



PMMU Newsletter

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WORKING FROM HOME DURING PANDEMIC

This e-newsletter covers the last quarter of FY 2019-2020 when Bangladesh and a large part of the world were struggling to contain COVID-19 pandemic. Offices opened within strict health guidelines from 31st May after remaining closed from 26th March. However the areas designated as Red Zones continued to be covered under the Government's general holiday restrictions till end-June. Most activities during this quarter were conducted from home on-line, including group consultation with different stakeholders.

CHANGED MANAGEMENT AT HSD AND PW

Another key feature of working environment during this quarter was changes in managerial leadership at the helm of Health Services Division, DGFP and Planning Wing. Mr. Abdul Mannan joined as Secretary HSD, replacing Mr. Ashadul Islam, who was transferred to the post of Secretary Planning Division. Ms. Shahan Ara Banu joined as DG of DGFP on 19th April. Mr. Md. Helal Uddin, Division Chief joined HSD on 21st April to head the Planning Wing. Dr. A E Md. Muhiuddin Osmani, Joint Chief, Planning Wing was transferred and posted to the Health Wing of Socio-economic Infrastructure Division, Planning Commission. CMSD – the procurement agency of DGHS - also got a new Director during this quarter.

REVISION OF MPIR 2020

The Mid-Term Programme Implementation Report 2020 was prepared in February to provide background materials for MTR. The deliberations in different Task Group meetings in the course of MTR were taken into consideration by the Planning Wing, which directed PMMU to revisit some of the data in MPIR. Accordingly, a revised and updated MPIR 2020 was submitted to Planning Wing on 30 April.

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MID-TERM REVIEW OF 4TH HPNSP

The Mid-Term Review (MTR) 2020 of the current sector programme was officially launched on 26th February and was scheduled to be completed on 8th April through finalization of the final MTR Report along with a Priority Action Plan (PAP). An independent review team (IRT) consisting of 16 consultants (national and international) to cover 13th thematic areas came on-board from 22nd February to conduct the MTR. Desk reviews, Task Group meetings, field visits to three districts outside Dhaka and stakeholder consultations could be completed before the Government declared general holiday on 26th March to contain the spread of Corona Virus in the country.

The IRT members were able to share draft reports on their thematic areas in mid-April. Based on review by PW and the DPs, these reports were finalised and the Main Report was submitted by the Team Leader, IRT in June 16 along with a set of PAP. The APR Steering Committee chaired by Mr. Md. Helal Uddin, Division Chief reviewed the PAP on 25th June and finalised it in its next meeting (on 6th July), the same was appraised to the LCG – Health Work Group meeting (on 9th July). This brought the MTR process to an end – involving a delay of three months due to disruption of normal activities caused by COVID-19.

ANNUAL PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION REPORT (JULY 2019 – JUNE 2020)

The Planning Wing, HSD decided to continue the long-established practice of bringing out the annual report of implementation progress of the 4th HPNSP, inspite of intense demand on its time and resources posed by COVID-19. In a meeting chaired by Mr. Helal Uddin, Division Chief on 24th June, the PW approved an amended version of the template presented by PMMU-TAST to collect up to date information from the LDs of all OPs. The report (APIR 2020) is to be submitted to the Planning Wing by PMMU within end-September.

MOHFW's COVID-19 PROJECTS

MOHFW processed two projects – each of \$100 million foreign aid – on an emergency basis involving 'Early Response and Pandemic Preparedness' for COVID-19: the first was co-financed by the World Bank and the second by ADB. The Hon'ble Prime Minister, as Chair of ECNEC, approved both these projects on-line. DGHS is the implementing agency for both these projects. Another project of \$100 million to be financed by the Asian Infrastructure Bank is under process. Both South Korea and Japan are in talks with the Government for supporting Bangladesh's COVID-19 measures.

AMENDMENT OF AGREEMENTS WITH WB

The Planning Wing with support from the PMMU-TAST finalized the Amