018 is $79bn), even though climate finance is on an "upward trajectory." So, there is still a big gap in finance.

The annual $100bn commitment, "is a floor and not a ceiling" for climate finance, according to the UN. The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) estimates that adaptation costs alone faced by just developing countries will be between $140 billion to $300 billion per year by 2030, and $280 billion to $500 billion annually by 2050.

This troubling gap should give the international community impetus to consider how to unleash and engage further action both now and over the longer term across society. In the run-up to the next, UNFCCC COP26 in Glasgow, and over the course of the Paris Agreement five-year review cycle, governments have the unique opportunity to widen the circle of implementation for inclusive ambition, with a particular focus on countries' Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) as a vehicle.

ICC – representing more than 45 million companies in over 100 countries and in its roles as Permanent Observer to the UN General Assembly and official UNFCCC Focal Point for Business and Industry – believes that UNFCCC and Paris Agreement Parties should revisit the scope and implementation of their climate policy strategies to assess how to enhance involvement of businesses of every sector, size and jurisdiction, in particular in NDC development, implementation and tracking at both national and international levels.

The pandemic and its disruptive impact on societies, economies and businesses have compounded the difficulty of developing and delivering on NDCs, which makes it even more important to design practical and inclusive NDCs. Overcoming these challenges will require mobilization and agreement to commit to redoubled efforts across society and in particular from governments and business.

While involvement of multinational corporations and major international business groups in international climate action efforts has grown substantially, they are still an incomplete picture of what the broader business community, including MSMEs is capable of contributing at national and global levels.

MSMEs are the foundation of global economic system– they make up 90% of businesses worldwide, comprise an estimated 80 percent of employment in many countries, collectively employ two billion people. Yet, they are not a dominant voice and presence in the UNFCCC process.

It is suggested, governments to encourage MSMEs to take on appropriate climate mitigation and adaptation measures; develop good practices that are flexible to innovation across NDCs, in particular for MSMEs tackling the social and economic impacts of the pandemic and create a dedicated and recognized space inside the UNFCCC for enhanced consultation and dialogue with business and employers, inclusive of MSMEs.

This private sector platform could also provide for practical and realistic dialogue on converging climate and recovery agendas.

WE MOURN



Deen Mohammad
(3 August 1938 –27 April 2021)

ICC Bangladesh is deeply shocked and grieved at the sad demise of prominent industrialist and Chairman of Phoenix Group Deen Mohammad on 27 April, 2021. *Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'un*.

Mr. Deen Mohammad started his business carrier in 1960 through hardware business with only Pakistani Rs 5,000 given by his father. Later, he established himself in the business arena both in the country and abroad.

He had earned a huge name and fame in the business community for his honesty, integrity, dedication, hard work, and a high degree of sense of responsibility. Known as one of the native traders of Dhaka, his business expanded in time and he played a leading role in the development and industrialization of the country.

Mr. Deen Mohammad had served as Chairman of the PICL between 2000 and 2006 and was also the founder chairman and director of The City Bank Ltd, Phoenix Finance and Investment Ltd, and Phoenix Securities Limited.

He not only contributed in the industrial development and setting up of financial and insurance companies, but was also a pioneer in setting up North South University, the first private university, to provide much needed quality education for our future generation.

Mr. Deen Mohammad was honoured with Maulana Akram Khan Gold Medal and Jagadish Chandra Gold Medal and was awarded Business Initiative Directions (BID) by a Spanish-based business firm.

May Almighty Allah rest his soul in peace in heaven.

WE MOURN



Shah Abdul Hannan
1939-2021

ICC Bangladesh is deeply shocked and grieved at the sad demise of Islamic philosopher, civil servant, banker, writer, economist, educator and media personality Mr. Shah Abdul Hannan on 2 June 2021. Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'un.

Mr. Hannan completed his Bachelor of Economics and Political Science in 1959 and Master of Political Science in 1961 from University of Dhaka. He joined the then Pakistan Civil Service in 1963 and retired as the Secretary of the Government of Bangladesh in 1998.

He served as the Deputy Governor of the Bangladesh Bank; Chairman of the National Board of Revenue (NBR) & Secretary, Internal Resources Division; Director General, Bureau of Anti-corruption; Secretary, Ministry of Social Welfare. He was one of the Board of Trustee and Founder Member of North South University Trust and founder Vice Chancellorof Darul Ihsan University; Chairman of Islamic Economics Research Bureau and Islami Bank Bangladesh Ltd.

He was also Chairman of the Institute of Research and Development (IRD); Chairman of Islamic Banks' Consultative Forum (IBCF); Founder Member of Central Shariah Board of Islamic Banks; Chairman, Ibn Sina Trust; Chairman, Manarat Dhaka International School and College; Member, Association of Correction and Social Reclamation, Bangladesh (ACSRB).

May Almighty Allah rest his soul in peace in heaven.

ICC Bangladesh News

ICC Bangladesh- UNICEF Webinar on Demographic Dividend in Bangladesh: Role of Private Sector Businesses suggested to invest in children

ICC Bangladesh and the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) Bangladesh jointly organized a webinar on The Demographic Dividend in Bangladesh: Role of Private Sector in Dhaka virtually on 15 June. The main objectives of the webinar were to sensitise the private sector about the urgency of the demographic dividend status that Bangladesh is experiencing, to take urgent actions about it and the role of the private sector in mitigating against these challenges going forward.

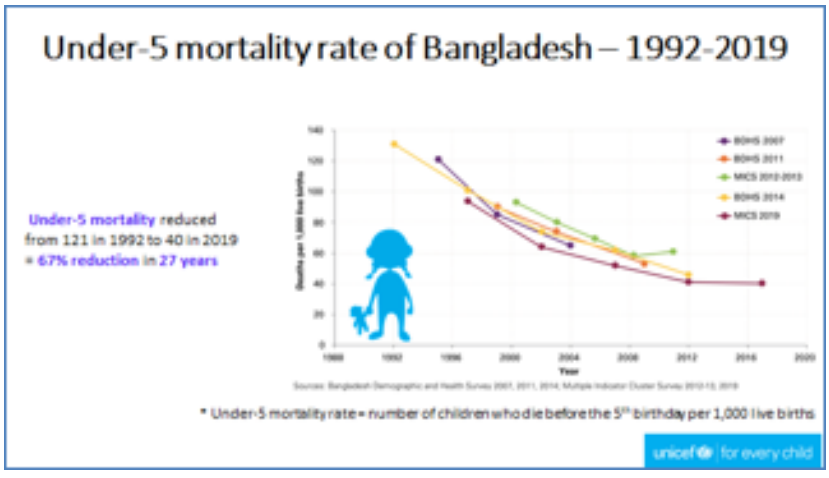
Moderated by ICC Bangladesh President Mahbubur Rahman, UNICEF Bangladesh Representative Tamoo Hozumi made the keynote presentation on "Paying Forward and Investing in Children Now". The panellists were Syed Manzur Elahi, Chairman, Apex Footwear Limited; Mrs. Rokia Afzal Rahman, Vice President, ICC Bangladesh; Mr. Md. Jashim Uddin, President , The Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FBCCI) & Chairman, Bengal Commercial Bank; Mr. Mahbubul Alam, President, Chittagong Chamber of Commerce & Industry (CCCI); Barrister Ms. Nihad Kabir, President, Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce & Industry (MCCI), Dhaka; Mr. Faruque Hassan, President, Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers & Exporters Association (BGMEA) and Mr. Rizwan Rahman, President, Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry (DCCI).

In his welcome remarks, ICC Bangladesh President Mahbubur Rahman underscored the need for investing in children in all earnestness to equip and make them capable of facing the future challenges. "Particularly health, nutrition and education along with other economic sectors seem to be crucial to prioritize our investment in a time-sensitive manner," he said and observed that demographic changes - rapid ageing of the population and a shrinking demographic window of opportunity - necessitated prioritized investment in today's children.

The investment needs to be made "as an act of paying forward to future generations who will develop the country and support the ageing society", Mr. Rahman said. He mentioned that it is worth noting this priority is aligned with the Government's 8th five-year plan (2020-2025) which also underscored the need for the same. "The private sector as the prime mover of the country's economy has a critical role to play in this regard," he said. Referring to available data, Mr. Rahman said Bangladesh will become an aging society by 2029 which means very little time is in hand to take actions. He also emphasised on the need for curriculum reforms and policy cooperation to take it forward, proper training of teachers, using technologies as required, and investing adequately to bring about the changes and reap the benefit of demographic dividend.



Mr. Tamoo Hozumi in his presentation shared the findings of a recent UNICEF report and outlined demographic changes and trends in Bangladesh as well as their policy implications.

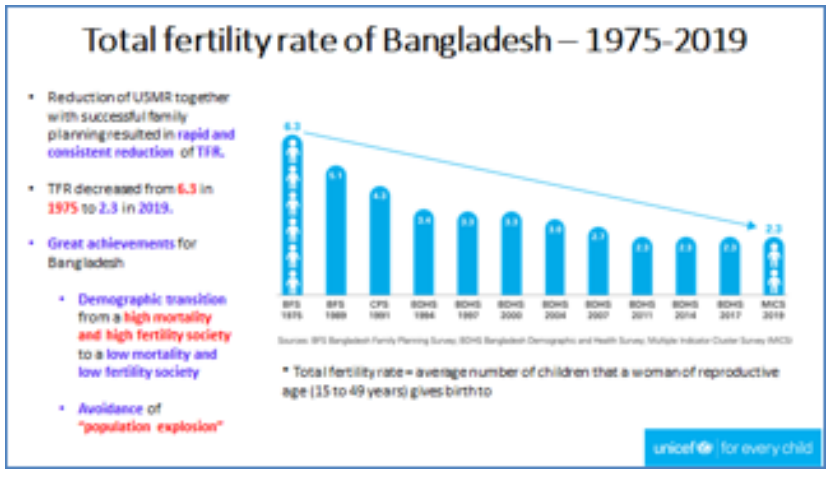


The presentation highlighted the progress that Bangladesh has made on multiple social development indicators. Special note was the 67% reduction of the under-5 mortality rate over a 27-year period and the rapid, but consistent, reduction of total fertility rate from 6.3 in 1975 to 2.3 in 2019. These improvements have caused a demographic transition in Bangladesh from a high mortality and high fertility society to a low mortality and low fertility society.

On the next challenges Mr. Hozumi said that while the trends noted are positive, they present a new challenge—namely, how to cope with the process of rapid demographic changes. Using Japan as a comparison point, he mentioned two challenges, namely (i) the population is aging at a rapid speed, and (ii) the remainder of the demographic window of opportunity is short.

There is an 18-year transitory period during which Bangladesh will transition from being an aging society (2029) to an aged society (2047). Notably, Bangladesh needs to be prepared for the challenges of an aged society in a shorter amount of time than many more industrialized nations (e.g. Bangladesh must prepare for the challenges of an aged society in 1/6th of the time France historically had to prepare for the same thing).

The demographic window of opportunity is the period of a country's history where the size of the working population (15-64 years) in particularly prominent within the total population—both in terms of absolute number and percentage. As such, this window is a sweet spot for economic development. Referring to the report UNICEF Representative said that unfortunately, Bangladesh is reaching the end of its demographic window of opportunity. (The country passed 78% of the 55 year-long window in 2021). Additionally, the number of working-age persons supporting one old age person is rapidly decreasing. Whereas about 20 people would support one senior dependent in 1960, 13 people supported one senior dependent in 2020. It is projected that by 2060, three working age people will be supporting one senior dependent, UNICEF representative said.



Given the challenges, continued growth and development can only be sustained if today's children become 2-4x more productive than today's adults by the time they become adults themselves. Today's children will be required to take care of a much higher proportion of senior dependents while also continuing to develop the country on a sustainable basis. It is critical that Bangladesh makes highly prioritized and time-sensitive investments in today's children while the country's demographic window of opportunity is still open, he said quoting the report.

UNICEF Representative Mr. Hozumi said Bangladesh has started enjoying the window of opportunity in the form of raising proportion of workable population from 1978, but it is expected to decline from 2033. "So there is not much time left." He said that investing in children is not a matter of charity or adding a soft side to the economic development, but it is fundamental for the country's sustainable development. "If we expect our children to take care of ourselves in our old age and continue to develop the country in the future, we need to invest in them today so that they can be equal to the challenge they need to face," Mr. Hozumi added.

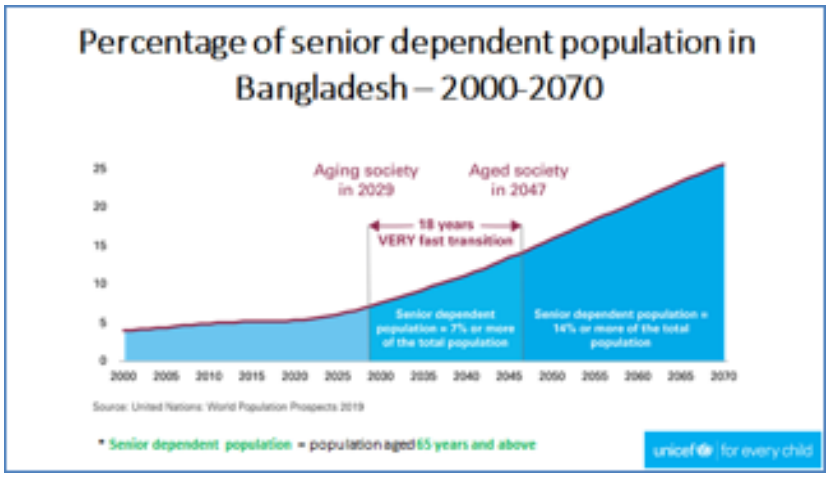
Mr. Tomoo Hozumi concluded his presentation saying that at present, Bangladesh falls significantly below

global averages for government/ public expenditure on health and education. Investing in children today is fundamental for the country's sustainable development and a way of "paying it forward". Policies like Universal Health Coverage, Universal Child Benefits, and Universal Early Childhood Care and Development have proven effective for this purpose and should be seriously considered. Because the number of children being born has started to decrease, it is possible for the government to make more significant investments on a per child basis within the given fiscal space.

The panelists underlined the need for investing in children in a highly-prioritized and time-sensitive manner to reap the benefits of demographic dividend. Such investment, they said, would help make today's children far more productive. They pointed out priority areas like health, nutrition, education, WASH, social and child protection where massive investment is needed to make the children far more productive than today's adults to take care of the higher proportion of aged people and develop the country on a sustainable basis.

Chairman of Apex Footwear Limited Syed Manzur Elahi said the government needed money to ensure welfare and increase productivity of the people. "But wherefrom the government would get money? Therefore GDP must grow." He said that there are three levels of education - primary, secondary and tertiary. "The quality of education in the primary level is very poor. Primary level is very important for a nation because that is where the foundation is laid," he said. If the quality of education in the primary level is poor, the secondary level will also be poor. So investing in children in primary level is very important for the government and "I am sure the government knows it well", he said. Drawing attention on the issue of governance, Syed Manzur Elahi said that the government definitely spends a lot of money on education and health. "But what is about the governance? Money is given there, but capacity to absorb the money has to be there too," he added. "If we don't improve the quality of investment in our children, especially in the primary and middle levels, the future of the country is not good," he added.

ICC Bangladesh Vice President Rokia Afzal Rahman said the private sector has the role to play to grow children in a healthy and effective manner and make them productive and good citizen in the future. "More specifically, Bangladesh needs to invest substantially more in children on a priority basis now," she said, adding that particularly areas like health, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene, education including early childhood development should be given top priority. She observed that historically Bangladesh as a country has been showing overall low level of investment in social sector like health and education compared to global averages. "This makes it very crucial for the country to review the situation quickly and increase a level of resource allocation and utilization" she said.

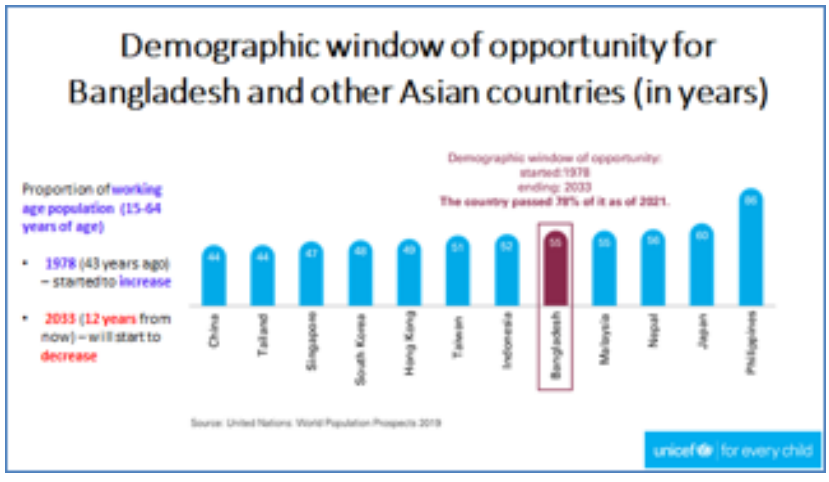


FBCCI President Md. Jashim Uddin said the budgetary allocations for health and education as percentage of GDP are 2.00 and 0.9 per cent respectively. "We need to improve our investment in these key areas. We need to make partnership with the government and development partners to drive private sector integrated investment to these areas," he said and suggested that the existing education system should be aligned with the demand of the job markets, and participation of the private sector is also important here.

CCCI President Mahbubul Alam said the main objective of Bangladesh in next 20 years should be creating a diversified pool of workforce who can contribute to both technical and managerial levels as well as innovation. To achieve the target, the private sector needs to join hands with the government to act as the opportunity does not come often, he said, giving examples of South Korea, Singapore and Thailand about how the demographic dividend can be best utilized. Of the total employment, around 80 per cent are engaged in the informal sector, which is not secured and their income growth is unsettled while interest of the young generation in agriculture keeps declining gradually, CCCI President said. "This is because of the lack of job opportunities as the investment in the formal sector is in slow growth," he said. For taking advantage of the demographic dividend, Mr. Alam underlined two key components - increasing investment in the formal sector to create jobs and transforming the young population into a skilled human capital.

MCCI President Barrister Nihad Kabir said the allocation for the development of country's young population is growing slowly.

However, she said. "Quality of the expenditure particularly in the education sector is important - that needs a tectonic shift". Barrister Nihad Kabir also underscored the need for changing the mindset of both adults and young population to cope with the changes in the notion of employment. Stressing on the need for taking prompt actions, she said education, training, skills development, youth engagement, youth employment and entrepreneurship should be focused. "I must put emphasis on the need to build the capacity of teachers, trainers considering the future need," she added.



BGMEA President Faruque Hassan emphasized the need for 'proactive use' of human resources in 'optimum and pragmatic' ways. "If we look at the demographic profile of Bangladesh, we can say that we are now passing through a golden age in terms of population," he said, adding that around 62.1 million people are actively participating in labour force and every year 2.0 million more are joining them. "We need to create decent employment for them. If we cannot utilize these labour forces at optimum level, we will not be able to reap the benefit of demographic dividend," said Mr. Hassan. In many cases, he said, it was noticed that a graduate professional cannot perform as expected and needed long-term on the job training. "This reflects a gap between industry and education which needs to be addressed." He suggested that FBCCI and BGMEA should work together to improve the skills of millions of youths so they could be employed in the future.

DCCI President Rizwan Rahman said that it seems Bangladesh is now at the midpoint of the demographic dividend period. So, he observed that it's high time to act faster in line with the target to become a developed and knowledge-based country by 2041, keeping in mind the ageing problem. He said the inclusion of private sector into the government's activities meant for reaping demographic dividend is vital. "To capitalize on the demographic dividend, emphasis should be given on the increase of social infrastructure," he said. Bangladesh must make and prioritize time-sensitive investment particularly in healthcare, nutrition, water, hygiene, outcome-based and research-oriented education, said Mr Rahman.

Mr. Rizwan Rahman felt that the government should collaborate with the private sector to enhance country's average human resource productivity, while UNICEF could facilitate the process. Highlighting the need for taking time-befitting activities and programmes, he said: "The government also needs to take additional national programmes in partnership with the private sector for up-skilling, reskilling and to train the existing labour force to increase the productivity and orienting them with the fourth industrial revolution." He said the pandemic has starkly drawn attention to the necessity of rapid digitalization. "This can help Bangladesh sustain its economic growth and reap the benefits of demographic dividend," he said, elaborating the role of digitalization for stronger connectivity between urban and rural areas. A systematic policy shift is also required for the whole process related to the use of demographic dividend, and it might turn into a disaster unless duly addressed, DCCI President said.

UNICEF Representative Mr. Hozumi thanked ICC Bangladesh President Mahbubur Rahman for jointly hosting the webinar. He also appreciated the suggestions made by the business leaders and thanked them for their participation. In his concluding remarks, he reiterated the need for Bangladesh to diversify its industrial base, increase the productivity of its work force, and climb the ladder of the international value chain so it does not get stuck in the middle-income trap. He highlighted the proven ROI in investing in children and acknowledged the central role of the private sector by appealing to them to continue supporting and advocating for privatized investment in human resources and skills development (both technical and transferable).

ICC Bangladesh Vice President A.K Azad thanked UNICEF Representative Mr. Hozumi for his excellent and elaborate presentation on this very vital sector of Bangladesh. Mr. Azad said that being an important segment of human capital development, healthcare sector needed more attention. He also underscored the need for taking more initiative to improve the quality of education and develop the skill level, making them available in every parts of the country. He further suggested that chambers of commerce and industry should support government in setting up appropriate technical colleges to cater to the need of job market. He thanked the business leaders for their valuable suggestions and willingness to work together with the government in addressing the issues raised by Mr. Hozumi. "We need to do something for society", Mr Azad said.

New Presidents of FBCCI, BGMEA and CCCI



Md. Jashim Uddin
FBCCI President

Mr. Md. Jashim Uddin has been elected as the President of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) for the 2021-23 tenure.

Mr. Uddin is a Vice Chairman of Bengal Group of Industries, Bengal Media Corporation Limited (Rtv) and Chairman of Bengal Commercial Bank Limited; Desh General Insurance Company Ltd.(DGIC) and sponsor shareholder of Meghna Bank Ltd. He is the President of Bangladesh Plastic Goods Manufacturers & Exporters Association (BPGMEA).

Mr. Jashim Uddin obtained his Bachelor of Commerce Degree under Chittagong University and started his business career in 1983 as a Director of Bengal Group of Industries. The Group is made up of a number of different industries that operate in diversified fields like banking, plastic processing, chemicals, food processing, trading, and cast polyester technology.

For his remarkable contribution in the economy, the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) has awarded him Commercially Important Person (CIP).



Faruque Hassan
BGMEA President

Mr. Faruque Hassan has been elected as the President of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) for the year 2021-2023.

Mr. Hassan is the Managing Director of Giant Textiles Limited. He served BGMEA as Director for two consecutive tenures 2001-2002 and 2003-2004; Vice President for two consecutive terms from 2009-2010, 2011-2012. He also served as BGMEA Senior Vice-President from 22nd September 2015 before being elected as BGMEA President. He started his business career in 1982 and became a leading business figure in the garment industry.

Mr. Hassan also served as President of Dutch Bangla Chamber of Commerce & Industry (DBCCI) and Vice President of the French Chamber. He was also involved in the German and Switzerland Chambers in Bangladesh. He is the Honorary Consul General of Greece in Bangladesh.

He is the Co-Chair of the Steering Committee of Partnership for Cleaner Textile (PACT) project jointly implemented by International Finance Corporation (IFC) & BGMEA. PACT is continuously working to reduce the water footprint in the Textile processing industries making the textile industry environment friendly and sustainable. He is also a member of the steering committee of WRG 2030 (World Bank Group). Mr. Hassan obtained his M.Com (Management) Degree from Dhaka University in 1984.



Mahbubul Alam
CCCI President

Mr. Mahbubul Alam, Chairman of M Alam Group, has been re-elected as the President of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) for the fifth consecutive time for 2021-22 and 2022-23 period.

Mr. Alam was Vice President of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FBCCI), Vice President of Conferderation of Eastern Chambers of Commerce & Industries, India. He is the Chairman of Diamond Life Insurance Company Limited ; Vice Chairman of Bengal Commercial Bank Limited and Chairman of J M Agro Fisheries.

Mr. Alam obtained B.A (Hons.) and Masters Degree in Sociology from University of Chittagong in the year 1979 and 1980 respectively. He started his business after completion of his education and established himself as successful entrepreneur. His business affiliation includes life and non-life Insurance, Steel Industry, Agro & Fisheries and Trading of various commodities.

Mahbubur Rahman: reappointed as Arbitrator of CIETAC for another five years



Mr. Mahbubur Rahman, President, International Chamber of Commerce-Bangladesh and the founding Chairman of Bangladesh International Arbitration Centre (BIAC) has recently been reappointed as an Arbitrator to continue for another 5 years to the prestigious Panel of Arbitrators of the China International Economic and Trade Arbitration Commission (CIETAC), a well known arbitral institution in the world. He is the first and only Bangladeshi Arbitrator to the CIETAC Panel since 2017.

Mr. Rahman was pivotal in establishing BIAC in 2004 to cater to the need of businesses in Bangladesh to resolve commercial and business disputes outside court in an expeditious and cost effective manner through Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) methods including arbitration and mediation. BIAC started operation in April 2011 and has so far been the only registered ADR institution in the country.

The China International Economic and Trade Arbitration Commission (CIETAC) is a permanent international commercial arbitration institution which independently and impartially resolves international and cross border economic and trade disputes by arbitration. Established by the Central Government of China in 1956 and based in Beijing, CIETAC is the oldest and largest arbitration institution in China. Recently CIETAC set up the North America Arbitration Center in Vancouver, Canada and the Europe Arbitration Centre in Vienna, Austria.

ICC Bangladesh President participate at ICC World Council held virtually

ICC World Council Meeting was held virtually on 10 June. Delegates from almost all the NCs including ICC Bangladesh President Mahbubur Rahman and Secretary General Ataur Rahman attended



Partial view of the participants

the Meeting. ICC Chair Ajay Banga delivered his welcome address and ICC Secretary General John Denton presented the ICC Report.

The Meeting approved the appointment of President and Vice Presidents of the ICC Court of Arbitration; Court Members and three Members of the ICC Executive Board.

Ms. Claudia Salomon has been elected as the President of the Court of Arbitration. Ms. Salomon is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators. She is a member of the New York bar and a solicitor in England and Wales. She Graduated from Harvard Law School, cum laude, and Brandies University, summa cum laude with honors. She also studied at Somerville College, Oxford University.

Mr. A.F. Hassan Ariff, Former Attorney General of Bangladesh has been appointed as a Member of the Court.

The new Executive Board Members of ICC are: Ms. Coutinho Marienne, KPMG in Brazil, Partner, KPMG IMPACT Global Council, Women Corporate Directors in Brazil; Ms. Alison Rose, Chief Executive NatWest Group plc, UK and Mr. Ralph Mupita, Group President and Chief Executive Officer, MTN Group, South Africa.

The out-going President of ICC International Court of Arbitration Alexis Mourre presented a report on the activities of the Court. Mr. Hamad Buamim, Chair of World Chambers Federation present the report on the activities of the ICC World Chambers Federation.The Council approved the ICC audited accounts for 2020 and also other items of the Agenda. The next ICC World Council Meeting will be held on 15 June 2022, in Mexico.

Participation at ICC Global Briefing with new WTO Director General Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala

The new WTO Director –General Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala briefed members of the ICC global network virtually from Geneva on 3 June. This is her first major address to global business since taking up the role on 1 March. ICC Secretary General John Denton welcomed and introduced the new DG .

Welcoming Director General Okonjo-Iweala and ICC Secretary General John W.H Denton acknowledged the difficulties faced by the WTO in recent years, but said he was optimistic for the organization's future under Dr. Okonjo-Iweala's leadership.

The exclusive global briefing was attended by around 2,000 Members of ICC Network from 120 countries and provided an opportunity to highlight the eagerness of business to help build and engage with WTO. ICC Bangladesh was represented by Secretary General Ataur Rahman.

Director General Okonjo-Iweala set out her vision for the future of the global trade body – expressing a desire for it to do more to engage with external stakeholders including the private sector.

"ICC has such a long history of excellent work in international trade and investment," she said. "The rules we deal with at the WTO have a direct impact on businesses ability to move goods and services across borders and tap into global markets. You the business community can help us understand what is working well and what is not."



WTO DG Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala and ICC SG John W.H Denton

Both leaders discussed a wide range of areas in which multilateral trade policy has a key role to play in solving complex global challenges, including vaccine nationalism, fractured supply chains, fisheries stocks, and environmental sustainability. Mr Denton also underscored the important role that the WTO can play in enabling a resilient and durable global recovery for Covid-19.

"I've had the opportunity of working with the Dr.Ngozi in recent weeks in the context of intergovernmental discussions on speeding access to Covid-19 vaccines – an issue on which we believe the WTO has a vital role to play," said Mr. Denton. "The health of the multilateral trading system — and the WTO itself — is, without doubt, an issue of prime importance for ICC and the global business community," he said.

"There is no doubt that under Dr. Nogzi's leadership, the WTO has started to make change in the right direction. I commit business to supporting this change and encourage members to accelerate the pace of WTO reform in the coming months," he said.

Mr Denton committed to mobilising global business leaders ahead of the WTO's 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) in November this year at which ICC will play a major role

at a dedicated Business Forum. The briefing took place just weeks ahead of a virtual trade dialogue with business leaders being held in conjunction with WTO and the Business-20.

Meeting of Permanent Heads of ICC National Committees attended by ICC Bangladesh Secretary General

ICC Secretary General John W.H Denton briefed the Meeting about steps taken by ICC's COVID-19 response: Global mobility, vaccine strategy, and economic growth; virtual meeting with WTO Director General, network development, New Engagement Models (Central Asia), Regional Economic Fora; ICC New Business Development and ICC's Strategic and Business Transformation Agenda. More than 100 representatives of ICC national committees from 68 countries, including ICC Bangladesh Secretary General Ataur Rahman attended the Meeting.

ICC International Court of Arbitration President Alexis Mourre, briefed about the activities and ICC Dispute Resolution Services: Recent developments and outlook. ICC Global Partnerships and Development Director Julian Kassum and Mary Kelly, NC and Membership Director presented an update on the utilization of NC Development Fund: Strengthening the NC network and the activities of NCs under the NC Development Fund.

Participation at ICC- UNICEF Asia-Pacific Briefing Session on COVID update

ICC Secretary General John W.H Denton and Paul Rutter, Regional Advisor for Health, UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia was held a webinar meeting on 1 June with the Secretary Generals of ICC National Committees of South Asia.

ICC Bangladesh Secretary General attended the meeting. They discussed as to what the business community can do now to help prepare for a wave of infection analogous to what India is sadly experiencing at the moment. The session covered the current situation in India and discussed about the latest projections on infection rates in neighboring countries as well as what measures can be taken by businesses to help guard against a surge in cases and support efforts to procure and deliver essential medical supplies in the coming weeks/months.

Executive Board Meeting held virtually decided to hold Annual Council on 11 July

The 82nd Meeting of ICC Bangladesh Executive Board was held virtually on 14 June. The Meeting presided over by ICC Bangladesh President Mahbubur Rahman and was attended by Vice Presidents Rokia Afzal Rahman, A.K.Azad and the following Board Members : Abdul Hai Sarker, Aftab ul Islam, Anwar-Ul-Alam Chowdhury (Parvez), Faruque Hassan, Kutubuddin Ahmed, Mahbubul Alam, Md. Fazlul Hoque, Mir Nasir Hossain, Md. Jashim Uddin, Mohammad Hatem, Rupali Chowdhury, Simeen Rahman, Sheikh Kabir Hossain, Tapan Chowdhury and Secretary General Ataur Rahman. DCCI President Rizwan Rahman also attended as special guest.



The Executive Board congratulated and welcomed the newly elected FBCCI President Md. Jashim Uddin, BGMEA President Faruque Hassan as Member of ICC Bangladesh Executive Board and also congratulated CCCI President Mahbubul Alam on his re-election. The Board decided to hold the 26th Annual Council virtually on 11 July, approved the Audited Accounts for 2020 for placing at the Annual Council for adoption, among other things. The Executive Board thanked BTMA President for contributing Tk.2.5 million at the meeting, part of the costs of furnishing ICC Bangladesh new office at Gulshan. The Executive Board also approved the following nomination of ICC Bangladesh to be Members of ICC HQs Policy Commissions.

ICC Bangladesh Members at ICC HQs Policy Commissions

Corporate Responsibility & Anti-Corruption
Rokia Afzal Rahman
Vice President
ICC Bangladesh
&
Chairman
Arlinks Limited

Banking Commission
Muhammad A. (Rumee) Ali
Chief Executive Officer
Bangladesh International Arbitration Centre (BIAC)
&
Chairman
AB Bank Ltd

Environment & Energy
Anwar-ul Alam Chowdhury (Parvez)
Managing Director
Evince Group

Competition
Mir Nasir Hossain
Managing Director
Mir Akhter Hossain Limited

Arbitration & ADR
Barrister Nihad Kabir
President
Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce & Industry (MCCI), Dhaka
&
Senior Partner
Syed Ishtiaq Ahmed & Associates

Digital Economy
Rizwan Rahman
President
Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry (DCCI)
&
Managing Director & CEO
ETBL Securities & Exchange Ltd.

Marketing & Advertising
A. K. Azad
Vice President
ICC Bangladesh
&
Managing Director
Ha-Meem Group

Taxation
Aftab-ul-Islam
Chairman
IOE (Bangladesh) Limited

Trade & Investment
Kutubuddin Ahmed
Chairman
Envoy Group

Customs & Trade Facilitation
Md. Fazlul Hoque
Managing Director
Plummy Fashions Limited

Intellectual Property
Barrister Nihad Kabir
President
Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce & Industry (MCCI), Dhaka
&
Senior Partner
Syed Ishtiaq Ahmed & Associates

Commercial Law & Practice
Barrister Fida Mohammad Kamal
Senior Advocate
Supreme Court of Bangladesh
&
Senior Partner
Fida M. Kamal & Associates

ICC HQs News

ICC, WTO, and ITC launch Digital Champions for Small Business competition

ICC joined the World Trade Organization (WTO) and International Trade Centre (ITC) on 25 June to launch the Digital Champions for Small Business initative.

The "Digital Champions for Small Business " initiative was launched at a joint event hosted by the WTO Informal Working Group on Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs), the International Trade Centre (ITC) and the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC). The aim of the initiative is to help small businesses go digital and increase their participation in international trade. Proposals on how to help MSMEs address the difficulties they face with digital trade should be submitted by 15 September 2021.

The initiative was announced at a virtual event attended by WTO Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, ICC Secretary General John Denton, ITC Secretary General Pamela Coke-Hamilton and Ambassador Jose-Luis Cancela, Coordinator of the Informal Working Group on MSMEs.

ICC-WTO Small Business Champions

Proposals are invited from industry associations, chambers of commerce and non-governmental organisations that are experienced in MSME and digitalization issues.

The winning proposals will be announced at the WTO's 12th Ministerial Conference to be held in Geneva from 30 November to 3 December 2021.

Awards will be tailored to the winning proposals. The number of awards will be determined based on the proposals received.

Incoterms® 2020 app gets makeover to enable traders worldwide

The International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) – the guardians and creators of the Incoterms® rules – has revamped its Incoterms® 2020 mobile app, making it more convenient and useful than ever.

The Incoterms® rules, the international language of traders worldwide, are the gold standard when it comes to B2B trade in goods across borders and domestically.



They are essential for creating B2B sale contracts and ensuring a smooth flow of goods while minimising risks involved in the transport and delivery process from sellers to buyers.

Since first launching in 2019, the Incoterms® 2020 app has been a vital tool for importers and exporters looking to keep up to date with the international trade terms, anytime, anywhere. But after 70,000 downloads and feedback from users around the world, the mobile tool has undergone a transformation to offer more information at the tap of a finger.

The go-to resource for anyone involved in B2B trade of goods has an all-new streamlined interface that makes it easier to understand which of the 11 Incoterms® rules to use and when.

With the new upgrade, users can expect to:

Browse in-depth descriptions of each of the rules; Access exclusive content only found on ICC's mobile app, including the introduction from our Incoterms® 2020 publication; Learn the do's and don'ts of the trade terms; Understand key differences between Incoterms® 2010 and Incoterms® 2020; Connect with ICC's global network of experts to access advice on the most pressing trade term questions; Discover podcasts featuring a range of professionals unveiling how the Incoterms® rules are used around the world; Shop and access free added resources to help traders work effectively.

Commenting on the launch of the new app, ICC Director of Trade and Investment Emily O'Connor said:

"ICC's top priority was to create a resource that made the Incoterms® rules easy to access and, more importantly, understandable for everyone. The new ICC Incoterms® 2020 app has a widened scope compared with its previous version. The update carries a number of intuitive features that users have

requested, making it even easier for them to interpret each of the 11 trade terms when conducting business, no matter where they are in the world."

To help ICC make business work for everyone, every day, everywhere, the app is available worldwide and completely free of charge. The app can be downloaded on any mobile device via the Apple App Store for iOS users or Google Play for Android users.

Trade defaults rise due to COVID-19 but overall performance not significantly out of line with longer-term range

ICC – along with partners Boston Consulting Group and Global Credit Data – has published interim findings from its Trade Register on the performance of short-term trade and supply chain finance assets from 2019 and 2020.

Preliminary analysis of the data for these assets has identified an increase in defaults across most trade finance products in 2020, which is likely at least in part attributable to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on economic activity – and related shifts in demand and supply.

However, whilst 2020 default rates are higher than recent years, they are not significantly out of line with the average default rates reported by the Trade Register over the 14-year period for which data has been collected.

The factors behind the performance of trade assets in 2020 will be explored in detail by this year's ICC Trade Register report, including an analysis of the likely "cushioning" impact of government economic support – such as, emergency state-backed lending.

At product level, a number of initial trends have been identified:

Import L/Cs: an observed increase in 2020 default rates appears skewed towards small and medium enterprises ("SMEs"). Obligor-weighted default rates overall rose by 40-50% versus the prior year – compared to more modest rises for transaction- and exposure-weighted default rates.

Export L/Cs: an increase in default rates is observed against prior years across all methodologies, likely influenced by one-off idiosyncratic defaults. Nevertheless, overall default rates for Export L/Cs continue to remain very low relative to other trade finance products.

Loans for Import / Export: it appears that increases in default rates were driven primarily by two or three large corporate exposures with a number of transactions across a cross-section of banks reporting data to the ICC Trade Register.

Performance Guarantees: default rates appear relatively flat, potentially influenced in part by contracting parties extending tenors due to the unprecedented nature of the crisis.

Supply Chain Finance: it appears that default rates have risen, driven primarily by an increase in smaller entity defaults across several regions, and potentially also the result of improved data coverage of Supply Chain Finance (SCF) exposures in the ICC Trade Register over time. Meanwhile, 2019 presented a more mixed picture, with the moderate increases across the portfolio vs. prior years likely driven by SME defaults – potentially indicating an emerging downturn in the economic cycle prior to the pandemic.



ICC has noted that these headline findings are based on an initial analysis of a partial data set – and, as such, should be treated with a degree of caution. ICC, BCG, and GCD teams are in the process of finalising and validating data submissions from member banks, with a view to publishing the final ICC Trade Register report in early September 2021.

A new operational model for the ICC Trade Register

Following consultation with member banks, ICC has also announced a change to the operating model of the initiative, in order to: (i) better differentiate its offering to members of the Trade Register; (ii) encourage more banks to submit data to; and (iii) ensure the long-term commercial viability of the programme.

The key details of the changes are as follows:

Participating member banks will receive enhanced outputs, including more granular data returns, dashboards, etc. Access to the detailed Trade Register Report will be made chargeable for non-participants (e.g. investors, non-member banks); a highly summarised (global default rates by product only) report will continue to be available publicly free of charge.

Pricing will be differentiated according to the size and nature of non-participants (e.g. commercial organisations vs. NGOs vs. academic / research institutions)

Weak G7 commitments on vaccines pose major downside risk to world economy

The International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) has issued a warning that G7 leaders risk imposing major costs to the global economy absent of a step-change in their approach to managing the Covid-19 pandemic.



Reports ahead of the Carbis Bay summit have indicated that the UK and the United States will pledge in the region of 600 million doses of proven vaccines to emerging economies over the next two years. But ICC – the institutional representative of more than 45 million businesses – has cautioned that these commitments still fall short of the major collaborative effort needed to lift the grip of the virus on the global economy.

ICC Secretary General John W.H. Denton AO said: "The signals from the UK and US ahead of the summit are most certainly welcome but, when viewed from a global perspective, little more than baby steps towards getting the spread of the virus under control.

"Simply put, the figures being quoted are a drop in the ocean set against anticipated global production of 12 billion doses of proven vaccines this year alone. We see a clear risk that the world's richest nations will continue to hoard vaccines for booster shots at home – in doing so, leaving their own citizens exposed to the boomerang effect of COVID-19 variants and the costs of continued disruption across global supply chains."

ICC has made a last ditch appeal to G7 leaders to commit to a clear and holistic road map to progressively bring the pandemic under control and get vaccines to everyone, everywhere.

Mr Denton added: "If the G7 wants to show real solidarity with the developing world there's an obvious place to start: a cast iron commitment this weekend to share all available excess supplies of vaccines and dismantle the trade barriers that continue to impact the supply of the tools needed to end the pandemic – including tests and treatments.

"This should be coupled with a clear commitment to provide up-front financing to support a further scaling of vaccine production capacity and accelerate roll-out across the developing world. The IMF has estimated that US$50 billion is required to do this – a minor investment compared to the potential returns from expeditiously defeating the pandemic."

The global business institution again cautioned on the downside risks to advanced economies of a prolonged pandemic – following on from the ICC study published in January that warned of possible losses of some US$4.5 trillion to the world's richest nations.

Mr Denton concluded: "G7 leaders are taking a huge gamble with their domestic economic fortunes if they fail to take concerted action to vaccinate the world. As demand rebounds in many western economies, we're already seeing damaging supply shortages in many important sectors – fueling domestic inflationary pressures. The only way for G7 governments to guarantee a durable economic recovery from the Covid-19 crisis is to invest in a major collaborative effort to vaccinate the world. The business cases for this is crystal clear."

ICC Trade Now to connect SMEs to innovative trade finance solutions

ICC has launched ICC Trade Now, a suite of digital products and services to tackle the global trade finance gap in all its breadth and complexity. Through tailored partnerships with cutting edge solution providers, ICC Trade Now will scale up trade finance solutions, empower small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and provide financiers with new investment opportunities.

International trade is a key driver of growth and innovation for SMEs worldwide – yet over 45% of SMEs see their requests for trade finance rejected and often struggle to find alternative sources of funding. Without adequate access to capital, SMEs are effectively cut off from international markets and unable to grow their operations to meet international demand.

Coupled with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, SMEs desperately need short-term liquidity and access to international trade to survive the ongoing economic crisis and thrive once the worst effects of the crisis have subsided. Building on extensive market research, ICC is taking bold action to ensure that SMEs worldwide have the right tools and access to capital to trade now. ICC Trade Now will connect SMEs to innovative service providers who can help finance their trade operations and seize new business opportunities globally

ICC Secretary General John W.H. Denton AO said: "Small businesses around the world continue to suffer from uncertain economic

conditions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. With credit conditions tightening, SMEs are in desperate need of solutions that will enable them to trade now. That's why ICC is leveraging our global network of 45 million businesses in over 100 countries to launch ICC Trade Now and connect small businesses with financial service providers. By working with trusted partners, ICC Trade Now will revitalize SMEs everywhere and enable them to lead for the long-term."

ICC Trade Now will bring together and offer a portfolio of solutions that can address the various facets of the trade finance gap. SMEs will be able to select the solution provider that is most aligned with their needs while a wide array of financiers will be able to leverage ICC Trade Now solution providers to service SMEs profitably. Three digital solutions – ICC TRADECOMM, TradeFlow Capital, and FQX – have already been announced under the ICC Trade Now campaign with more solutions expected to be added in 2021.

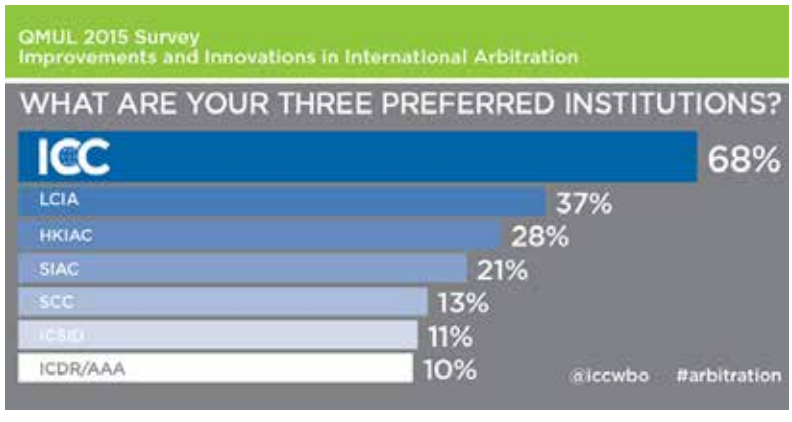
ICC TRADECOMM powered by Finastra will allow investors to finance trade transactions against title documents and equip SMEs with a broader set of solutions to mitigate perceived risk and the burden of compliance. TradeFlow Capital – developed in partnership with TradeFlow Capital Management – offers investors a non-credit approach based on direct ownership of the commodities and quick and low cost on-boarding of SMEs with full bank level KYC and AML checks. FQX is a blockchain-based digital infrastructure that enables the issuance, transfer and settlement of electronic promissory notes for obtaining and providing trade finance in 152 countries around the world.

Dr Victor K. Fung, Chairman of the Fung Group and Chair of ICC's Advisory Group on Trade Finance said: "In the current context of the COVID-19 pandemic, it's essential that SMEs receive secure lines of capital, so that they can trade in international markets and grow their operations. By fully leveraging the transformative power of digital technologies, ICC TRADE NOW will create more favorable conditions for banks and non-bank financiers to service SMEs profitably and establish conditions for a resilient economic recovery."

In the coming months, ICC will continue to de velop new solutions and initiatives to accelerate the provision of trade finance to SMEs. Urgent action is required to bridge the widening trade finance gap and ICC is determined to help SMEs access trade finance every day, everywhere.

ICC world's most preferred arbitral institute, global survey finds

ICC's reputation as the world's most preferred arbitral institute has been upheld in a major survey of arbitration professionals and users worldwide. The 2020 Survey by Queen Mary University, London in partnership with law firm White & Case, reveals that of all nominations received, ICC stands out once more as the most preferred institution among arbitration providers, including market leaders featured in the rankings who have led the field for well over a decade.



The survey rankings reflect ICC's standing as a truly global and independent institution with close to 100 years' experience in resolving commercial disputes, and a contemporary purpose to leverage dispute resolution to secure more widespread peace and prosperity.

Going from strength to strength, the ICC International Court of Arbitration revealed record Arbitration and ADR numbers in 2020, reflecting its continuing global expansion efforts. To facilitate the management of cases and ensure ease of access to the institution's trusted and reputed services, ICC today manages its growing arbitration caseload through 12 case management teams located on five continents – including most recently through a new case management office in Abu Dhabi Global Market, established in April 2020.

ICC Court President Alexis Mourre said: "ICC's global reputation as the world's preferred arbitral institute can be put down to the extensive experience we have accumulated as a result of resolving over 26,000 cases to date,

combined with an ability and agility to lead change in line with the needs of the parties as well as legislative and technological developments."

As the only arbitral forum truly independent from any singular legal culture or tradition, ICC enables parties and other users of arbitration to confidently resolve disputes through a diverse and complementary range of services. Having closed 2020 with a pending caseload amounting to an aggregate amount in dispute of US$ 258 billion – with the average amount in dispute in ICC cases at US$ 145 million – ICC has also gained a reputation as the leading provider of arbitration for large, complex, multi-party and multi-contract cases while also continuing to provide market leading services where smaller sums are in dispute.

Mr Mourre concluded: "Our global reputation as the world's preferred arbitral institution reflects the feedback received from arbitration users worldwide and we therefore take this opportunity to thank those who entrust the resolution of their dispute to ICC. Our ranking would not be made possible without the exemplary leadership and dedication of ICC Court members, the ICC Commission on Arbitration and ADR, our Institute of World Business Law and our regional groups and representatives.

We therefore thank them for their hard work and support in ensuring ICC Dispute Resolution Services continue to reach new heights and delivers on its mission to make dispute resolution work for everyone, everywhere."

ICC and WFP partner to mobilise the private sector in support of zero hunger around the globe

ICC and World Food Programme have launched a global partnership to engage the business community and foster strategic collaborations at regional and national levels in support of the Sustainable Development Goals, specifically Goal 2: Zero Hunger. Ending hunger and malnutrition are key to building life-long prosperity for all, which requires close collaborations between the private sector, national governments, local communities and organisations like WFP focused on sustainable development.

Representing 45 million companies across the world, ICC will leverage its broad network for knowledge-sharing and facilitate strategic partnerships with private sector companies at the global, regional and local levels. Working closely with governments and local communities in 88 countries, WFP will channel private sector expertise to build dynamic partnerships that can create systemic change together.

The partnership will also nurture strategic collaborations between ICC's worldwide network of chambers of commerce and WFP's regional offices to support future food delivery and emergency assistance operations. Through these national and regional networks, ICC and WFP will improve connections between private sector resources and development needs, share financial appeals, and provide sector-specific training programmes to local businesses.

As part of the partnership, ICC has appointed Ercole de Vito as ICC Food and Agriculture Lead for the UN Rome-based agencies to strengthen



engagement with WFP, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the International Fund for Agricultural Development. He also serves as Coordinator for the Master in Food Law and Master in Business and Company Law programmes at Luiss Guido Carli University.

ICC applauds the Biden Administration's commitment to cut emissions in half by 2030

ICC has issued the following statement in support of the Biden Administration's commitment to cut American greenhouse gas emissions in half by 2030.

ICC Secretary General John W.H. Denton AO said: "Tremendous to see the Biden Administration putting the United States at the forefront of the global effort to tackle climate



change. Those claiming that the plan will impose too great a cost on the American economy are, simply put, looking at this in the wrong way. Business knows full well that effects of climate change can't simply be wished away. Science tells us that ambitious action is needed.

The real challenge will be to design policies that work for and with Main

Street throughout the United States. The administration's target may be big – but the trick will be to 'think small' in shaping smart interventions that allow the millions of small businesses across America to reduce their emissions footprint without it impacting the health of their balance sheets."

Gulf of Guinea remains world's piracy hotspot in 2021, according to IMB's latest figures

The Gulf of Guinea accounted for nearly half (43%) of all reported piracy incidents in the first three months of 2021, according to the latest figures from the ICC International Maritime Bureau (IMB). IMB's latest global piracy report records 38 incidents since the start of 2021 – compared with 47 incidents during the same period last year. In the first three months of 2021, the IMB Piracy Reporting Centre (PRC) reported 33 vessels boarded, two attempted attacks, two vessels fired upon, and one vessel hijacked.



Despite a drop in the number of reported piracy incidents for Q1 2021, violence against crew is on the rise in comparison to previous years. Since the start of 2021, 40 crew have been kidnapped compared to 22 crew in Q1 2020. A crew member was also killed in Q1 2021.

The Gulf of Guinea continues to be particularly dangerous for seafarers with 43% of all reported piracy incidents occurring in the region. In addition, the region accounted for all 40 kidnapped crew incidents, as well as the sole crew fatality, according to IMB.

"Pirates operating within the Gulf of Guinea are well-equipped to attack further away from shorelines and are unafraid to take violent action against innocent crews" warns IMB Director Michael Howlett. "It's critical that seafarers remain cautious and vigilant when travelling in nearby waters and report all incidents to the Regional Authorities and the IMB PRC. Only improved knowledge sharing channels and increased collaboration between maritime response authorities will reduce the risk to seafarers in the region."

The furthest recorded kidnapping occurred on 11 March 2021 when pirates kidnapped 15 crew from a Maltese flagged Chemical Tanker, 212nm south of Cotonou, Benin. In another incident, a fishing vessel hijacked on 8 February 2021 was used by pirates as a mother vessel to facilitate other attacks.

The IMB PRC commends the Coastal response agencies and independent international navies tasked in the Region for actively responding to reported incidents and encourages their continued efforts in making the GoG waters safer for the seafarers.

During the first three months of 2021, there was only one incident of reported piracy around Somalia. A bulk carrier reported a skiff with armed persons and a ladder approaching it while underway in the Gulf of Aden. The onboard armed security team fired warning shots resulting in the skiff moving away.

Despite the decline of piracy incidents around Somalia and neighbouring waters, the IMB PRC encourages vessels to implement BMP5 recommended practices while transiting these waters as Somali pirates continue to possess the capacity to carry out attacks.

The Singapore Straits recorded six piracy incidents in Q1 2021 compared to five during the same period last year.

Although these incidents are opportunistic in nature, the IMB PRC warns that the perpetrators were armed with knives in some cases and that seafarers should remain vigilant when travelling through the region.

The information-sharing cooperation between the Indonesian Marine Police and the IMB PRC continues to produce positive results. During the first three months of 2021, only two anchored vessels were reported, in comparison to five in the same period last year.

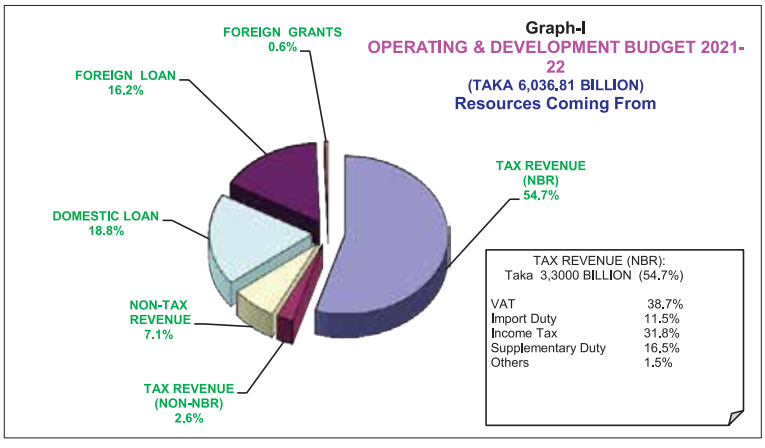
There has been an uptick of reported piracy incidents in Callao Anchorage, Peru with five incidents occurring in the first three months of 2021 compared to just three in Q1 2020.

Meanwhile, container vessels are the target of attacks while underway or at anchor in Colombian waters. Perpetrators have been known to open containers and steal cargoes even while vessels are under pilotage, according to the IMB PRC. Masters are encouraged to report all incidents in these waters.

Bangladesh Economy

Parliament approved Tk 6.03 trillion budget for FY22

Parliament approved Tk. 6.03 trillion national budget for FY22 aims to attain a 7.2% GDP growth by putting priority to the lives and livelihood of the country's people in tandem with development amid the Covid-19 pandemic. The national budget titled "Bangladesh Towards a Resilient Future Protecting Lives and Livelihoods" passed on 30 June.



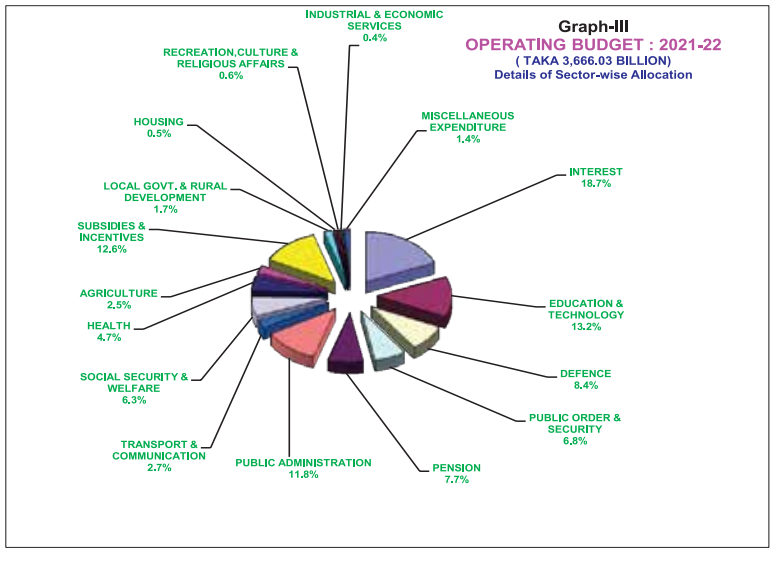
The budget size 17.5% of the GDP. Total allocation for operating and other expenditures has been set at Tk 3.78 trillion, while the allocation for the Annual Development Programme (ADP) is Tk 2.25 trillion. The overall budget deficit for FY22 will be Tk2.14 trillion, which is 6.2% of GDP while the budget deficit in the last fiscal year was 6.1%.

Out of the total deficit, Tk1.01 trillion will be financed from external sources, while Tk 1.13 trillion from domestic sources of which Tk .76 trillion will come from the banking system and Tk .37 trillion from savings certificates and other non-bank sources.

The growth rate for FY22 has been fixed at 7.2% remaining consistent with the government's long-term plan and taking the post Covid-19 recovery situation into account. The inflation rate during this period is expected to remain within 5.3%.

Earlier, on 3 June the finance minister in his 192-page budget speech highlighted various steps of the government to mitigate the shocks from the Covid-19 and the way forward to a sustainable economic recovery. With giving utmost priority to the programmes and steps taken by the government to address the Covid-19 pandemic, the government also allocated Tk .32 trillion for the health and family welfare sector, which was Tk .29 trillion in FY21.

Considering the impact of the pandemic, the government has made allocation of Tk1.07 trillion in the social safety net sector, which is 17.83% of the budget and 3.11% of the GDP. The government has set the target for total revenue income in the FY22 at Tk 3.89 trillion, which is 11.3% of the GDP. Out of this, Tk. 3.30 trillion will be collected through the NBR sources



Hasina calls for global climate plan with $100bn in annual fund

Developed countries should draw an immediate action plan to reduce their carbon emissions and keep the global temperature rise at 1.5 degrees Celsius, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said. The developing nations should also focus on mitigation measures, Hasina said in her address to the virtual Leaders Summit on Climate, hosted by US President Joe Biden on 22 April. An annual target of $100 billion should be ensured and balanced 50:50 between adaptation and mitigation measures with special attention to the vulnerable communities while pursuing loss and damage, Hasina suggested. “Major economies,

international financial institutions and private sectors should come forward for concessional climate financing as well as innovation and focus is needed on green economy and carbon-neutral technologies with the provision of technology transfer among nations."

Hasina thanked Biden for convening the summit and appreciated the United States' return to the Paris Climate Agreement. Despite being a climate vulnerable country with resource constraints, Bangladesh has emerged as a global leader in adaptation and mitigation, Hasina said, highlighting that Bangladesh spends about $5 billion every year on climate adaptation and resilience-building measures.

The Rohingya refugee crisis, with 1.1 million members of the ethnic minority who have taken shelter in Bangladesh after being displaced forcefully from Myanmar, has however "worsened our vulnerability", she said. Now Bangladesh is pursuing a low carbon development path, the prime minister said.



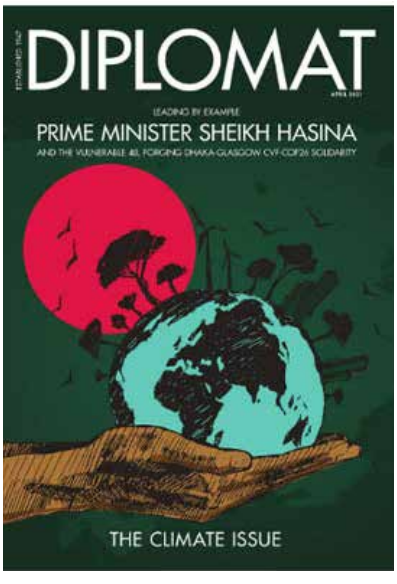
To raise the country's Nationally Determined Contribution, or NDC, and adaptation ambition, the government has included new sectors in addition to the existing energy, industry and transport sectors in the mitigation process.

She noted that the government is planting 30 million saplings nationwide and adopted "Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan" to achieve low carbon economic growth, as Bangladesh observes "Mujib Year", marking the birth centenary of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

She also said that Bangladesh's key focus is to uphold the interests of the climate vulnerable countries and it is hosting the South Asian regional office of the Global Centre on Adaptation which is promoting locally-led adaptation solutions.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina stressed unlocking carbon markets to ensure climate justice

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has underscored the need for unlocking the carbon markets to ensure climate justice alongside finding solution to the losses and damages caused by natural calamities. She came up



with the importance in her article headlined "Forging Dhaka-Glasgow CVF-COP26 Solidarity" written in famous Diplomat magazine.

The magazine in its April, 2021 issue carried the article where Sheikh Hasina also urged all to take a united stand to effectively fight the war against nature. In the article she wrote, "We want to see international carbon markets unlocked for transnational climate cooperation and solutions found to our profound loss, damage and climate injustice."

Sheikh Hasina, also the incumbent president of the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF), said that like Bangladesh, every CVF nation has an irreversible climate loss and damage story to tell. "But they contributed little to global emissions. It is time to address this climate injustice," she continued. Calling upon all to remain united in the war against nature, the prime minister said, "In our war against nature, we'll lose unless we unite."

PM said that humans are consciously destroying the very support systems that are keeping us alive. "What planet shall we leave for the Greta Thunbergs or those at the Bangladesh Coastal Youth Action Hubs? At COP26 we must not fail them," she said.

She went on saying, "We want to see climate financing unleashed, not only towards a low-carbon economy, but also for the promised $100 billion, and 50% dedicated to climate resilience building." To this end, she added that the CVF represents over one billion of the world's most vulnerable communities, whose very survival is threatened by the slightest sea level rise, frequent hurricanes or rapid desertification.

She mentioned that for Bangladesh, often referred to as the 'ground zero' of natural disasters, climate change is a survival battle braved by millions of our resilient people whose homes, lands and crops are

lost to the recurring wrath of nature. The premier in her write up also said every year, 2% of a country's GDP is lost to extreme climate events, adding that by the turn of the century, it will be 9%.

By 2050, more than 17% of its coastlines will go underwater displacing 30 million, she continued. She said six million Bangladeshis have already become climate displaced and yet the country continues to bear the 1.1 million Rohingyas from Myanmar at the cost of environmental havoc in Cox's Bazar. "Who will pay for this loss and damage?" she questioned.

Bangladesh GDP growth 2nd-best in South Asia

The World Bank has upgraded Bangladesh's GDP growth forecast for this fiscal year by 2 percentage points to 3.6 percent, making it the second best-performing economy in South Asia behind the Maldives.

In fiscal 2020-21, neighbouring India's economy is forecasted to contract by 7.3 percent, while Pakistan will register a GDP growth of 1.3 percent, according to the World Bank 'Global Economic Prospects', which was released on 8 June.

The improved GDP growth forecast for this fiscal year is still lower than the government's target of 6.1 percent, which is closer to the Asian Development Bank's forecast of 5.5-6 percent. Recoveries in Bangladesh and Pakistan face new headwinds from a recent rise in COVID-19 cases accompanied by rising restrictions to stamp out the new surge, it said, adding that mobility around places of work and retail has again dropped below pre-pandemic levels.

Subsequently, the Bangladesh economy is forecasted to grow at 5.1 percent in the next fiscal year that begins in July up by 1.7 percentage points from its forecast earlier in January but once again lower than the government's target of 7.2 percent. "In Bangladesh, the recovery is expected to be gradual."

Private consumption, the main engine of growth, will lead the recovery and will be supported by normalising activity, moderate inflation and rising garment exports, it said. In fiscal 2022-23, Bangladesh's GDP is forecasted to grow at 6.2 percent, behind India and the Maldives in South Asia.

Per capita income losses will not be unwound by 2022 for about two-thirds of emerging market and developing economies.

Among low-income economies, where vaccination has lagged, the effects of the pandemic have reversed poverty reduction gains and aggravated insecurity and other long-standing challenges.

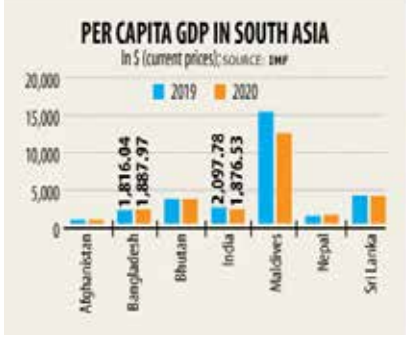
"While there are welcome signs of global recovery, the pandemic continues to inflict poverty and inequality on people in developing countries around the world," said David Malpass, the WB Group president.

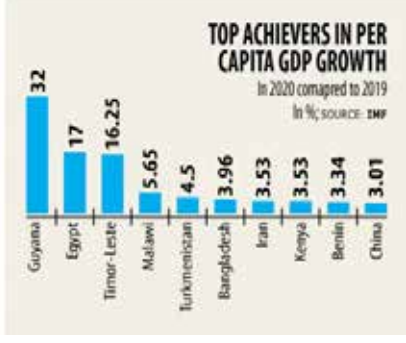
Per capita income: Bangladesh surpasses India

Bangladesh, which outpaced India in many indices of economic or human development, has surpassed its giant neighbour on per capita income. "Once described as a bottomless basket by US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, Bangladesh is fast emerging as a bull economy, outpacing giant neighbour India in many indices of economic or human development," The Tribune says citing Indian newswire IANS.

Planning Minister MA Mannan informed the cabinet that the per capita income of Bangladesh has now increased from $2,064 to $2,227. Bangladesh's per capita income is now $280 higher than India's $1,947. In 2007, the per capita income of Bangladesh was half of that of India but it will overtake the giant neighbour in per capita GDP once again in 2025 if IMF's latest World Economic Outlook is to be believed.

But what pleases Bangladeshis more is that they have left Pakistan far behind—a sort of sweet revenge for the genocide of 1971 in which three million Bengalis died and quarter of a million women were dishonored by the brutal Pakistan army trying to suppress the Bengali liberation struggle.





Source : The Financial Express

Economic Recovery: Bangladesh leads the way in South Asia, said IMF

Despite the recent spike in Covid-19 infections, South Asia excluding India is recovering, led by Bangladesh, due to higher-than-expected exports and remittances, the International Monetary Fund said on 13 April. The lender revised its GDP projection for Bangladesh to 5 percent in 2021, up from its October last year's projection of 4.4 percent.

The nation's economy is expected to grow 7.5 percent the next year, said the IMF at its Spring Meetings which took place virtually. With a remittance income of $18.60 billion, the country recorded 35 percent year-on-year spike in remittances in the first nine months of the current fiscal year, according to Bangladesh Bank data. .

While the overall export remained slightly below the last year's level in July-March period of the current fiscal year, shipment soared by 13 percent year-on-year to $3.7 billion from a year ago, shows data of Export Promotion Bureau (EPB). The IMF said the pandemic has resulted in unprecedented output losses in the Asia-Pacific region.

"Losses varied widely across economies as a function of the stringency and effectiveness of containment policies; dependence on tourism and contact-intensive services; and the degree of policy support. Some of the Pacific Island countries have been among the worst affected," said Deputy Director of IMF's Asia and Pacific Department Jonathan D Ostry at a press briefing.

The IMF said although a recovery is now underway, and the pandemic is receding in some countries, elsewhere, second or third waves of infections are raging, notably in India and some of the ASEAN economies. "Outlooks in the Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka are affected by weak tourism and limited policy space," said Ostry. The IMF predicted that regional growth would be just above 7.5 percent this year.

Jonathan said recovery in Asia depends on a smooth handoff from public support to private demand. "After the historically unprecedented stimulus in 2020, fiscal policy in the region is expected to continue to do its part this year, with the fiscal stance remaining supportive in the region," he said. The IMF suggested accommodative fiscal support, targeted towards vulnerable groups, until private demand recovers.

Source : The Daily Star

Exports grow 15% amid pandemic in 2020-21 fiscal

Bangladesh has earned more than $38.75 billion from exports with a 15.1 percent growth in FY21 during the coronavirus pandemic. Although the country missed the target by 5.5 percent, the growth has ignited hopes among the exporters with the factories open amid a nationwide lockdown to curb a surge in deadly infections.

After the pandemic hit exports in a locked down world in the second half of 2019-20, the entire FY21 went through the pandemic crisis, with much of it in efforts to recover from the effects of the outbreak.

The readymade garment industry, which makes up more than 80 percent of the total exports, has posted a 12.55 percent growth by covering the losses in past few months, but the exports from the sector is still 7.84 percent behind the pre-pandemic level of 2018-19. Bangladesh's export earnings in June were $3.67 billion, a rise of 31.77 percent from the same month last year, according to latest data released by the Export Promotion Bureau on 5 July.



The contribution of the RMG sector to exports dropped to 81.16 percent in the last fiscal year from 84.2 percent in 2018-19. The BGMEA president said it also augurs well for diversification of products, pointing out that jute, home textile and leather industries posted robust growths.

$7.5m Covid-19 response fund launched for private enterprises

The Ministry of Commerce and World Bank on 18 April unveiled a $7.5 million Covid-19 response fund to aid private enterprises in procuring plant equipment, as well as produce medical and personal protective equipment (PPE) in the country. As a result, local entrepreneurs will get grants for manufacturing

Covid-19 protective equipment to tap the huge potentials of domestic and international markets under the Covid-19 Enterprise Response Fund (CERF).

Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi attended the virtual launching of the fund as the chief guest, while Prime Minister's Private Industry and Investment Adviser Salman F Rahman and World Bank Country Director for Bangladesh Mercy Miyang Tembon joined as special guests. Speaking at the event, Minister of Commerce Tipu Munshi said that the CERF is a very timely step by the ministry.

Mentioning that the pandemic has adversely affected the global economy including Bangladesh, he said: "We will have to take pragmatic steps to face this deadly virus." Tipu also said that the purpose of producing these medical safety products for Covid-19 is for not only tapping the local market, but also the international market.

He informed that the matching grants to be provided under CERF to the selective firms ranging between $50,000 to $5,00,000 is a great milestone. The CERF is the fourth funding window under the Export Competitiveness for Jobs (EC4J) project being implemented by the commerce ministry, which is in association with the World Bank.

The purpose of CERF is to support Bangladeshi businesses to repurpose



and pivot their operations and build resilience in an ever-changing economic environment. The CERF will support private enterprises to procure plant, equipment, materials and know-how for rapid repurposing of capacity to produce MPPE products on a sustainable basis.

CERF grants will be made available to private Bangladeshi firms from any industry sector, providing they are in the production or have plans to manufacture qualifying MPPE products. It will range from $50,000 to $500,000 for supported projects. The contribution of the grant recipients will be 40% for SMEs and 50% for large enterprises.

This paves way for immense potential before Bangladesh amid the growing challenge for meeting the demand and supply of medical and PPE products at both local and international markets to fight the pandemic.

World Bank Country Director for Bangladesh Mercy Tembon said the Covid-19 has come before the world as a shock and the pandemic is hitting the poor severely. Highlighting some salient features of the CERF supported by the World Bank, Tembon said the World Bank is committed to enhance the competitiveness of the country as well as would continue to help building a resilient economy and achieving robust growth. The purpose of ERF is to integrate Bangladesh in the value chain of the global export market. The ERF provides grant-based incentives to firms to support exports from Bangladesh.

Pandemic made 17m 'new poor' and loses 3pc jobs: BILS-CPD study

The Covid-19 pandemic has rendered about 3.0 per cent of the country's labour force jobless and created an estimated 16.38 million 'new poor', a study report has revealed. Day-labourers, numbering about 1.08 million, working in construction, informal services and transport, lost jobs, it said.

On 17 April, the report predicted that small and medium enterprises and informal sector would face the highest number of job losses at the end of 2021. The Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS) and the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) conducted the joint study styled 'Impact of Covid-19 on the Labour Market: Policy Proposals for Trade Union on Employment, Gender and Social Security for Sustainable Recovery'.

The report, however, has laid emphasis on effective social dialogues aimed at ensuring the recovery of the labour market during this trying time. The findings were disclosed at a virtual dialogue chaired by Syed Manzur Elahi, treasurer, CPD Board of Trustees and former adviser to a caretaker government. CPD executive director Dr Fahmida Khatun and BILS executive director Nazrul Islam Khan made introductory remarks at the event.

Lack of communication is there among the owners, the workers and the government, said Mr Elahi, chairman of the Apex Group, adding that tripartite coordination is vital to reduce communication gap

among stakeholders. Underlining the importance of social dialogue, he said it was the responsibility of the government to organise a participatory social dialogue.

Terming a happy worker a good worker, Mr Manzur said, "How much productivity from a worker can be expected when he or she has to come to factories by walking three to five miles?" Despite the fact that many factories do not have work orders up to 60 per cent and they are yet to receive payments, arranging transportation for workers is not a big deal, he said



CPD chairman Prof Rehman Sobhan said workers are taking much risk during the lockdown as they have to walk to factories. Their concerns should be given much attention. He suggested that unions reach out workers to know whether factory managements are providing required safety and also about the safety situation at workers' dwelling places.

CPD research director Dr Khandaker Golam Moazzem in a keynote said workers' overall wages declined by 37 per cent. The decline was 42 per cent in Dhaka and 33 per cent in Chattogram, he said. The fall in income and the rise in the incidence of poverty caused a generation of new poor by 16.38 million to join the second quarter of 2020, he added.

Different tripartite discussions and negotiations during this period ensured limited success in favour of workers and MSMEs regarding coping with the risks and recovery from the crisis, he said. There are as many as 8,551 trade unions in the country. But unfortunately, the majority of workers are not unionised and only 4.2 per cent of the total labour force are active trade union members.

Trade unionism is active in a few sectors: transport (35.2 per cent of total workers involved in unionism), ready-made garment (11.6 per cent), construction (6.9 per cent) and jute (4.6 per cent). "During the covid pandemic, trade union activities are largely reflected in these sectors," Mr Moazzem said, adding that such a segmented form of trade unionism was unable to address concerns of workers who are mostly un-unionised.

Workers' health and safety are in a vulnerable state due to the second wave of the pandemic. A tripartite discussion and a joint statement can ensure workers' interests through implementing long-term policies. Trade unions in Bangladesh need to revisit their activities and engagements during the pandemic and take lessons from other countries, he said, suggesting that areas of future engagement be identified during the process of sustainable recovery.

Based on the national social safety-net strategies, trade unions need to identify various support measures for workers and their families, a food transfer programme, protection for disabilities and affordable healthcare. Trade unions should focus on the world of work, particularly highlighting the workers of those who are organised and unorganised, Mr Moazzem suggested.

At the dialogue, labour secretary KM Abdus Salam said all stakeholders are heard with equal importance and monitoring is taking place regularly through 23 countrywide crisis management committees. On April 15, the committees inspected 189 factories.

International Labour Organisation Bangladesh country director Tuomo Poutiainen accentuated the need for providing social safety net to labour in both formal and informal sectors. He called for better utilisation of social dialogue mechanism not only in crisis period but also on a regular basis.

Emphasising continued social dialogue, parliamentarian Shirin Akhter, also BILS vice-chairman, called for increasing the number of enlisted organised labour. Speaking at the dialogue, Garment Workers' Trade Union Center president Mantu Ghosh said transportation must be arranged for garment workers, especially in the areas of Dhaka, Gazipur, Chattogram and Narayanganj.

Workers are walking to and from their respective workplaces during the lockdown and owners are allegedly terminating workers for being late, he alleged. He urged the government to shun the tendency to take the side of the owners in this crisis period. BILS advisory council member Naimul Ahsan Jewel alleged that the crisis management committees were initially effective after their formation last year. Equal participation must be ensured to get expected results through social dialogue, said National Garments Workers Federation president Amirul Haque Amin. Some 50,000 workers, who earlier lost jobs, are yet to rejoin work, he said, demanding no cuts in wages and full payment of festival allowances ahead of Eid.

Mr Amin also pressed for full implementation of the ILO conventions of 97 and 98 and urged the government to ratify the convention related to violence against women.

Bangladesh Garment and Industrial Workers Federation president Babul Akter alleged that 8,551 registered unions are not functional here. Fifty-per cent garment factories having registered unions have no existence, he said, adding that only 100 unions are functional.

Over 36pc growth in remittance during FY'21

The inflow of remittance grew by over 36 per cent to a record $24.78 billion in the just-concluded fiscal year (FY) despite the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. The figure jumped from $18.20 billion in FY 2019-20, according to the central bank's latest statistics.

The money sent home by Bangladeshis working abroad amounted to $1.94 billion in June 2021, down by $230.21 million from the previous month's level. In May last, the remittances stood at $2.17 billion. It was $1.83 billion in June 2020.

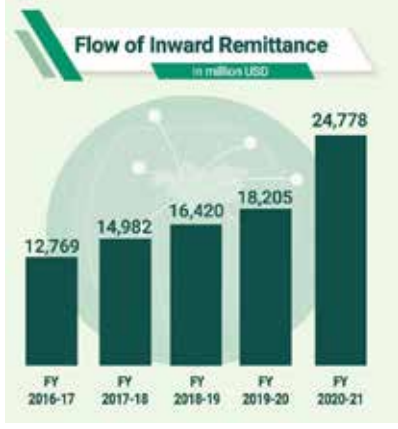
In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, the remittance inflow, one of the main barometers of the economy, dipped from March to May of 2020. Appreciatively, the inflow rebounded in June and its upward trend continued till last month as the remittance senders are using more proper channels amid lockdowns slapped by states and restrictions on movement.

As per central bank data, the migrants had sent their money through 57 banks, including nine commercial banks. The inflow of remittance, one of the main barometers of the economy, continues to rise at a time when the outflow of migrant workers for jobs abroad dropped by 69 per cent year-on-year to 217,669 in 2020.

According to Bangladesh Bank, the number of total outgoing workers was 33,271 in May this year and it was 64,259 in the same month last year, a 48.22 per cent decrease in the number of the outgoing expatriates. According to data of the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training, 85,242 workers left for jobs abroad as of February this year.

Despite the reduction of outgoing workers, the remittance flow saw a constant rise because of some initiatives of the government and bank authorities. The government has given 2 per cent incentives on remittance, which was a big factor behind this rise of the remittance inflow.

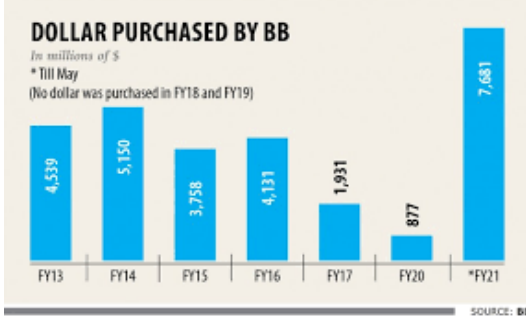
When the income of expatriates was coming down at the beginning of the pandemic, this facility encouraged them to use proper channels greatly. Meanwhile, due to the Covid-19 situation, the hundi system has come



to a halt because of the restriction on movement and at that time there was no other option to send money without banking channels, which was also a reason behind the remittance influx. Besides, different banks have also given some facilities, including easy technical services.

Bangladesh Bank buys record $7.7 billion to keep taka stable

The central bank purchased $7.68 billion from the banking system in the first 11 months of the current fiscal year, the highest on record, to contain any abnormal appreciation of the local currency. The previous highest was posted in 2013-14 when Bangladesh Bank bought $5.15 billion.



The regulator was forced to smash the previous record between July and May because of a higher flow of remittance and lower imports caused by the business slowdown amid the coronavirus pandemic. The central bank needs to continue the intervention until the economy recovers from the slowdown, analysts and businesspeople say.

The US dollar purchase is helping the export sector as local products become cheaper in foreign markets. It is also swelling the foreign exchange reserves. But it has flooded the financial sector with excess liquidity. A lower credit demand has adversely impacted the cost of funds for banks as liquidity has largely remained idle. The excess liquidity in the banking industry stood at around Tk 200,000 crore in April.

Despite the massive dollar purchase, the central bank has failed to devalue the taka against the US currency. Since July, the central bank has been intervening in the foreign exchange market after the local currency began strengthening.

The interbank exchange rate has been hovering around Tk 84.80 per USD since July. The rate was Tk 84.95 on June 2 last year. Had the central bank had not intervened in the exchange market, local currency would have appreciated.

Ahsan H Mansur, executive director of the Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh, said the central bank's stance in purchasing the dollar was appropriate to contain the appreciation of the local currency. The current business slump might continue until the end of the next

fiscal year, given the weak vaccination programme, said Mansur, also a former official of the International Monetary Fund.

Although import payments have recently gone up to some extent due to the price hike in the global commodity market, this has not positively impacted the investment sector. The volume of the imported products has not increased significantly, he said. "The central bank's intervention is time-befitting as it is playing a strong role in protecting the interest of exporters from the slowdown," said Kutubuddin Ahmed, chairman of Envoy Group, a garment exporter.

Despite Bangladesh Bank's move, the exchange rate of the taka is still comparatively stronger than those in peer nations. For instance, the currencies of India, Sri Lanka and Pakistan fell against the US dollar earlier. Between July and May, Bangladesh received $22.8 billion in remittance, already the highest in a single year. The pile-up of US dollars will help the country to a large extent when imports start picking up. Foreign reserves stood at $45.08 billion on June 2, up 34.70 per cent year-on-year.

Forex reserve crosses $46b mark

Bangladesh's foreign exchange (forex) reserve crossed the $46 billion mark for the first time on 29 June following lower import payment obligations and higher growth of inward remittance. The forex reserve rose to $46.08 billion on the day, setting a new record, from $45.46 billion of the previous record, according to Bangladesh Bank's latest data.

Bangladesh Bank said in a report that from July to June 28 of the current financial year, the expatriates have sent $2,459 crore which is $656 higher compared to the same time of the previous year ($1603 crore). As a result, remittances have increased by 36.37 percent. In the last financial year, the growth in remittances was 10.6 percent.

According to Central Bank report, the country's reserves crossed $45 billion marks for the first time on May 3, 2021. On the same day, the reserves increased to $45.10 billion. On February 24 this year, the reserve was $44.02 billion. Earlier, the reserves had crossed $43 billion on December 30, $42 billion on December 15, and $41 billion on October 28. In October 2020, the country's reserves exceeded $40 billion marks.



Recovery of FDI inflow in Bangladesh will be delayed : UNCTAD

After the two consecutive years of decline in the inflows of foreign direct investment (FDI) in Bangladesh, the recovery is likely to take more time. World Investment Report (WIR) 2021, released by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) on 19 June Geneva makes the prediction.

It showed that inflow of FDI in Bangladesh dropped by around 11.0 per cent in 2020 to US$2.56 billion from $2.87 billion in 2019. The net inflow of FDI in 2018 was $3.61 billion which was the highest amount of inflow in a single year in the country. The report also mentioned that global FDI declined by 35 per cent to $998.91 billion in the last year from $1530.28 billion (or $1.53 trillion) in 2019 due to pandemic.



It, however, expressed optimism that FDI flows are expected to bottom out in 2021 and recover some lost ground with an increase of 10 to 15 per cent in the current year. "In Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, FDI inflows will take longer to recover, as investment commitments in these countries remained weak," said the UNCTAD report.

In this connection, it mentioned that announced greenfield investment projects in 2020, an indication of FDI trends over the next few years, contracted 87 per cent in Bangladesh and 96 per cent in Sri Lanka. "This contraction is due to weak investment interests in garment production, a major export industry and FDI recipient in these countries," it added. "Investment in, and production of, garments suffered severely in 2020, with no sign of recovery as of early 2021."

The report also mentioned that garment factories in Bangladesh faced some $3 billion worth of cancelled export orders in the last year while in Sri Lanka, export data for January 2021 showed no recovery yet.

Bangladesh was the second largest recipient of FDI in the last year among

the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), preceded by Cambodia where inflow of FDI stood at $3.60 billion in 2020. Ethiopia became the third with $2.40 billion and followed by Mozambique ($2.30 billion) and Myanmar ($1.80 billion). All the five LDCs faced decline in FDI in the last year.

"As in previous years, inflows were concentrated in some large LDCs," said the UNCTAD report. "The top five recipients (Cambodia, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Mozambique and Myanmar, in that order) accounted for more than half of FDI to the group, and the top 10 (adding the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Senegal, the United Republic of Tanzania, Mauritania and the Lao People's Democratic Republic) for over three quarters," it added.

WIR 2021 also mentioned that foreign investment inflows in Bangladesh are "shifting away from large non-renewable energy and finance projects towards fintech, the pharmaceutical industry, liquefied natural gas plants and agribusiness, which the Government is actively promoting."

"The prospects of FDI in LDCs remain subdued in the immediate future. Inflows are expected to remain sluggish over the next few years," said the report. "Even though some countries contained the disease effectively and quickly (e.g., Bhutan), in many LDCs mass vaccination may be many years away," it added.

According to UNCTAD, the immediate challenge is to minimise the number of "lost" years in terms of progress toward SDG goals. "The main concern in LDCs is that the pandemic could wipe out development gains achieved over the last decade under the Istanbul Programme of Action (2011–2020) and the SDG agenda," the report continued.

UNCTAD also express apprehension that the six LDCs including Bangladesh in the process of graduation may face more difficulty. "An additional two years were added to the transition period for those selected for graduation after the outbreak of the pandemic (e.g., for Bangladesh and Nepal, until 2026) suggests that the international community is willing to support LDCs to adjust in a more orderly manner to the changing conditions of the world economy," it added.

Bangladesh Bank adopted policy to phase out LIBOR

The Bangladesh Bank on 21 June fixed a fresh reference rate for short term trade financing ahead of the phase out from the London Interbank Offered Rate globally after December 31, 2021. The central bank issued a circular in this regard on the day allowing the banks to charge 3.5 per cent per annum on top of the reference rate in the currency of financing for discounting or early payment of export bills.

Besides the 3.5-per cent plus reference rate, the banks were allowed to charge up to 2.5 per cent on risk free reference rate. In case of financing in US dollars for instance, the Secured Overnight Financing Rate (SOFR), developed by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, would be considered as a reference rate. On June 17, the SOFR was 0.05 per cent while the rate was 1.54 on January 2, 2020.

The new rate can be used alongside LIBOR based financing until the complete phase out from LIBOR in December 2021. Currently, the banks are allowed to charge six-month LIBOR plus 3.50 per annum against short term trade financing. The BB circular has relaxed the six-month fixed tenure by allowing flexibility depending on the credit period for financing.

In absence of tenure-linked rate like three-month, six-month, the relative rate can be compounded in advance to calculate the effective benchmark rate for the specified tenure, as per the circular. The circular also allowed the Islamic Shariah-based benchmark rate for Shariah-base finance. The policy will be applicable for permissible usance import under supplier's or buyer's credit.

In case of import finance, where the forward looking benchmark rate with tenure-link is absent, the relative rate applied as the benchmark rate for import finance can be compounded in arrears to calculate the effective interest for the tenure of credit, the circular noted. In case of the necessity for phasing out of LIBOR, the respective benchmark rate may be applied during the credit period as per mutual understanding with the lenders concerned.

In addition, the banks must refrain from arranging LIBOR-tag financing when the global discourse is published with regards to the deadline for its usability. Introduced in 1984 by the British Bankers Association, LIBOR has been serving as a key benchmark for short-term (overnight to one year) interest rates worldwide. The rate is being used for an estimated $3 trillion dollars in financing.



The UK Financial Conduct Authority has taken an initiative not to publish the LIBOR rate after 2021 after a wide range of misuses of the rate by different means were revealed. The world's lenders, including banks and other financial institutions, use LIBOR as the benchmark reference for determining interest rates for various debt instruments, including trade financing.

According to the United States Federal Reserve and regulators in the United Kingdom, LIBOR will be phased out by June 30, 2023, and will be replaced by the Secured Overnight Financing Rate.

ADB approved $940 million loan to buy COVID-19 jabs

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) will provide Bangladesh US$940 million for purchasing safe and effective vaccines against the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). The ADB Board gave the approval to the loan package for Bangladesh, said a press release issued by ADB on 22 June.

The package, which comprises a regular loan and a concessional loan of $470 million each, is a part of ADB's $9 billion Asia Pacific Vaccine Access Facility (APVAX) launched in December 2020 to offer rapid and equitable vaccine-related support to ADB's developing member countries (DMCs), it said.

"Vaccination programmes can break the chain of virus transmission, save lives, and mitigate the negative economic impacts of the pandemic," the press statement said. "This project is a continuation of ADB's ongoing support to Bangladesh's COVID-19 pandemic response in order to protect its population from the virus, rebuild the livelihoods of vulnerable groups, and work to return its economy to its impressive growth path," ADB said.

The project will fund the purchase of an estimated 44.7 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines to be administered to more than 20 million Bangladeshis by 2024, contributing to the government's National Deployment and Vaccination Plan for COVID-19 Vaccines, according to the release.

The vaccines will be secured through the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) programme, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), or bilateral arrangements with vaccine manufacturers or distributors, it mentioned.

Vaccines eligible for financing must meet at least one of the APVAX eligibility criteria: the vaccine has been selected for procurement through the COVAX mechanism; the vaccine has been prequalified by the World Health Organization (WHO) or WHO emergency use listing; or the vaccine has received regular or emergency licensure or authorization by a Stringent Regulatory Authority, it said. The ADB is helping the Bangladesh government strengthen its vaccine delivery system through ongoing technical assistance projects worth $1.7 million, it added.

In addition, the ADB has supported Bangladesh's COVID-19 response through a $250 million loan in June 2021 to strengthen social protection and resilience programs, a $500 million loan in May 2020 for expanding social safety nets for vulnerable groups and supporting critical labor-intensive industries and small and medium enterprises to preserve jobs.

Besides, it also provide $100 million as loan in April 2020 to support procurement of equipment and supplies and upgrading of health and testing facilities, an initial emergency grant of $350,000 for the procurement of medical supplies and equipment, and $1.3 million from an ongoing project to provide one-time cash support to trainees of an ongoing skills training programme, said the press release.

$250 Million ADB loan to support Social Resilience Program

The Asian Development Bank on 18 June approved a $250 million policy-based loan to the Government of Bangladesh to help finance reforms aimed at improving the inclusiveness and responsiveness of the country's social development and resilience program, according to ADB's Press Release.

Bangladesh has made remarkable progress in reducing poverty over the past 2 decades. The poverty incidence declined from 48.9% in 2000 to 20.5% in 2019. However, while many people were lifted from extreme poverty, a considerable number continue to live at a subsistence level. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has significantly affected the socioeconomic situation of Bangladesh with the decline of the country's gross domestic product to an estimated 5.2 % in fiscal year (FY) 2020 from 8.2% in FY 2019, ADB said.

"Enhancing social protection support is critical to cushioning the effects of the pandemic," said ADB Senior Social Sector Specialist for South Asia Hiroko Uchimura-Shiroishi. "ADB supports the government's intention to leverage the COVID-19 pandemic as an opportunity to strengthen its social protection programs as an essential means of building the resilience of the poor and supporting an inclusive recovery.", the Bank added the release.

ADB said the Strengthening Social Resilience Program will include

institutional and policy reforms to address cross-sector issues of social development in Bangladesh. These include improving the coverage and efficiency of the social protection system through improving the administrative efficiency of social protection management. The program will expand its outreach to vulnerable women by increasing the coverage of both the old age allowance for women over 62 and the allowance for widowed, deserted, and destitute women in 150 sub-district units or upazilas.

Other reforms include promoting the use of mobile financial services and simplifying identification and documentation requirements for opening a bank account and broadening the scope of social protection from mere poverty relief to life cycle social and health responses, including social insurance system, the release added.

ADB will also provide a technical assistance grant to support program implementation, policy analyses, and capacity development for social development-related ministries. The technical assistance is estimated to cost $1.2 million which will be financed on a grant basis by the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction, the release noted.

ADB is committed to achieving a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific, while sustaining its efforts to eradicate extreme poverty. Established in 1966, it is owned by 68 members—49 from the region, said the Bank.

World Bank approved $600 Million to Improve Skills and Livelihoods for Poor and Vulnerable Population

The World Bank on 20 May approved $600 million for two projects in Bangladesh to increase the employability and livelihood opportunities of more than 1.75 million poor and vulnerable people—including youth, women, disadvantaged groups, and returnee migrant workers—and build their resilience to future shocks like the COVID-19 pandemic.

"In Bangladesh, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the livelihoods of thousands of people, particularly female workers, youth, and returnee migrant workers," said Dandan Chen, Acting World Bank Country Director for Bangladesh and Bhutan.

"These two projects will help empower and mobilize rural poor people, prepare them for the future job market and support entrepreneurial opportunities, especially women and disadvantaged groups."

The $300 million Accelerating and Strengthening Skills for Economic Transformation (ASSET) Project will equip more than 1 million youth and workers with skills needed for the jobs of the future. The project will help youth, women and disadvantaged groups, including people with disabilities, learn skills and connect them to the labor market. The project will also help accelerate recovery from the pandemic by supporting industries to retrain their workers.

"Building on the success of earlier projects, 'STEP' and 'NARI', the project will help modernize and build resilience of the technical vocational education and training sector in Bangladesh.

It will set up an international standard model polytechnic in the country," said Md. Mokhlesur Rahman, World Bank Team Leader for the project. "Further, the project will benefit the informal sector workers through expanding the 'Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)' program."

The $300 million Resilience, Entrepreneurship and Livelihood Improvement (RELI) Project will help improve the livelihoods of about 750,000 poor and vulnerable rural people across 3,200 villages in 20 districts.

"The project will provide immediate and tailored livelihood support to rural poor people to respond to urgent needs such as the COVID 19 pandemic, improve their ability to cope with future shocks and help them come out of poverty through income-generating activities and skill development," said Jean Saint-Geours, World Bank Team Leader for the project.

The project will help organize and build the capacity of village groups, and finance climate-resilient infrastructure and community plans for savings and micro-loans, giving priority to the poor and extreme poor, women, and youth.

With over 90 percent female beneficiaries, the project will also support entrepreneurship and encourage crop diversification and good nutritional practices, while raising awareness of climate risk adaptation and mitigation, the spread of diseases, and gender-based violence. Both projects have a maturity of 30 years including a grace period of 5 years.

The World Bank is among the first development partners to support Bangladesh following its independence. Bangladesh currently has one of the largest IDA programs totaling over $14 billion. Since independence, the World Bank has committed more than $35 billion in grants, interest-free, and concessional credits to the country.

Solar home systems saved $1.85b in 15 years: WB study

Solar home systems (SHS) saved Bangladesh $1,852 million while providing clean energy for the past 15 years since 2003, says a World Bank survey. This came about through scalable off-grid electrification business models combining private sector solar electrification initiatives and microfinancing.

It was under the state-run Infrastructure Development Company Limited's (IDCOL) Rural Electrification and Renewable Energy Development (RERED) Project, the lender said on 8 April while launching a book titled "Living in the Light-The Bangladesh Solar Home System Story".

The project helped households gain $745 million, partner organisations $310 million and the IDCOL $379 million while the government's net benefit was $474 million. Kerosene distributors lost $56 million in profits. All discounted figures were constant in 2018.

An estimated $1,094.93 million was invested in the project to provide electricity services to about 20 million people, meaning about $266 per household. Of the investment, 63 per cent came from the World Bank, 14 per cent from the Asian Development Bank and 12 per cent from the Japan international Cooperation Agency. The project would continue until the end of this year.

Source : The Daily Star

South Korea to provide $700m EDCF loan

South Korea has decided to provide $700 million Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF) loan to Bangladesh between 2021 and 2025. The two governments have been discussing this plan since last year and, upon the completion of necessary domestic procedures, will sign a Framework Agreement which contains detailed conditions and the list of potential projects to be considered.

This decision was shared by Korean Ambassador to Bangladesh Lee Jang-keun with Fatima Yasmin, secretary of Economic Relations Division of the Ministry of Finance, at the ODA projects review meeting between the Embassy and ERD held virtually on 15 June.

At the meeting, the Korean Embassy and ERD reviewed a number of other ongoing and new development assistance projects between the two governments, including those under implementation through KOICA.



Bangladesh is a priority development partner of South Korea and the second largest recipient of Korea's EDCF loan, according to Korean Embassy in Dhaka. South Korea has provided $1.24 billion US$ EDCF loan and $172 million in grants through KOICA since 1991 in various sectors, including public administration, vocational training and education, transport, ICT-based communication, public administration, water management, and public health. At the meeting, the Embassy also introduced Knowledge Sharing Program (KSP), a platform for development cooperation, aiming to share knowledge with development partner countries and develop a solid foundation for the expansion of economic and political cooperation.

The Embassy recommended the ERD to consider ways to improve the efficiency of development cooperation, including the facilitation of customs clearance and tax exemption on grant equipment and items in accordance with the Framework Agreement for grant aid between the two governments.

The meeting was also attended by ERD officials, Korea EXIM Bank Bangladesh Office, KOICA Bangladesh Office, and KSP manager of Korea Development Institute.

Japanese firms to bounce back from Covid impact: JETRO

JETRO
Japan External Trade Organization

The study of Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), shows that nine percent Japanese companies have already recovered from Covid-19 impact while 31.3 percent is expected to return to normal in "first half of 2021" and 34.3 percent in the "second half of 2021".

JETRO, an independent administrative institution established by Japan Export Trade Research Organization as a non-profit corporation in Osaka, conducted the survey on 'Business Condition of Japanese Companies in Asia and Oceania' for 2020. Referring the recent survey, JETRO Country Representative Yuji Ando said the changes in the trading environments of Bangladesh had a positive impact on business performance (year-on-year increase).

He mentioned that many respondents of the survey said the shift of production to their countries caused by the US-China trade frictions had a positive impact for the country. He said Bangladesh is one of the major destinations for Japanese entrepreneurs and they are investing in different fields, including ready-made garments (RMG), textile, IT and infrastructure taking the advantage of competitive human resource and huge domestic market.

"The number of Japanese companies operating in Bangladesh has increased around four times in 10 years. A total of 321 Japanese firms are currently running their businesses in the country which was 83 in 2010," he mentioned." He informed that many Japanese entrepreneurs are expanding their businesses in different fields, including electric and consumer products, of the country.

Yuji Ando said Bangladesh has the potential to develop businesses but needs to improve environment bottlenecks. He said investors face different hassles like time consuming customs procedures, difficulty in local procurement of raw materials and components, power shortages and wage hikes.

As per the survey of the JETRO, Japanese companies feel that "difficulties in local procurement of raw materials and parts" (66.7 percent) and "custom procedures" (56.1 percent) are major challenges in their businesses.

The pandemic is showing no signs of abating but still 41.8 per cent of Japanese companies in Bangladesh during 2020 wanted to expand business in the next two years. In 2020, another 49.3 per cent believed that their operations will remain the same while 6 per cent pondered over going for retrenching.

Bangladesh amongst 3 countries leading global cotton trade recovery : USDA

Bangladesh has joined China and Turkey to lead the global cotton trade recovery, as per the USDA or United States Department of Agriculture.

According to USDA report in June, 'record global trade is boosted, led by robust demand in Bangladesh, Turkey and China', even as cotton exports for the three largest exporters namely United States, India and Brazil are up, while the USDA further underlined that higher-than-expected demand in Bangladesh, China and Turkey are driving higher imports in these countries and have more than offset the lower consumption outlook for India.

Meanwhile, reports from Bangladesh indicate the recent spurt in cotton import in the country is due to skyrocketing demand amongst local spinners, millers, traders and importers, which is consequent to higher demand from the garment exporters as apparel export is on the path to recovery.

The export data shows that the Bangladeshi garment sector is recovering fast with the rise in demand in the western world. A significant development was the return of woven shipments to the positive territory in May after declining for a year. The demand for woven items had fallen in the western world as formal events were suspended because of the lockdowns and fears over contracting Covid-19.

Knitwear items maintained 12 per cent growth over the last year because of an increase in demand for more extended stays of people at home. Last year, international



clothing retailers and brands either suspended or cancelled work orders worth $3.18 billion, of which 90 per cent have been reinstated so far.

The volume of merchandise trade was down 15.5 per cent year-on-year in the second quarter of 2020 when lockdowns in many countries were in full effect. But by the fourth quarter, trade had surpassed the level of the same period in 2019, said the World Trade Organisation on May 28.

On the global cotton trade, the USDA said China's 2020-21 imports were forecast at a seven-year high, driven by the highest projected consumption in three years, robust state reserve imports, and attractive prices for imported cotton relative to domestic supplies. Imports are expected to support China's record year-over-year rise in consumption.

China's 2020-21 consumption is expected to recover from the lowest level in 16 years to surpass the previous year by 7 million bales, accounting for half of the gain in global use. Currently, spinners' spot margins are roughly 30 per cent higher compared with that of the previous year due to the robust demand for cotton yarn and significantly lower yarn stocks, said the USDA.

Since Bangladesh is not a major cotton-producing nation, 99 per cent of the requirement for the raw material is met through imports. Traders, importers and millers may import 8.5 million bales of cotton this year, spending $3 billion this year, according to BTMA.

Last year, cotton imports fell to 7.5 million bales as production came to a halt in many mills after the government had imposed nationwide restrictions to tame the coronavirus pandemic.

$500m can be saved annually by recycling cotton waste: study

Bangladesh has a mammoth opportunity by recycling the cotton waste as readymade garment (RMG) factories and textile mills generate a vast amount of leftovers of the main raw material. According to a study, carried out by the Circular Fashion Partnership, Bangladesh can save $500 million annually. At a recent virtual discussion, the findings of the study were exposed.

The research has found that in 2019, Bangladesh produced around 577,000 tons of waste just from the RMG and fabrics mills of which almost half (250 thousand tons) was 100% pure cotton waste. It is assessed that garment factories in Bangladesh could sell this 100% cotton waste to the recycling market for up to US$100 million.

According to a press release of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), at present, Bangladesh is greatly dependent on the import of textile fiber. In 2019, the country imported 1.63 million ton s of staple cotton fiber (with a value estimated to be 3.5 billion USD). Based on the Circular Fashion Partnership findings, if just the 100% cotton waste was recycled within Bangladesh, imports could decrease by around 15%, therefore saving $500 million that would have been spent on cotton imports.

Circular Fashion Partnership

Speaking at the event, Faruque Hassan, president of the BGMEA, said, "The sustenance of the planet is now at risk, and we cannot stay indifferent. We have to shift the linear economic model to circular." "This is the future, and we are committed to closing the loop while achieving our strategic growth targets," he said.

Federica Marchionni, chief executive officer of the Global Fashion Agenda, said, "For fashion to continue to prosper within planetary boundaries, we need to embrace the opportunities of a circular economy urgently." A circular economy is a systemic approach to economic development designed to benefit businesses, society, and the environment.

"Using the Reverse Resources technology platform, we have been able to map participants' textile waste to grasp its scale and quantify the economic opportunity of closing the loop," Marchionni said. Nin Castle, Chief Project Officer of Reverse Resources, said Bangladesh produced arguably the most recyclable textile waste of any apparel-producing country.

With the emergence of new and improved versions of existing recycling technologies, Bangladesh has a huge opportunity to scale its local recycling capacity and reduce its dependency on virgin raw materials.

Castle added, "If a recycling industry is fostered now, it will enable the country not only to enjoy the obvious benefits of cost and carbon footprint reduction but also gain a massive competitive edge." Leading policy-makers and fashion industry experts were present at the event hosted by the platform, a project that promotes recycled materials in fashion.

The Circular Fashion Partnership is a cross-sectorial project led by the Global Fashion Agenda, in partnership with Reverse Resources and the BGMEA. The project purposes to support the development of the textile recycling industry in Bangladesh by capturing and directing post-production fashion waste back into the production of new fashion products.

BEPZA economic zone eyes $10b investment

The Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (Bepza) is establishing an economic zone at the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Shilpa Nagar (BSMSN) to diversify exports. The agency will emphasise the electronic and spare parts manufacturing industries keeping in mind the fourth industrial revolution and job creation.

"The new zone will be different from the existing zones of the Bepza as we will not give priority to the apparel industry," said Md Nazrul Islam, executive chairman of the Bepza. The planned economic zone will be an EPZ inside the BSMSN in Mirsarai of Chattogram. Investors will have to sell 90 per cent of the products to be manufactured in the international markets, and the rest could be sold in the domestic market following customs and other rules. Islam said the new zone would attract at least $10 billion in investment and employ five lakh people.

There are eight EPZs under the Bepza across the country. A total of 476 industrial units have for been set up in the EPZs. Of them, 300 units are textile and related accessories factories, 32 footwear plants, 19 electronics and electrical goods factories, 13 plastic goods factories, 13 tent-producing units, and 11 are service-oriented industries.

The factories so far attracted $8 billion investment and have created around 4.5 lakh jobs. They shipped products worth about $6.5 billion in the fiscal year 2019-20, down from $7.2 billion a year ago because of the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. The EPZs account for a fifth of the total export receipts for Bangladesh.

The development work of the Bepza economic zone began in 2018. The Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority (Beza) will hand over 1,150 acres of land at the BSMSN to the Bepza on May 30. Paban Chowdhury, executive chairman of the Beza, said the land was almost ready for setting up factories. "The Bepza economic zone will be the biggest economic zone in the country."

Of the 539 plots planned at the zone, 140 will be initially up for grabs, and they will be ready for investment by September, Islam said. The size of the plot will be 3,600 square metres each. The rest of the plots would be available at different stages within 2023.

The economic zone will consist of industrial plots, standard factory building area, water treatment plants, central effluent treatment plants, transfer stations, power hubs, incinerator, central warehouses, container depot, mega kitchen, hospitals and daycare facilities.

The plots are equipped with adequate road facility, utility services such as water, gas, electricity, telephone, and effluent collection network. The Bepza is also developing facilities such as investors' residence and club. "Investors will be able to ship products directly from the zone as all required services provided by stakeholders such as banks, customs, and ports would be available inside the zone," Islam said.



Khondaker Golam Moazzem, research director of the Centre for Policy Dialogue, said there was no doubt that the establishment of the economic zone by the Bepza would create jobs and boost exports. He suggested the Bepza allocate plots to real investors so that factories could go into production immediately. It should not allot plots to traditional product manufacturers to ensure export diversification, he said.

Islam said the shipment from the factories in the EPZs might hit $8 billion in the current fiscal year. The EPZs have alleviated poverty through employment generation and setting up of backward and forward linkage industries and created new business scopes in the surrounding areas of the estates.

The Bepza would allocate a maximum of 15 per cent of plots at the new zone to the apparel industry, down from about 33 per cent in existing zones.

Source : The Daily Star

Energypac launches industrial park to boost economy

Publicly traded company Energypac Power Generation Limited (EPGL) on 8 May virtually inaugurated its industrial park at Sreepur in Gazipur, through a press conference. The industrial park will increase employment opportunities, take the power generation sector to new heights, and develop the economy, said the management of the company.



Multiple EPGL products will be manufactured in the park, like Steelpac, GLAD, and JAC. The project has employed 550 people, and it is located over around 52 bighas of land. Industries Minister Nurul Majid Mahmud Humayun attended the virtual ceremony as the chief guest.

The production and the operational activities of the Industrial Park will boost the commercial automative and pre-engineering steel building sector. This state-of-the-art "Enerygypac Industrial Park" houses a world-class plant capable of testing a load of up to 1.5 MW and producing 500 generators of the GLAD brand.

Enerygypac plans to build a world-class electric DB box that will be capable of testing a load of up to 3 MW and increase the capacity of the plant to produce 1000 GLAD generators. The park also has an assembling plant for JAC vehicles, where 1200 vehicles can be assembled every year.

Enerygypac hopes to increase the capacity to 1500 and build a

bus assembling plant and electric vehicles.

There is also a plant for prefabricated steel buildings with a yearly production capacity of 18,00 MT. The company has plans for manufacturing pre-engineering low-cost houses, nut-bolts, wear machines, and profile sheets, and marketing those as well, which will contribute greatly to the infrastructural development of the country along with contributions in the power and transport sector. EPGL soon plans to establish storage facilities along with mezzanine floors and innovative technologies to maximize production.

Indo-Bangla joint venture to invest $2.95m in Ishwardi EPZ

India-Bangladesh joint venture company M/s Khyaati Leather



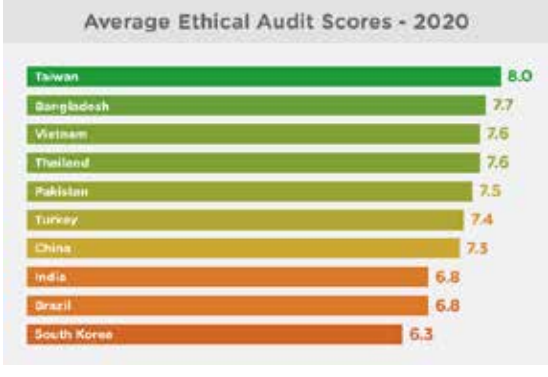
Innovations BD Ltd. has signed an agreement with Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (BEPZA) to establish a Garments Accessories and Bags Manufacturing industry in Ishwardi EPZ with an investment of $2.95 million, according to a press release.

The company will produce annually 40 million to 50 million pieces of Back Patches- Paper/PU/ Leather, Heat Seal labels, Silicon Labels, Belts- PU/ Leather, Printed Fabrics (Coated and Uncoated), Buttons, Rivets, Metal/ Plastic IDs, Metal and Plastic Eyelets, Lock-pin, Hanging Accessories, Fabric Label, Hang Tags/Stickers, Laces, Shoe Sole, Shoe Upper, Bags, all types of fashionable Tapes, Taffeta labels, Woven Labels and Knitted & Fabric Belts etc.

The joint venture company will create employment opportunity for 116 Bangladeshi nationals. BEPZA is trying its best to attract local and foreign investment in the EPZs even during the Covid-19 pandemic. BEPZA Member (Investment Promotion) Md. Mahmudul Hossain Khan and Khyaati Leather Chairman Pravin Satyapal Uppal signed the agreement at BEPZA Complex, Dhaka on behalf of their respective organizations.

Bangladesh ranks 2nd in ethical auditing practices

Bangladesh ranked second after Taiwan in a global list comparing the ethical auditing practices in major manufacturing countries, according to an assessment of Qima, an international supply chain solutions provider. The Hong Kong-based Quality Inspection Management (Qima) unveiled the study titled 'Q1 Barometer 2021' on last week of March based on the global supply chains compliance in 2020.



Scoring 8.00 out of 10.00 in ethical auditing practices, Taiwan topped the list, followed by Bangladesh and Vietnam with scores of 7.7 and 7.6 respectively. Other top-ranking countries include Thailand, Pakistan, Turkey, China, India and Brazil. Issues range from increased vulnerability to modern slavery and child labour, to labour violations in factories and less scrutiny on non-virus-related safety measures due to health and safety resources being stretched thin, the report suggests.

The Qima ethical audit data collected from reopened factories as well as in the course of remote audits paints an alarming picture, with the percentage of factories ranked 'Red' for critical non-compliances increasing by more than 100 per cent in the second half of 2020 compared to the first half of the year.

Some of the most pressing issues are in the area of working hours and wage compliance: in China, 14 per cent of factories audited were given a failing grade due to critical violations in the area of working hours and wages. Examples of violations include sanitation duties being imposed as unpaid overtime, as well as workers being pushed to work excessive hours to meet tight schedules for high-demand goods, such as PPE.

"In response to the mounting ethical risks and limited physical access to factories, more businesses are accelerating the adoption of technological solutions for compliance and quality control, which include remote audits, worker voice solutions and integrated QC and compliance platforms that enable them to map their sourcing network and achieve better visibility into multiple supply chain tiers," Qima said in the report.

According to the global agency, uncertainty and disruption continue dominating global trade. In 2021,

global sourcing is liable to remain at the mercy of the pandemic, emphasizing the importance of supply chain agility and efficiency to any business's continued survival, almost a year into the global pandemic.

Bangladesh climbs up 25 notches on Global Cybersecurity Index

Bangladesh has moved twenty-five notches up to rank of 53rd among 194 countries in the Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI), an initiative of the UN specialized agency for ICTs. The country has scored an impressive 81.27 points to climb the spot from its previous position 78th in the index.



The GCI results show overall improvement and strengthening of five pillars - i.e. legal measures, technical measures, organizational measures, capacity development measures, and cooperation measures - of the cybersecurity agenda.

The index reported Capacity Development and Technical Measures as the areas of relative strength for Bangladesh, while the Legal Measure category fell under the areas of potential growth for the country that is currently in the developing or LDC stage.

According to the index published on the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) website, the United States of America grabbed the first position with a score of 100. England and Saudi Arabia jointly secured the second spot with a score of 99.54, while Estonia was in the third position with 99.46 points.

Region-wise data shows that Bangladesh ranked 11th among the countries of the Asia-Pacific region. The only country that ranked better than Bangladesh – both globally and regionally – was India with 97.49 points. Under the GCI index for the Asia-Pacific region, the Republic of Korea and Singapore jointly secured the highest points. Meanwhile, India was in the 4th position, China in 7th and Pakistan in 14th, Sri Lanka in 15th and Nepal in 17th position.

The Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI) was first launched in 2015 by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) to measure the commitment of 193 ITU Member States and the State of Palestine1 to cybersecurity to help them identify areas of improvement and encourage countries to take action, through raising awareness on the state of cybersecurity worldwide. This report aims to better understand countries' commitments to cybersecurity, identify gaps, encourage the incorporation of good practices, and provide useful insights for countries to improve their cybersecurity postures. The GCI has also been adapted to give a more accurate snapshot of cybersecurity measures taken by countries.

Bangladesh jumps by seven notches to 91st place in Global Peace Index

Bangladesh is the 91st most peaceful country with an overall score of 2.068, according to Global Peace Index 21 released on 17 June. In the latest index, Bangladesh has jumped up by seven notches from last year. The country is also the third most peaceful country in South Asia ahead of India and Pakistan.

Although in South Asia, Bangladesh is behind Bhutan and Nepal, it performed significantly better than the neighbouring India and Pakistan. Bhutan and Nepal remained the most peaceful country in South Asia with their global peace ranking at 22nd and 85th respectively. Bangladesh replaced Sri Lanka as the third most peaceful country in South Asia as the island nation recorded a massive deterioration in their peace ranking after relegating to 95th position in Global Peace Index from last year's 19th.

India moved up two spots from its previous year's peace ranking to become the 135th peaceful country and fifth in South Asia. Pakistan is ranked 150th globally and sixth in the region, while Afghanistan remained the least peaceful country for the fourth consecutive year.

South Asia

Regional Rank	Country	Overall Score	Score Change	Overall Rank
1	Bhutan	1.51	-0.013	22
2	Nepal	2.033	0.018	85
3	Bangladesh	2.068	-0.034	91
4	Sri Lanka	2.083	0.096	95
5	India	2.553	-0.017	135
6	Pakistan	2.868	-0.055	150
7	Afghanistan	3.631	-0.017	163
REGIONAL AVERAGE		2.392	-0.003	

The Institute for Economics and Peace released the 15th edition of the Global Peace Index, ranking 163 independent states and territories according to their level of peacefulness. The countries are ranked from most peaceful to least peaceful on the basis of safety and security, militarisation, and frequency of ongoing conflicts.

Iceland remains the world's most peaceful country, followed by New Zealand, Denmark, Portugal and Slovenia.

$25b export to China possible by 2030 : Just needs 1pc more market share—study

Bangladesh's exports to China, the world's second biggest economy, will grow to $25 billion if local suppliers can grab an additional 1 per cent share of the Chinese market by 2030, according to a study released on 9 June. Currently, Bangladesh's share of exports to the Chinese market is 0.05 per cent, equivalent to a bit above $1 billion in a year, it said.

Bangladesh has the opportunity to increase its exports to China as since July last year, the Chinese government approved duty-free facility for 97 per cent of products from Bangladesh, which is a big advantage for the country, it added. Some 8,256 products enjoy duty-free facility from Bangladesh to China as the country falls under the least developed country (LDC) category, said MA Razzaque, research director of Policy Research Institute (PRI).

He was presenting a keynote paper at a webinar on "Bangladesh-China Economic and Trade Relations in the aftermath of the Covid-19 Global Pandemic", jointly organised by Economic Reporters' Forum (ERF) and Bangladesh China Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCCI). Razzaque also advocated for attracting Chinese investment in different export projects in Bangladesh. "We need to materialise investment pledges from China," he said.

China's economy remains robust, its trade is fast recovering and it is one of the largest sources of foreign direct investment (FDI). The significance



of Bangladesh's export to China becomes clear if some trade data is analysed, he said. For instance, prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, China's exports of goods and services were $2.69 trillion and imports were $2.48 trillion. "Future growth of China will make its imports volume even bigger," Razzaque also said.

Bangladesh should also negotiate to bring in Chinese investment pledges worth more than $27 billion. Currently, Chinese investment in Bangladesh is $2 billion and the Chinese companies have been implementing different mega projects in the country, he said. After Bangladesh makes the United Nations status graduation to a developing country, it will need a lot of FDI and China might be a major source for investment, he said.

Negotiations are underway for a free trade agreement (FTA) to be signed between Bangladesh and China, said Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi. Last fiscal year, bilateral trade amounted to $12 billion, of which over $11 billion were goods imported from China. China is the largest source of imports for Bangladesh and in pre-pandemic times, Bangladesh used to import goods worth more than $18 billion from the country.

Li Jiming, Chinese ambassador to Bangladesh, said it was high time to consider the signing of an FTA as bilateral trade was growing alongside Chinese investment in Bangladesh. Bilateral trade decreased by 30.6 per cent year-on-year in 2020 because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the ambassador added. A discussion is underway for joint production of Chinese Covid-19 vaccines in Bangladesh, said Li Jiming, recalling Bangladesh's medical support to China last year.

China has shown a resilient recovery from the fallouts of Covid-19, said Mahbub Uz Zaman, Bangladesh's ambassador to China. In 2019, bilateral trade was $18.5 billion. In pre-pandemic times, it annually grew by 24 per cent, he said. Since China is the largest raw material supplier for the industries in Bangladesh, so the trade balance is heavily tilted towards China, he added.

CNN Int'l Commercial hired to brand Bangladesh

Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute, a wing of the Commerce Ministry, has tied up with CNN International Commercial, the US-based news channel's commercial wing, to promote 'Made in Bangladesh' products globally. According to a statement, both the organisations signed a non-financial understanding on 2 June to promote different export sectors of Bangladesh on the CNN network.

Achieving the export-oriented growth strategy through public-private collaboration is one of the targets of the deal signed between the bodies. Bangladesh has shown resilience and kept the country's economy moving forward even as the world economy was hit by the Covid-19 pandemic, BFTI said in a statement.

Bangladesh's success stories need to be promoted in the global arena and campaigns themed 'Made in Bangladesh' will help reach the global audience of CNN, according to the statement. The BFTI will implement the campaign under the direct supervision of a steering committee formed by the Commerce Ministry.

This campaign coordination and fund management will be executed by Spellbound Communications Limited, the local facilitation agency of CNN in the name of Spellbound

Leo Burnett, the BFTI said. Under the 'Made in Bangladesh' campaign, CNN will develop and execute TVC, Blueprint Bespoke Editorial, Promo, Vignettes and a 'Made in Bangladesh' theme week.

CNN will also promote five potential export sectors as well as 10 leading export-oriented organisations within the selected sectors. BFTI chief executive officer in-charge Md Obaidul Azam and CNNIC director sales Abhijeet Dhar signed the instrument on behalf of their respective sides at BFTI office.

As per the deal, CNN will produce television advertisements, promotional audio visuals and prepare a themed week of 'Made in Bangladesh' and others to campaign for Bangladeshi exports. The Spellbound Communications Limited, the local representative of the CNN, and the BFTI will work together to make the digital campaign a success.

Country's largest rooftop solar power plant opened at Korean EPZ

The country's single largest rooftop solar plant was inaugurated on 20 June at the privately-owned Korean Export Processing Zone at Anwara upazila in Chattogram. The power plant, installed on the rooftop of the factories at the EPZ will generate 16 megawatts in the first phase while the total capacity of the plant will be 40MW.

Inaugurating the plant, state minister for power, energy and mineral resources Nasrul Hamid said that the government had been putting special emphasis on promotion of renewable energy across the country. 'We've set a target to generate 40 per cent electricity from renewable sources by 2041,' he said at the function.



The function was also addressed by South Korean ambassador to Bangladesh Lee Jang-keun and Youngone Corporation chairman and CEO Kihak Sung. South Korean conglomerate Youngone Corporation has set up the Korean EPZ. Nasrul said that the project would encourage other industries to set up similar projects to promote green energy in the industrial sector.

Ambassador Lee Jang-keun said that the 40MW rooftop solar panel project showed the vision and innovation of the KEPZ which set an example not only for other companies in Bangladesh but also for all in the region and in the world. 'It is not only saving money and production cost, but also makes the KEPZ and its business sustainable and resilient,' he added.

Dhaka Bank arranges $40m loan for Chandpur Power Plant

Dhaka Bank Limited has arranged US$40.00 million ECA loan for Chandpur Power Generations Limited, a sister concern of Doreen Group. In this regard the bank signed an agreement with Commerzbank AG and AKA Ausfuhrkredit-Gesellschaft mbH of Germany recently. Consortium of Commerzbank AG, and AKA Ausfuhrkredit-Gesellschaft mbH of Germany is financing under ECA Cover, according to a press release. This is the first ever ECA-covered transaction for Dhaka Bank Limited, which has enabled them to expand its footprint into international financial market and to widen their spectrum of operation in structured financing.

Chandpur Power Generations Limited is a 115 MW HFO based IPP power plant, which is now under implementation at Chandpur. The project is an IPP (Independent Power Producer) for 15 years. Doreen Group is one of the reputed business conglomerates in the country, especially in the power sector.

The group has so far implemented 9 power plants having total capacity of 460 MW. The capacity will be 575 MW when Chandpur Project is completed.

BGMEA wins US award for green initiatives

The Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) has been awarded the 2021 USGBC Leadership Award by the US Green Building Council (USGBC) for green initiatives in the apparel industry. The BGMEA is the only organisation in the global apparel industry that got the award.

In a media release on 11 June, the USGBC announced the awardees from around the world. They were awarded for innovations in sustainability for healthy, equitable, and resilient buildings and communities during a virtual conference on 10 June. Kutubuddin Ahmed, chairman of Envoy Textiles, the world's first platinum rated

denim factory, said this award is a big recognition for the BGMEA. He said the BGMEA itself also recognises apparel entrepreneurs by awarding them for green initiatives. The BGMEA has been playing a vital role in negotiating with the National Board of Revenue to bring fiscal policy support for green initiatives, he added.

The USGBC Leadership Award recognises the exemplary leadership of individuals and organisations contributing to the creation of sustainable, healthier, equitable, and resilient buildings, cities, and communities.

The USGBC Leadership Award was given to recognise notable green building projects, companies, and individuals over the last year and also recognise the hard work put forth to create healthy and sustainable spaces. The awards were given based on regions, with six US regions and five international regions.

Bangladesh now boasts the highest number of green apparel factories in the world. According to the USGBC, Bangladesh has 143 green factories, of which 40 are platinum rated. Besides, more than 500 are in the process of becoming green.

The country owns nine out of the top 10 environment-friendly garment factories in the world. Not only that, 39 of the top 100 global platinum factories are in Bangladesh.

In May 2012, Bangladesh's Vintage Denim Studio was recognised as the first LEED platinum certified factory in the world. Apparel entrepreneurs have invested a lot in green initiatives after the 2013 Rana Plaza building collapse, which killed 1,134 people and injured more than 2,000.

Apart from the platinum rating, the USGBC also gives gold, silver, and green ratings as well as mere certifications to garment factories.

IDLC Investments wins "Best Investment Bank in Bangladesh" award by FinanceAsia

IDLC Investments Limited has been awarded as "Best Investment Bank in Bangladesh" in the Finance Asia Country Awards for 2021. Commenting on this recognition, Managing Director of IDLC Investments Md Moniruzzaman said, "Our trendsetting initiatives, strong performance in the market along with compliance and setting examples of best practices have been repeatedly recognized in the local and international arena, winning the FinanceAsia award is another testament to that."

IDLC Investments has been operating in the capital market of Bangladesh for over two decades. The company had an eventful year even amid the pandemic in 2020. It worked as the issue manager for the biggest ever IPO in Bangladesh as well as the IPO of the only listed company in the engineering construction sector of the stock exchanges. The company also completed a merger and acquisition transaction in the power sector. IDLC Investments also acted as trustee of the first-ever Basel III compliant contingent convertible perpetual bond in the country.

FinanceAsia is a Hong Kong-based publication reporting on Asia's financial and capital markets.



ACI chairman wins Bangabandhu agriculture award

ACI Group Chairman M. Anis Ud Dowla, has been awarded "Bangabandhu Jatiyo Krishi Puroshkar-1424" at Osmani Memorial Auditorium in Dhaka recently. Agricultural Minister Dr. Md. Abdur Razzaque handed over the award to Dowla and other winners on behalf of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who joined the ceremony virtually from her official Gono Bhaban residence.



Five gold, nine silver and 18 bronze medals were presented for outstanding contributions in agriculture such as agriculture research and expansion, cooperatives motivation, technology innovation, commercial farming, afforestation, rearing livestock and poultry and fish farming.

Fisheries and Livestock Minister SM Rezaul Karim was present.

Regional News

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina seeks D-8 leaders' role for sustainable solution to Rohingya crisis

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has urged the D-8 leaders to come forward for a sustainable solution to the Rohingya crisis and address the challenges posed by climate change. She also put emphasis on the importance of trade, investment, cooperation and harnessing the power of youth in the D-8 countries.

"I would like to urge you (D-8 leaders) to put pressure on Myanmar for taking back the Rohingyas," she said, expressing her concern that if the crisis is not resolved, it may create security concerns in the region and beyond.

The Rohingya crisis is an urgent issue for Bangladesh as it is having a severe impact on the country's environment, society and the economy, said the premier while addressing the 10th D-8 Summit, which is hosted by Bangladesh, virtually on 8 April as chair. The D-8 Organisation for Economic Cooperation, also known as Developing-8, consists of eight developing Muslim dense countries – Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan and Turkey. All heads of state and government, foreign ministers, D-8 secretary general and delegates joined the summit virtually.

Sheikh Hasina said Bangladesh gave shelter to 1.1 million Rohingyas of Myanmar on humanitarian grounds, but it insisted from the beginning that they (Rohingya) have to go back to the Rakhine State in Myanmar in a safe, dignified, voluntary and sustainable manner. Unfortunately, it has been more than three years after their influx into Bangladesh, and the repatriation process is yet to be started," she noted.

Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan delivered the opening speech and then handed over the organisation's chairmanship to Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was also in the chair when Bangladesh hosted the 2nd D-8 Summit in Dhaka in 1999.



In the summit, Sheikh Hasina made an urgent call to the leaders for a meaningful cooperation among the D-8 member countries for adaptation and mitigation measures, referring to Bangladesh's experiences regarding the issues of climate changes. The Bangladesh premier said her country has achieved phenomenal socio-economic growth even after the increasing frequency of natural disasters.

In addition to the Covid-19 pandemic, she said, Bangladesh had to bear the brunt of cyclone Amphan and prolonged flood last year and an estimated close to 1% of GDP was lost due to climate change. "It is likely to increase in the coming decades if the current phenomenon is not reversed," she noted.

Sheikh Hasina said as the chair of the Climate Vulnerable Forum-CVF, Bangladesh will be happy to work with the D-8 member states on the issue of implementation of the Paris Agreement. The theme of the 10th D-8 summit is "Partnership for Transformative World: Harnessing the Power of Youth and Technology".

Sheikh Hasina, one of the founding members of D-8 who attended the first Summit in Istanbul in 1997 as the prime minister of Bangladesh, also highlighted a few points in the areas of mutual cooperation in the summit. These are to harness the power of youths through skill development; utilise full potential of ICT; create necessary legal, institutional and infrastructural framework; and improve connectivity to facilitate trade and investment.

Laying emphasis on tapping the power and potential of the youths who have made breakthroughs in business ideas, models, innovations and technologies, she said the youths of D-8 countries can be encouraged to come together through the business initiatives at private and even government to private level.

Sheikh Hasina said Bangladesh has put emphasis on the use of transformative technology for the last one decade, turning the country into a "Digital Bangladesh" and added that Bangladesh is moving forward optimally using the power of youth and technology with more than 6 lakh IT professionals, 28 high-tech parks and technology friendly initiatives.

The Bangladesh prime minister also pointed out another key area of cooperation and said the member countries need to give focus on trade. Mentioning that trade is ultimately driven by the private sector, she said it is important to facilitate the travel of business people for which Bangladesh has joined six D-8 members in ratifying "Simplification of Visa Procedures for the Businessmen of the D-8 Member States".

The Leaders' Summit on Climate 2021 held virtually on April 22 & 23

On April 22 and 23, US President Joe Biden brought together 40 world leaders in a virtual Leaders' Summit on Climate to rally the world in tackling the climate crisis. The US announced that it would reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 50% by the end of decade, while other countries also announced more ambitious climate targets.

Biden began the Leader's Summit on Climate by framing enhanced climate action as necessary both to address the climate crisis and to promote economic opportunity, including the creation of "good-paying, union jobs." He went on to announce the US's updated NDC under the Paris Agreement: that the country will halve its greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.

Japan will cut emissions 46-50% below 2013 levels by 2030, with strong efforts toward achieving a 50% reduction, a significant improvement from its existing 26% reduction goal. Canada will strengthen its NDC to a 40-45% reduction from 2005 levels by 2030, a significant increase over its previous target to reduce emissions 30% below 2005 levels by 2030.

India reiterated its target of 450 GW of renewable energy by 2030 and announced the launch of the US-India 2030 Climate and Clean Energy Agenda 2030 Partnership to mobilise finance and speed clean energy innovation and deployment this decade. Argentina will strengthen its NDC, deploy more renewables, reduce methane emissions and end illegal deforestation.

The United Kingdom will embed in law a 78% GHG reduction below 1990 levels by 2035. The EU is putting into law a target of reducing net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030 and a net zero target by 2050. South Korea will end public overseas coal finance and strengthen its NDC this year to be consistent with its 2050 net zero goal.

China indicated that it will join the Kigali Amendment, strengthen the control of non-CO2 greenhouse gases, strictly control coal-fired power generation projects and slow down coal consumption. Brazil committed to achieve net zero by 2050, end illegal deforestation by 2030 and double funding for deforestation enforcement. South Africa announced that it intends to strengthen its NDC and shift its intended emissions peak year ten years earlier to 2025.

Russia noted the importance of carbon capture and storage from all sources, as well as atmospheric carbon removals. It also highlighted the importance of methane and called for international collaboration to address the potent greenhouse gas.

The urgent need to scale up climate finance, including both efforts to increase public finance for mitigation and adaptation in developing countries and efforts to catalyse trillions of dollars of private investment to support the transition to net zero emissions by 2050. Biden stressed the importance of developed countries mobilising $100 billion per year in public and private finance to support developing countries. He also announced that the US will seek to double funding, by 2024, for annual US public climate finance to developing countries, compared to the average level of the second half of the Obama-Biden Administration. This would include tripling public finance for adaptation by 2024. President Biden also called for an end to fossil fuel subsidies and announced that his administration will work to promote the measurement, disclosure and mitigation of material climate risks to the financial system.

The participants of the sessions recognised the need for governments to embrace key policies, including meaningful carbon pricing, enhanced disclosure of climate-related risks and phasing out fossil fuel subsidies.

Bangladesh stressed that the funding should be distributed at a ratio of 50:50 between mitigation and adaptation. At the same time, adaptation without mitigation is not a good strategy. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina put forward four suggestions to global leaders to fight climate change challenges with a strong collective response.

Her suggestions include announcing an immediate and ambitious action plan by developed countries to reduce their carbon emissions to keep the global temperature at 1.5 degrees Celsius with focus on mitigation measures; and ensuring the annual target of 100 billion US dollars which should be balanced 50:50 between adaptation and mitigation with a special attention to the vulnerable countries while pursuing losses and damages.



The other two suggestions are: major economies, international financial institutions and private sectors should come forward with plans for concessional climate financing as well as innovation; and focusing on green economy and carbon neutral technologies with a provision of technology transfer among nations.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chinese President Xi Jinping, Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga, Russian President Vladimir

Putin, Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, South Korean President Moon Jae-in, and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan were among the participants at the summit invited by the US president.

G7 should invest $10 trillion to stoke climate-friendly recovery - PM Johnson told

G7 countries should invest $10 trillion to stoke an investment-driven recovery that puts COVID-19 vaccines in arms and triggers a sweeping energy transformation to slow climate change, according to a report requested by Prime Minister Boris Johnson. Founded in 1975 as a forum for the West's richest nations to discuss crises such as the OPEC oil embargo, the G7 will discuss what it perceives as the biggest threats: China, Russia, climate change and the coronavirus pandemic.

Nicholas Stern, professor of economics at the London School of Economics, said in a report for Johnson that the G7 was a crucial opportunity for the West's richest economies to make a real change to the global economy. "The transition to a zero-emissions and climate-resilient world provides the greatest economic, business and commercial opportunity of our time," Stern said in the report.

"At the heart of the proposed vision for the economic response to the pandemic is a coordinated global



programme of investment for recovery, reconstruction and transformation that can boost all forms of capital – physical, human, natural and social," Stern said. G7 countries, he said, should set a collective goal to raise annual investment by 2% of GDP above pre-pandemic levels for this decade and beyond and improve the quality of investment - equal to about $1 trillion per year in additional investment over the next decade.

The G7 leaders should ensure a timely global roll-out of vaccines by immediately closing the $20 billion funding cap of COVAX, a global programme to provide vaccines mainly for poor countries.

After Johnson called for countries to do more than produce "hot air" rhetoric on climate, the report said the G7 should come up with credible ways to meet Biden's climate goals. The G7 should commit to eliminating all fossil-fuel subsidies no later than 2025, lead a sweeping energy transition, end overseas support for fossil-fuel investments and consider a minimum corporate profit tax of 21%.

Achieving Global Climate Goals Dhaka, Washington to forge new partnership

Having returned to the Paris Agreement after assuming office in January, US President Joe Biden is eager to work with Bangladesh as part of a new global partnership to fight climate change and protect future generations.

The US is ready to provide funding and leadership in raising climate ambition -- net zero carbon emissions and adaptation mechanisms -- and the "Leaders Summit on Climate" to be hosted by Biden on April 22-23 will prepare the groundwork ahead of the COP26 in Glasgow in November.

"We have experienced the hottest month and year in human history [last year]. We see the damages all across the world -- fires, flood, drought, sea level rise, food production being hampered migration is already happening because of climate change," said US Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry on 9 April.

"We know from scientists we all need to take actions." Kerry, who arrived in Dhaka at 11:30am on 9 April, following visits to India and the UAE, called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the afternoon and handed over Biden's invitation to attend the "Leaders Summit on Climate" to be hosted by the US president on April 22-23.

The summit will be attended by 40 global leaders of major economies and climate vulnerable countries. "Returning of the US to the Paris Agreement will create new momentum to the climate diplomacy," the PM said when Kerry called on her at the Gono Bhaban.

Earlier, Kerry participated in a climate finance roundtable with international partners, hosted by US Ambassador Earl Miller at his official residence. He then held meetings with Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen, Environment Minister Shahab Uddin, Special Envoy of the Vulnerable Forum Presidency Abul Kalam Azad, Saber Hossain Chowdhury MP, and State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam at the state guesthouse Padma in the capital.

At the meeting, they discussed accelerating interventions to keep the global temperature increase within 1.5 degrees Celsius, plans and projects being implemented by Bangladesh, including the Climate Change Trust Fund, National Solar Energy Roadmap, Bangladesh National Climate Action Plan,

establishing 14,000 cyclone shelters, Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan, planting of 11.5 million saplings, Planetary Emergency Resolution and protecting and preserving the Sundarbans.

Briefing reporters on the meeting, Foreign Minister Momen said Dhaka solicited assistance for renewable energy, US partnership with Global Adaptation Centre's regional office in Dhaka, and Bangladesh's plan to hold a high-level side event during the COP26 in Glasgow.

Momen said thousands of people are displaced every year in Bangladesh due to river erosion, while the problem of salinity due to sea level rise is affecting people's' ealth -- issues that need global support to be addressed.

As chair of the Climate Vulnerable Forum, Dhaka also sought US support to create an office of the special rapporteur at the UN, and urged for a proactive US role in Rohingya repatriation. Bangladesh officials also discussed Bangladesh-US climate collaboration in adaptation, renewable energy, waste management, technology transfer and climate finance.

"We both agreed to collaborate to achieve our goals for a better future for the next generation," Momen said. He raised the issue of losses and damages due to climate events, requested for assistance in afforestation in the southern coastal region and reconstruction and widening of river embankments to stop erosion.

Kerry, former US secretary of state, told journalists that he was delighted that PM Hasina would take part in the summit and that the two countries would be able to work together to conduct research and develop technology. Referring to his visit to India and the UAE, Kerry said both the countries have pledged to raise climate ambitions and accelerate the transition to clean energy.

"This does not require sacrifice. This does not require a lesser quality of life; it is a better quality of life, with cleaner air, less disease, less cancer. It will create tens of millions of jobs in the deployment of technologies for creation of a new energy future."



Kerry said President Biden had proposed to set aside two trillion dollars to help the US achieve zero carbon emissions in the power sector by 2035. He said under a multi-year programme, the US may commit $15-17 million for Bangladesh's access to affordable clean energy, fostering transparent and efficient energy market and advance innovation.

The US earlier had not paid the money to the fund due to Donald Trump's withdrawal from the Paris Agreement. The developed countries have committed to mobilise $100 billion annually to the fund for mitigation and adaptation. Biden will make further commitment for taking forward the $100 billion fund annually. "That's the beginning," Kerry said.

Asked if the US will provide compensation under the "Loss and Damage" principle according to which major carbon emitters should compensate the climate-affected countries, Kerry said, "First thing's first. "We need to invest significant amount of money this is the first step, instead of the loss and damage issue. This will not help produce the new money," he said, adding that for example, the Sundarbans need to be protected and this needs money. Let that happen first instead of speaking of compensation, he said.

The US Embassy in Dhaka in a statement said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will be recognised in the Global Leaders' Summit for Bangladesh's leadership as chair of the Climate Vulnerable Forum and the Vulnerable Twenty Group of Finance Ministers. "Bangladesh plays a vital role in international efforts to combat climate change and adapt and build resilience to climate hazards," it said.

"Secretary Kerry's visit underscores the importance the United States places on our partnership with Bangladesh, a vital leader in international efforts to address climate change," US Ambassador Earl Miller said in the statement.

During the meeting with Hasina, Kerry said the US president put emphasis on using alternative source of energy like renewable ones, including solar energy and hydroelectricity, to reduce pollution. Kerry said US companies are keen to invest in the renewable energy sector in partnership with others.

The PM said Bangladesh's contribution to carbon emission is negligible and that the country needs energy for development. She also said Bangladesh is in talks with India, Bhutan and Nepal to set up hydropower plants in a bilateral or trilateral manner on a regional basis. She thanked President Biden for inviting her to join the "Leaders Summit on Climate".

Source : The Daily Star

Asia Pacific renewable investments to double to $1.3 trillion by 2030 – Woodmac

Asia Pacific investments in renewable energy generation by 2030 may double to $1.3 trillion from the previous decade, dwarfing fossil fuel power expenditures that are expected to drop by about 25% to $54 billion annually, according to Wood Mackenzie.



"Asia Pacific power generation investments are leading the world and expected to hit $2.4 trillion in the current decade, with renewables accounting for over half...of power investments," the consultancy's research director Alex Whitworth said.

China, Japan, India, South Korea and Taiwan are among the top contributors to renewable investments, which include solar and wind, in Asia Pacific with an average of about 140 gigawatts of additional capacities annually, Woodmac said in a note on 22 June. By contrast, Woodmac said renewable investments in Australia - Asia Pacific's leader in the energy transition - will drop by 60% in the next five years, but pick up again to average $7 billion a year in 2030s.

"The country is closing ageing coal-fired plants and facing reliability and cost challenges at least 10 years earlier than other Asian countries," said Woodmac senior analyst Le Xu. Coal is expected to make up 55% of Asia Pacific's fossil fuel investments until 2030, before shrinking to 30% in the 2030s as gas dominates, said Whitworth.

The region's carbon emissions from power sector is likely to peak at 7.3 billion tonnes by 2025, equivalent to 1.8 tonnes per person or less than half the level of most developed countries. While the region's power sector carbon emissions are expected to drop by 47% from their 2025 peak, "inertia in the coal power fleet will prevent Asia Pacific from reaching carbon-free power by 2050," said Whitworth.

New technologies such as carbon capture and storage and green fuels including hydrogen, ammonia and biomass into coal and gas generation will be key in reducing power sector emissions, said Whitworth.

Bank of America triples environmental funding goal to $1tr by 2030

Financial institution Bank of America on 8 April announced its goal of deploying and mobilising $1-trillion by 2030 in its Environmental Business Initiative to accelerate the transition to a low-carbon, sustainable economy. This commitment will anchor a broader $1.5-trillion sustainable finance goal by both environmental transition and social inclusive development purposes, spanning business activities across the globe, said Bank of America vice-chairperson Anne Finucane.

Beyond the $1-trillion climate-related finance, the balance of the sustainable finance goal is focused on socially inclusive development, scaling capital to advance community development, affordable housing, healthcare and education, in addition to racial and gender equality. The bank's broader $1.5-trillion sustainable finance target is consistent with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and will spur transformative change nationally and around the world.

The new commitment advances an environmental transition across sectors to solutions in energy efficiency, renewable energy, sustainable transportation, resource efficiency, sustainable water and agriculture, as well as improved forestry and pollution control measures, the company said.

"The private sector is well-positioned to ensure that the capital needed – at the scale it is needed – can drive the transition to a low-carbon, sustainable economy. We will meet our commitment by working with clients to provide lending, capital raising, advisory and investment services, and to develop financial solutions and drive innovation to ensure the transition to a sustainable economy," she said.

BANK OF AMERICA

Finucane leads the company's environmental, social and governance, sustainable finance and public policy efforts.

Euro zone business growth hits three-year high but ECB cautious

Euro zone business growth accelerated at its fastest pace in over three years in May, a survey showed on 21 May, but European Central Bank President Christine Lagarde said an uncertain recovery still needed emergency support from the ECB. After a slow start to vaccinations the pace is picking up,

allowing some restrictions imposed to quell the spread of the coronavirus to be lifted, and a strong resurgence in the bloc's now-reopening service industry added to the impetus from a booming manufacturing sector.

As the economy rebounds and confidence improves, some policymakers are making the case for the ECB to start giving up its emergency measures and revert to more traditional forms of stimulus. But others are more cautious, warning the fledgling recovery is predicated on copious ECB support and that a recent rise in borrowing costs to two-year highs is already a major drag.

"We are committed to preserving favourable financing conditions. It's far too early and it's actually unnecessary to debate longer-term issues," Lagarde said. "I have repeatedly said that policymakers needed to provide the right bridge across the pandemic, well into the recovery, so we can actually deliver on our mandate."

Alongside that, euro zone finance ministers will continue to support their economies but were upbeat on 21 May about prospects for the post-pandemic recovery. With more businesses reopening - or at least adapting to lockdowns - IHS Markit's flash Composite Purchasing Managers' Index, seen as a good guide to economic health, climbed to 56.9 in May from April's final reading of 53.8.

That was its highest level since February 2018 and comfortably above the 50 mark separating growth from contraction, as well as the more modest increase to 55.1 predicted in a Reuters poll. The bloc's economy will expand 1.4% this quarter, according to a Reuters poll last week that also found forecasts for the rest of the year had been downgraded from last month.

"May's increase in the euro zone Composite PMI reflects the further lifting of virus restrictions in many parts of the region and suggests that the economic recovery is now underway," said Jessica Hinds at Capital Economics. In Germany, Europe's largest economy, services activity rose by the most in nearly a year, helped by a loosening of restrictions. But supply bottlenecks in manufacturing led to production problems at a growing number of factories.

The lifting of a lockdown in France unleashed a business boom there, with activity surging past expectations to set the stage for an economic rebound. A deal agreed by the European Union on 20 May to open up tourism across the 27-nation bloc this summer should provide a boost to tourism-dependent economies that were hammered by restrictions last year.

A preliminary PMI covering the 19-country euro zone's dominant service industry bounced to 55.1 from April's 50.5, well above the 52.3 median forecast in the Reuters poll and its highest since June 2018. Services firms benefited from the release of pent-up demand. The new business index - which has been below 50 almost throughout the pandemic - soared to 56.7 from 49.7, its highest since January 2018.



The manufacturing industry has weathered the coronavirus crisis much better than services as factories largely remained open. Its flash PMI dipped from April's record high of 62.9 to 62.8 but was ahead of the 62.5 Reuters poll estimate. An index measuring output that feeds into the composite PMI dropped to 61.9 from 63.2.

But supply-side issues have made it a seller's market for purveyors of raw materials and factories faced a record increase in input costs. The sub-index soared to 86.5 from 82.2, its highest since the survey began in June 1997.

Hopes the vaccine rollout is successful and that the worst of the pandemic is behind the bloc pushed overall optimism to its highest since IHS Markit began collecting the data in July 2012.

The composite future output index rose to 69.7 from 68.9. Consumer confidence in the bloc improved more than expected this month, official data on showed.

China's exports soar as US recovers and India stalls

China's exports unexpectedly surged in April as America's speedy recovery from the pandemic spurred demand. Stalled factory production in India, as the country struggles with a coronavirus crisis, also helped boost the global market for Chinese goods. China's exports in dollar terms surged by more than 32% from a year earlier to almost $264bn (£190bn). In the same month imports grew at the fastest pace in more than a decade,



rising by 43% from a year ago. Despite ongoing trade tensions with the US and other countries, China's exports for the month were almost $43bn more than its imports, a more than threefold increase. Economists highlight that the figures are heavily skewed as they are compared to the period a year ago when the country was brought to a virtual standstill by

strict lockdown measures. Analysts expect China's gross domestic product growth to slow from the record 18.3% expansion in the January-March quarter. That comes as the Covid-19 pandemic disrupts supply chains around the world, slowing the movement of goods and pushing up the cost of shipping.

Steel sector may be saddled with up to US$70b stranded assets

The global steel industry may have to write down up to $70 billion in assets in the coming years because it is still building new blast furnaces using coal that will become obsolete as the world cuts carbon emissions, a report said on 29 June. Some 50 million tonnes of steelmaking capacity is under development using blast furnace technology, largely in top producer China, US-based think-tank Global Energy Monitor (GEM) said in the report.

"Building new coal blast furnaces is a bad bet for steel producers and a bad bet for the planet," said Christine Shearer, GEM's coal programme director. Blast furnaces using coal could become unnecessary or inoperable, resulting in "stranded assets" worth US$47 billion to US$70 billion, the report said.

"Based on projections from the IEA and other groups, (they could become stranded) quite likely by 2030-2040. It could be sooner if more aggressive carbon taxes/restrictions are applied," said Caitlin Swalec, lead author of the report.

Total direct emissions from the global iron and steel sector must fall by more than 50 per cent by 2050 relative to 2019 to meet goals of the Paris Agreement on climate change, according to the International Energy Agency (IEA). New plants are being built even though there is large swathes of excess global steelmaking capacity, which was 25 per cent above production levels in 2019, GEM said.



Much of the global steel industry acknowledges it will have to slash carbon emissions since the sector accounts for about 7 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions, the group said. Steel making companies and countries have made commitments to move to net-zero and low carbon emissions that cover more than three-quarters of current global steel capacity, it added.

Steelmakers are looking to expand the use of electric arc furnaces while also developing hydrogen and carbon capture technologies to cut emissions. GEM used data from its Global Steel Plant Tracker, which surveys every plant operating at a capacity of one million tonnes a year or more.

Porsche to set up joint venture with German battery maker

Volkswagen's luxury sports car unit Porsche AG is setting up a joint venture with Customcells to produce high-performance batteries that will significantly reduce charging times, the company said on 20 June. The partnership with Customcells, a company in southern Germany specialising in lithium-ion cells, will aim to produce car batteries with higher energy density than prototypes used in Porsche's current electric cars, the company said in a statement.



European carmakers are pushing to reduce their dependence on Asia for batteries as they roll out all-electric models to meet stricter emissions targets in the European Union. In addition to cutting charging time, improving energy density will mean reducing the amount of raw material needed in batteries to achieve the same range. It will also cut battery production costs, making electric cars more affordable.

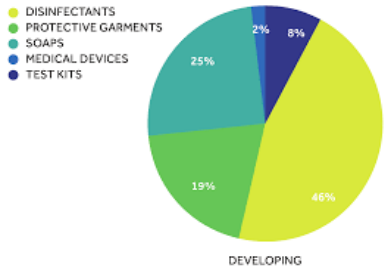
Porsche said it will invest a high double-digit million euro sum in the joint venture in which it will hold 80%. The production facility aims to have a capacity of 100 kilowatt hours, which will translate into about enough batteries for 1,000 cars a year.

Porsche Chief Executive Oliver Blume said in April the company wanted to speed up its e-mobility drive with plans for a German factory in Tuebingen to manufacture battery cells. At that time he did not say if Porsche would seek a joint venture partner. Porsche's parent company Volkswagen has said it plans to build half a dozen battery cell plants across Europe and expand infrastructure for charging electric vehicles globally.

WTO News

WTO issues new update on trade in medical goods in the context of COVID-19

The WTO Secretariat has published a further update of its information note on trade in medical goods in the



context of tackling COVID-19. The update provides figures on trade in medical goods covering all of 2020. The report also includes a special case study on diagnostic reagents and test kits, two critical products for monitoring the prevalence of the virus and which constitute a crucial barometer for governments to determine policies to fight the COVID-19 pandemic.

Trade in medical goods continued to register phenomenal growth of 16.3 per cent in 2020 compared to the 4.7 per cent growth of the same sector in 2019. Medicines remained the largest category by trade value, with more than 50 per cent of the total share of medical goods both in 2019 and in 2020. The highest share increase was for personal protective products, which accounted for only 13.7 per cent in 2019 but increased to 17.4 per cent in 2020.

Key points:

- Imports and exports of medical goods were valued at US$ 2,343 billion in 2020. This represents growth of 16 per cent compared to the previous year. In contrast, the total value of world merchandise trade contracted by 7.6 per cent in 2020.
- Trade in test kits and diagnostic reagents increased sharply in March 2020 when COVID-19 became a global pandemic. In December 2020, the monthly year-on-year increase reached 90 per cent for exports and 126 per cent for imports. Singapore and Lithuania are among the top ten exporters of these products.
- The share of medical goods in world trade grew from 5.3 per cent in 2019 to 6.6 per cent in 2020.
- Global trade in goods critical for fighting the pandemic, such as face masks, ventilators, sterilizers and ultrasonic scanners, grew by 31 per cent in 2020.
- China became the largest exporter of COVID-19-critical medical products in 2020. It exported products with a value of US$ 105 billion, about 2.8 times its exports in 2019. Malaysia, which was among the top 10 exporters in 2020, registered a 52 per cent year-on-year increase.
- The world's top 10 exporting economies supplied about three-quarters of world trade of COVID-19-critical products, while the top 10 importers accounted for 62 per cent of world imports.
- Diagnostic reagents and test kits account for around 10 per cent of per capita import expenses on COVID-19-critical goods in the economies with the highest incidences of COVID-19.

World Bank, IMF, WHO, WTO heads call for urgent action to accelerate global vaccine access

The heads of the World Bank Group, International Monetary Fund, World Health Organization and the WTO convened on 30 June the first meeting of the Task Force on COVID-19 Vaccines, Therapeutics and Diagnostics for Developing Countries. David Malpass, Kristalina Georgieva, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus and Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala said urgent action is needed to stop the rising human toll due to the pandemic and halt further divergence in the economic recovery between advanced economies and the rest. Following the meeting, they issued a joint statement.



Joint statement :

"As many countries are struggling with new variants and a third wave of

COVID-19 infections, accelerating access to vaccines becomes even more critical to ending the pandemic everywhere and achieving broad-based growth. We are deeply concerned about the limited vaccines, therapeutics, diagnostics, and support for deliveries available to developing countries. Urgent action is needed now to arrest the rising human toll due to the pandemic, and to halt further divergence in the economic recovery between advanced economies and the rest.

We have formed a Task Force, as a "war room" to help track, coordinate and advance delivery of COVID-19 health tools to developing countries and to mobilize relevant stakeholders and national leaders to remove critical roadblocks — in support of the priorities set out by World Bank Group, IMF, WHO, and WTO including in the joint statements of June 1 and June 3, and in the IMF staff's $50 billion proposal.

At today's first meeting, we discussed the urgency of increasing supplies of vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics for developing countries. We also looked at practical and effective ways to track, coordinate and advance delivery of COVID-19 vaccines to developing countries.

As an urgent first step, we are calling on G20 countries to (1) embrace the target of at least 40 percent in every country by end-2021, and at least 60 percent by the first half of 2022, (2) share more vaccine doses now, including by ensuring at least 1 billion doses are shared with developing countries in 2021 starting immediately, (3) provide financing, including grants and concessional financing, to close the residual gaps, including for the ACT-Accelerator, and (4) remove all barriers to export of inputs and finished vaccines, and other barriers to supply chain operations.

In addition, to enhance transparency we agreed to compile data on dose requests (by type and quantity), contracts, deliveries (including through donations), and deployments of COVID-19 vaccines to low and middle-income countries — and make it available as part of a shared country-level dashboard. We also agreed to take steps to address hesitancy, and to coordinate efforts to address gaps in readiness, so countries are positioned to receive, deploy and administer vaccines."

WTO members agree to extend TRIPS transition period for LDCs until 1 July 2034

WTO members agreed to extend until 1 July 2034 the deadline for least developed countries (LDCs) to protect intellectual property under the WTO's Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). Members reached consensus on the 13-year extension of the current transition period, which was set to expire on 1 July 2021, at a formal meeting of the TRIPS Council on 29 June.

Since the inception of the TRIPS Agreement, LDCs have benefitted from an extended transition period to apply provisions of the TRIPS Agreement, in recognition of their special requirements, their economic, financial and administrative constraints, and their need for flexibility in order to create a viable technological base. The transition period for LDC members under Article 66.1 of the TRIPS Agreement had been extended twice before (in 2005 and 2013).

The decision adopted was the result of intensive consultations over several months. Members were broadly in agreement on the principle of the extension but were unable to reach a decision due to their differences on the additional request that members graduating from LDC status should be accorded additional flexibilities under the TRIPS Agreement after their graduation.



LDCs favoured extending the transition period for as long as the member remains categorized as an LDC, and for an additional period of 12 years from the date of graduation of a member from the LDC category. A group of delegations expressed a preference for extending the period for a limited time, while others argued that a transition period for members that have graduated from LDC status went beyond the TRIPS Council's mandate under Article 66.1.

Given the lack of consensus on this latter issue, and the urgency to agree on the transition period extension, members agreed that the post-graduation element of the request would best be pursued under an LDC proposal already on the agenda of the General Council.

Under the agreed decision, LDC country members shall not be required to apply the provisions of the TRIPS Agreement, other than Articles 3, 4 and 5, until 1 July 2034, or until the date when they cease to be a least developed country, whichever date is earlier.

"This important decision proves that finding consensus is still within reach for members of this organization," said the chair of the TRIPS Council, Ambassador Dagfinn Sørli of Norway. The chair commended all delegations involved in this effort "for their sense of responsibility in finding a timely solution, for their

commitment in pursuing their respective objectives, and for the flexibility and pragmatism they showed when this was necessary to close the deal."

"It is thanks to the hard work and diplomatic acumen of these delegations that we have a draft decision before us, agreed by those most directly affected by this matter, that can once again extend the transition period for LDCs before the current period expires in just over 24 hours' time," he added. Delegations thanked the chair for his engagement and efforts to bring members together.

On behalf of the LDC Group, Chad noted this is a compromise solution they accept with the understanding that members have also expressed their readiness to continue discussions in good faith at the General Council on the post-graduation transition period for LDCs.

In expressing their support for the extension, developed members acknowledged the unique challenges facing LDCs, which in many cases have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. They encouraged LDCs to use the transition period to build reasonable and balanced IP systems for themselves, including by availing themselves of technical assistance available from the WTO and other international organizations.

Several members expressed their satisfaction at the fact that members have demonstrated they can work together constructively to reach consensus and deliver important results. The work done by the delegations of Chad and Bangladesh, who led the LDC effort in bringing the discussion to a successful and multilateral outcome, was also commended by a large number of delegations.

Call for proposals for "Digital Champions for Small Business" initiative

The "Digital Champions for Small Business " initiative was launched on 25 June at a joint event hosted by the Informal Working Group on Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs), the International Trade Centre (ITC) and the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC). The aim of the initiative is to help small businesses go digital and increase their participation in international trade. Proposals on how to help MSMEs address the difficulties they face with digital trade should be submitted by 15 September 2021.

The initiative was announced at a virtual event attended by WTO Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, ICC Secretary General John Denton, ITC Secretary General Pamela Coke-Hamilton and Ambassador Jose-Luis Cancela, Coordinator of the Informal Working Group on MSMEs.

Proposals are invited from industry associations, chambers of commerce and non-governmental organisations that are experienced in MSME and digitalization issues. The winning proposals will be announced at the WTO's 12th Ministerial Conference to be held in Geneva from 30 November to 3 December 2021.

Proposals can focus on awareness-raising campaigns, competitions, capacity building, training and mentoring programmes. Proposals should be designed to be delivered by the entity submitting the proposal and should not focus on WTO negotiations, or proposed changes to WTO rules.

Proposals should include details on the concept, aims, timelines and other information as appropriate. Proposals should be no longer than three pages and should be sent to the following address in Word or PDF



format: Digitalchampions@wto.org. Deadline for the call for proposals is 15 September 2021.

Awards will be tailored to the winning proposals. The number of awards will be determined based on the proposals received.

Merchandise trade posts strong gains in first quarter despite growing regional disparities

Global merchandise trade continued to bounce back in the first quarter of 2021 from its collapse earlier in the pandemic, but the pace of recovery has diverged strongly across countries and regions. The volume of merchandise exports and imports in the first quarter rose to new heights in Asia, reverted to pre-pandemic levels in Europe and North America, and lagged in poorer, less industrialized regions such as Africa and the Middle East.

The volume of world merchandise trade grew 2.1% quarter-on-quarter in Q1, which is equivalent to an annual rate of 8.7%. Year-on-year growth picked up to 4.3% in the same period. A bigger increase is expected in the second quarter due to the steep decline in the same quarter a year ago. The current pace of recovery is broadly consistent with the WTO's most recent forecast of 31 March 2021, which predicted global merchandise trade growth of 8.0% in 2021 and 4.0% in 2022. Inequitable access to COVID-19 vaccines continues to pose the

greatest threat to the economic outlook since a failure to protect all people regardless of income leaves populations vulnerable to further waves of infection. The next forecast update will be released in October.



Most regions have seen merchandise exports and imports recover to varying degrees since trade bottomed out in the second quarter of last year. The major exception is the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) including certain former and associate members, exports of which have continued to decline. In the first quarter of 2021, merchandise export volumes were up in Asia (+21.0% year-on-year) and Europe (+1.9%). They were down slightly in South and Central America (-0.1%) and North America (-2.2%), and down more substantially in Africa (-4.6%), the Middle East (-8.4%) and the CIS (-13.9%).

By comparison, merchandise import volumes were up year-on-year in all regions except Africa (-0.9%) and the Middle East (-2.7%). Overall, it appears that the trade recovery to date has been strongest in Asia and weakest in regions that export natural resources disproportionately.

Merchandise trade in nominal US dollar terms also rebounded strongly in the first quarter, up 14% year-on-year, due to a combination of increased quantities and higher prices. The sharp decline and subsequent rebound since the start of 2020 mostly reflects trends in manufactured goods trade, while other product categories made smaller contributions. Prices of primary commodities fell during the first wave of the pandemic but have since risen steadily, contributing to the upswings in fuels, mining products and agricultural products trade. In May 2021, prices were up 194% year-on-year for fuels, 54% for metals, 45% for food and 26% for agricultural raw materials according to IMF primary commodity price statistics.

WTO estimates for the first quarter of 2021 show strong year-on-year growth in all main product categories of merchandise trade. Manufactured goods trade was up 16% in the first quarter after having fallen 18% in the second quarter of 2020 at the height of the pandemic. Trade in agricultural products was up 11% in the latest quarter while shipments of fuels and mining products rose 9%.

Sub-sectors of manufactured goods showed positive year-on-year export growth in the first quarter. Computers, telecommunications equipment, and integrated circuits all recorded robust year-on-year trade growth of between 25% and 28% in the latest quarter. In contrast, personal items such as footwear, handbags and clothing saw more modest increases of between 4% and 11%. Growth in exports of pharmaceuticals moderated to 8% in the first quarter after having spiked last year.

WHO, WIPO, WTO map out further collaboration to tackle COVID-19 pandemic

The Directors-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and the WTO agreed to enhance their support to members battling COVID-19 by collaborating on a series of workshops to augment the flow of information on the pandemic and by implementing a joint platform for tripartite technical assistance to member governments relating to their needs for medical technologies. As a result of their meeting on 15 June, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Daren Tang and Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala issued a joint statement.

Joint statement :

On 15 June 2021, we, the Directors-General of WHO, WIPO and the WTO, met in a spirit of cooperation and solidarity to map out further collaboration to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic and the pressing global challenges at the intersection of public health, intellectual property and trade. Acutely conscious of our shared responsibility to communities across the world as they confront a health crisis of unprecedented severity and scale, we pledged to bring the full extent of the expertise and resources of our respective institutions to bear in ending the COVID-19 pandemic and improving the health and well-being of all people, everywhere around the globe.

We underscored our commitment to universal, equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines, therapeutics, diagnostics, and other health technologies — a commitment anchored in the understanding that this is an urgent moral imperative in need of immediate practical action.

In this spirit, we agreed to build further on our long-standing commitment to WHO-WIPO-WTO Trilateral Cooperation that aims to support and assist all countries as



they seek to assess and implement sustainable and integrated solutions to public health challenges. Within this existing cooperative framework, we agreed to enhance and focus our support in the context of the pandemic through two specific initiatives.

First, our three agencies will collaborate on the organization of practical, capacity-building workshops to enhance the flow of updated information on current developments in the pandemic and responses to achieve equitable access to COVID-19 health technologies. The aim of these workshops is to strengthen the capacity of policymakers and experts in member governments to address the pandemic accordingly. The first workshop in the series will be a workshop on technology transfer and licensing, scheduled for September. The workshop will help our members update their knowledge and understanding of how intellectual property, know-how and technology transfer work in actuality. This would be in the context of medical technologies and related products and services. This first workshop will be followed by others on related practical themes.

Secondly, we will implement a joint platform for tripartite technical assistance to countries relating to their needs for COVID-19 medical technologies, providing a one-stop shop that will make available the full range of expertise on access, IP and trade matters provided by our organizations, and other partners, in a coordinated and systematic manner.

The platform for technical assistance will, in particular: support countries to assess and prioritize unmet needs for COVID-19 vaccines, medicines and related technologies, and provide timely and tailored technical assistance in making full use of all available options to access vaccines, medicines and technologies, including through coordination between members facing similar challenges to facilitate collective responses.

These initiatives will also be underpinned by our joint efforts to collect and make accessible robust and inclusive data needed to guide an effective response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This will include a periodical update of the overview of COVID-19-related measures that are mapped in a key resource for trilateral cooperation, the WHO-WIPO-WTO publication "Promoting Access to Medical Technologies and Innovation: Intersections between public health, intellectual property and trade", published in 2020.

WTO launches call for MSME stories on "Building resilience through trade during COVID-19"

The WTO is inviting micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) to share their business experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic and tell us how trade has helped them combat the crisis. Selected stories will be featured during the WTO Public Forum entitled "Trade beyond COVID-19: Building Resilience" scheduled to take place from 28 to 30 September 2021.

MSMEs are invited to submit their stories no later than 19 July 2021. The story should briefly explain how your business has been affected by the COVID 19 pandemic, what measures you have taken to stay in operation and how trade has helped you to overcome the challenges. The story may be submitted as an audio file or as a short text. The online application form can be accessed here. Selected stories will be featured on the WTO website.

WTO receives updated petition calling for universally accessible and affordable COVID-19 vaccines

A petition signed by over 2.7 million people from around the world calling for universal access to affordable COVID-19 vaccines was received by the WTO on 7 June. It was delivered by Avaaz, an online activist network, and the People's Vaccine Alliance, a coalition of organizations. The petition brings together the work of more than 40 organizations worldwide, including the Online Progressive Engagement Network (OPEN), Public Citizen, Frontline AIDS, Amnesty International, Oxfam, SumOfUs and the European

Citizens' Initiative for No Profit on Pandemic.

The handover took place the day before a meeting of the Council for Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), where WTO members continue discussions on a revised proposal to waive certain obligations in the TRIPS Agreement in relation to the prevention, containment or treatment of COVID-19.

The WTO's Head of External Relations, Bernard Kuiten, received the petition on behalf of the organization from representatives of Avaaz and the People's Vaccine



Alliance. "The WTO is very appreciative of the time and dedication that Avaaz and others continue to give to this important issue. The WTO needs to be aware of citizens' views and concerns with trade matters that could directly affect them. Avaaz and others are helping to raise awareness about access to vaccines and their vital role in ensuring a global solution to the COVID-19 crisis," he said.

The original version of the petition, signed by over 900,000 individuals, was delivered to the WTO on 9 December 2020. The updated petition, with over 2 million signatures, has been supported by a variety of influential public figures.

WTO launches Gender Research Hub to promote cooperation on trade and gender issues

The WTO on 31 May launched the WTO Gender Research Hub to enhance collaboration and exchange among trade and gender researchers. It will also serve as a platform for dialogue between researchers and the Informal Working Group on Trade and Gender established at the WTO last September.

Core participants in the WTO's Research Hub include the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank Group, the International Trade Centre, the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, participants in the WTO Academic Chairs Programme, and a number of academics from various countries and regions. Other experts will be invited to take part on an ad hoc basis.

"I believe the launch of this initiative is particularly important today because of the economic and social upheaval experienced by millions of women across the globe due to the COVID-19 pandemic," said the WTO Trade and Gender Focal Point, Anoush der Boghossian, who will coordinate the activities of the Hub and contribute to it.

The Hub will enable the sharing of information on trade and gender research, foster research partnerships, and promote comparative research across regions. Arrangements will be made for the information to be publicly available online. The Hub aims for these research findings to inform discussions across WTO bodies, including the WTO Informal Working Group on Trade and Gender. It further aims to support



efforts to gather research funding and take stock of efforts every two years through an international research conference.

Goods barometer reveals strength of trade recovery, depth of COVID-19 shock

Global merchandise trade is continuing to recover in 2021 following a steep but brief pandemic-induced drop in the second quarter of last year, according to the latest WTO Goods Trade Barometer released on 28 May.

The Goods Barometer is a composite leading indicator for world trade, providing real-time information on the trajectory of merchandise trade relative to recent trends. The barometer's current reading of 109.7 is nearly 10 points above the baseline value of 100 for the index and up 21.6 points year-on-year, reflecting both the strength of the current recovery and the depth of the COVID-19 shock last year.



In the latest month, all of the barometer's component indices were above trend and rising, highlighting the broad-based nature of the recovery and signalling an accelerating pace of trade expansion.

Among the barometer's component indices, the biggest gains were seen in export orders (114.8), air freight

(111.1) and electronic components (115.2), all of which are highly predictive of near-term trade developments. The strength of the automotive products index (105.5) may reflect improving consumer sentiment, since confidence is closely linked to sales of durable goods. This is also true of agricultural raw materials (105.4), which are mostly made up of wood intended for housing construction. Finally, the strong showing for container shipping (106.7) is more impressive in light of the fact that sea shipments held up well during the pandemic and had less ground to make up as a result.

The latest barometer reading is broadly in line with the WTO's current trade forecast issued on 31 March, which predicted an 8% pickup in the volume of world merchandise trade in 2021 following a 5.3% decline the previous year. The relatively positive short-term outlook for trade is marred by regional disparities, continued weakness in services trade and lagging vaccination timetables, particularly in poor countries.

Global trade has been recovering since the second quarter of 2020, when the spread of the COVID-19 virus prompted lockdowns in many countries and triggered a steep drop in world trade. The volume of merchandise trade was down 15.5% year-on-year in Q2, when lockdowns were in full effect, but by the fourth quarter trade had surpassed the level of the same period in 2019.

While quarterly trade volume statistics for the first and second quarters of 2021 have not been released yet, they are expected to show very strong year-on-year growth, partly due to the recent strengthening of trade and partly as a result of the trade collapse last year. However, COVID-19 continues to pose the greatest threat to the outlook for trade, as new waves of infection could easily undermine the recovery.

DG Okonjo-Iweala announces her four Deputy Directors-General

Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala on 4 May announced the appointment of Angela Ellard of the United States, Anabel González of Costa Rica, Ambassador Jean-Marie Paugam of France and Ambassador Xiangchen Zhang of China as her four Deputy Directors-General.

"I am very pleased to announce the appointment of four new Deputy Directors-General at the WTO. It is the first time in the history of our Organization that half of the DDGs are women. This underscores my commitment to strengthening our Organization with talented leaders whilst at the same time achieving gender balance in senior positions. I look forward to welcoming them to the WTO," DG Okonjo-Iweala said.

Ms Angela Ellard (United States) has a distinguished career of service working at the US Congress as Majority and Minority Chief Trade Counsel and Staff Director. She is internationally recognized as an expert on trade and international economic policy, negotiating trade agreements and supporting multilateral solutions as part of an effective trade and development policy. Ms Ellard has negotiated and delivered significant bipartisan trade policy outcomes and legislation for well over 25 years with Members of U.S. Congress and senior Trump, Obama, Bush, and Clinton Administration officials. Ms Ellard also worked as a lawyer in the private sector, working on trade litigation and strategy, policy and legislative issues. Ms Ellard obtained her Juris Doctor, cum laude from Tulane



University School of Law and her Master of Arts in Public Policy also from Tulane. Ms Ellard is a frequent lecturer at law, graduate, and undergraduate classes and has published articles on trade law and policy.

Ms Anabel González (Costa Rica) is a renowned global expert on trade, investment and economic development with a proven managerial track record in international organizations and the public sector. In government, Ms Gonzalez served as Minister of Foreign Trade of Costa Rica; as Director-General for International Trade Negotiations; as Director-General of the Costa Rican Investment Promotion Agency (CINDE); and as Special Ambassador and Chief negotiator of the US-Central America-Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement. Ms Gonzalez also served at the World Bank as a Senior Director, the WTO as Director of the Agriculture and Commodities Division and as Senior Consultant with the Inter-American Development Bank. More recently, Ms Gonzalez has worked as a Non-Resident Senior Fellow with the Peterson Institute for International Economics. Ms Gonzalez obtained her master's degree from Georgetown University Law Center with the highest academic distinction and has published extensively on economic issues and trade.

Ambassador Jean-Marie Paugam (France) has held senior management positions in the French Government on trade, most recently as Permanent Representative of France to the WTO. He has also held a number of senior positions in the French Ministry of Economy and Finance, including as a member of the Executive Committee of the French Treasury. He has also served as Deputy Executive Director

of the International Trade Centre in Geneva. He has accumulated a deep and practical knowledge of government practices on trade as well as being familiar with high-level dialogues on trade and international economic operations. He has published a number of articles on trade-related issues, in particular when serving as Senior Research Fellow on International Trade at the French Institute for International Relations (IFPRI). Ambassador Paugam graduated from ENA in Paris and obtained degrees in Political Science from the Institute of Political Science in Aix-en-Provence and in Law from the Faculty of Law Aix-Marseille III.

Ambassador Xiangchen Zhang (China) is currently serving as Vice Minister in the Ministry of Commerce of China. He has long and extensive experience on WTO issues, international negotiations, and policy research. Ambassador Zhang served until recently as China's Permanent Representative to the WTO and previously as Deputy Permanent Representative. He has had an extensive career of more than 30 years in international trade, serving as Director of the Department of International Trade and Economic Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation; as Director-General of the Department of WTO Affairs of the Ministry of Commerce; and as Director General of the Department of Policy Research of the Ministry of Commerce. Ambassador Zhang holds a bachelor's degree in Law, a Master's degree in International Relations and a PhD in International Politics from Peking University.

WTO saddened by passing of former Deputy Director-General Miguel Rodríguez Mendoza

Miguel Rodríguez Mendoza died in Geneva on Sunday 25 April. He was a senior member of former WTO Director-General Mike Moore's management team from 1999 to 2002.

Miguel Rodríguez was an "astute and politically savvy trade specialist", WTO Director-General Okonjo-Iweala said. "He helped to advance the trade policy agenda during difficult times for the WTO. He will be sorely missed by the WTO community. My thoughts are with his family and friends."

During his tenure as Deputy Director-General, Miguel Rodríguez Mendoza oversaw work on agriculture, economic research, trade policy reviews and the WTO's General Council. He joined Mike



Moore because of his wealth of experience with trade negotiations and trade policy making. Miguel Rodríguez successfully led Venezuela's accession to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) in 1990 and was Minister of State and President of Venezuela's Institute of Foreign Trade. Until 1998, he was the Chief Trade Advisor at the Organization of American States (OAS), after which he worked as a trade consultant. He chaired six WTO dispute settlement panels and was a member of three others.

Miguel Rodríguez had a passion for teaching and for mentoring new generations of trade officials. Being very approachable, he was always willing to share his knowledge and experience.

Dates fixed for WTO's 12th Ministerial Conference

The WTO's 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) will take place from 30 November to 3 December 2021 in Geneva, Switzerland, the chair of the organization's General Council confirmed on 16 April.

In a communication to WTO members, Ambassador Dacio Castillo of Honduras noted that the General Council agreed at its meeting on 1 March to hold MC12 in Geneva the week of 29 November. As a follow-up, the chair indicated to members on 30 March the proposed dates of 30 November — 3 December for MC12. As no objections have been raised, the chair said he was pleased to confirm these dates for the meeting.

The Ministerial Conference, which is attended by trade ministers and other senior officials from the organization's 164 members, is the highest decision-making body of the WTO. MC12 was originally scheduled to take place from 8 to 11 June 2020 in Kazakhstan's capital, Nur-Sultan, but was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. MC12 will be chaired by Kazakhstan's Minister of Trade and Integration, Bakhyt Sultanov, as approved by WTO members in December 2019.

This will be the fourth time that the Ministerial Conference will be hosted by Geneva, where the headquarters of the WTO are located. Previous meetings took place in Geneva in 1998, 2009 and 2011.

WTO OMC MC12 GENEVA 2021

About ICC Bangladesh

International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), The world business organization, with its headquarters in Paris, celebrated its Centenary world over in 2019. ICC, with physical presence in more than 100 countries, represents 45 million companies and more than 1 billion workers worldwide. One in every three worker depend on ICC Members for their livelihood.

ICC was founded in 1919 in the aftermath of the First World War when no world system of rules governed trade, investment, finance or commercial relations. ICC's founders, referred to as "The Merchants of Peace", acted on their conviction that building stronger trade relations between nations would reduce the risk of war and armed conflict. ICC, is the largest and the only private sector non-sovereign organization, which was granted Status of a Permanent Observer at the General Assembly of the United Nations in December 2016.

ICC works in close cooperation with national governments and multi-national institutions such as G-8/G-20, World Bank, WTO, Asian Development Bank, UNCTAD, OECD and several UN agencies for promotion, protection and development of world economy.

Bangladesh National Committee of ICC, founded in 1994, is comprised of trade organizations, national and trans-national corporations, who represent almost 80% Bangladesh economy.

The activities of ICC Bangladesh include promotion of foreign trade and investment, trade policy reviews, business dialogues, seminars & workshops both at home and abroad on related policy issues, harmonization of trade law & rules, legal reforms, updating businesses with the ICC rules & standards for cross border business transactions. ICC Bangladesh has so far organized following regional & international conferences.

- 10-11 November 2000: ICC Asia Conference on "Investment in Developing Countries: Increasing Opportunities" organized in Dhaka was inaugurated by the Prime Minister of Bangladesh and attended by a number of high profile dignitaries including the Thai Deputy Prime Minister & WTO Director General Designate, ADB President, UN-ESCAP Executive Secretary and Chinese Vice Minister for Foreign Trade & Economic Cooperation. More than 250 participants from 24 countries participated in this event.
- 17-18 January 2004: International Conference on "Global Economic Governance and Challenges of Multilateralism" was held in Dhaka, coinciding with 10th Anniversary of ICC Bangladesh. The Conference was inaugurated by the Prime Minister of Bangladesh and Thai Prime Minister was the Keynote Speaker. WTO Director General, EU Commissioner for Trade, UNESCAP Executive Secretary, Governor of Japan Bank for International Cooperation, six Ministers from three continents, Bangladesh Ministers, ICC Chairman, ICC Vice Chairman, ICC Secretary General and more than 500 participants from 38 countries attended this event.
- 27-28 September 2005: Regional Seminar on "Capital Market Development: Asian Experience". The Seminar held in Dhaka was inaugurated by the President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh and attended by Chairmen/CEOs of securities & exchange commissions, stock exchanges, capital market operators, financial institutions and investors from 15 Asian countries.
- 13 April 2010: Conference on "Energy for Growth" was held in Dhaka coinciding with the 15 years of ICC's presence in Bangladesh. The Conference was inaugurated by the Finance Minister of Bangladesh and attended by ICC Global Chairman, Minister for Commerce of Bangladesh, Minister for Development Cooperation of Denmark and Adviser to the Bangladesh Prime Minister for Energy & Mineral Resources. Some 800 delegates from home and abroad including energy experts and international financiers from Australia, China, Denmark, India, Germany, Japan, Singapore, Switzerland, UK and USA attended the event.
- 25-26 October 2014: International Conference on "Global Economic Recovery: Asian Perspective", was in held in Dhaka coinciding with the 20 years of ICC's presence in Bangladesh. The Conference was inaugurated by the President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Minister for Finance & Minister for Commerce of Bangladesh, UNCTAD Secretary General, Ministers from Myanmar and Nepal; ICC Vice Chairman; ICC Secretary General; ICC Research Foundation Chairman; Director of ICC National Committees and more than 500 participants attended this event.
- 8-9 February 2017 : The first ever "UNESCAP Asia Pacific Business Forum: Regional Integration to Achieve Sustainable Development" was organized by ICC Bangladesh jointly with UNESCAP under the patronage of the Ministry of Commerce, Government of Bangladesh. The Forum was inaugurated by the Hon'ble President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Ministers from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, UNESCAP Under Secretary General, UNCTAD Secretary General, business leaders and some 600 delegates from home and abroad attended the Forum.
- 10-12 December 2019 :"The Asia Pacific Conference on Financing inclusive and Sustainable Development" was organized by ICC Bangladesh jointly with UNESCAP, ADB and LIBF (The London Institute of Banking & Finance) under the patronage of the Financial Institutions Division (FID), Ministry of Finance, Government of Bangladesh to celebrate 100 years of ICC and 25 years of ICC Bangladesh. The Hon'ble President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh inaugurated the Conference. Video Messages from UN Secretary General Mr. António Guterres and 8th former United Nations Secretary General Mr. Ban-Ki moon were also played during the inauguration. Ministers from Bangladesh, Cambodia, Maldives and Sri Lanka, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCAP, Central Bank Governors, Business Leaders, Policy Makers, Experts and some 800 delegates from home and 30 foreign countries attended the Conference.

As part of its activities, ICC Bangladesh has been organizing Workshops/ Seminars on International Trade Finance, mainly for bankers, within Bangladesh and in various countries. Since 2014, the National Committee has organized workshops in Kuala Lumpur (April 2014); in Colombo (February 2015); in Kunming (August 2015); in Yangon (November 2015); in Hanoi (April 2016); in Bangkok (December 2017) and in Phnom Penh (April 2018).

The National Committee also arranged participation of Bankers from Bangladesh at ICC Annual Banking Meetings held in Singapore (April 2015), in Jakarta (April 2017) and in Beijing (April 2019). Besides, ICC Bangladesh arranged participation of Bankers at ICC Austria Global Trade Conference held in Vienna in May 2017, June 2018 and May 2019, FCI Annual Meeting in Vietnam (June 2019), ICC Academy 8th Supply Chain Summit in Singapore (February 2019), International Financial Crime Forum in Kuala Lumpur (July 2019) and World Conference on Banking Institutions (WCBI) organized by London Institute of Banking and Finance (LIBF) in London (September 2019).

For professional development of bankers, ICC Bangladesh also organizes Certified Documentary Credit Specialist (CDCS) and Certificate for Specialists in Demand Guarantees (CSDG) Examinations in Dhaka, conducted worldwide every year by LIBF (London Institute of Banking and Finance) and endorsed by ICC Paris.

ICC Bangladesh participates in most of the World Chambers Congress & ICC World Congresses held every two years and WTO Ministerial Meetings as well as ICC Regional Consultative Group Meetings. The National Committee also arranges visit by Bangladesh Business delegation to different countries for promotion of trade and investment.

International Chamber of Commerce

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IPDC FINANCE

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financial institution, IPDC Finance
holds **AAA** rating,
the highest possible credit rating, from Emerging Credit Rating Limited.



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NATIONAL HOUSING

বন্ধুত্বের আস্থা

National Housing Finance and Investments Limited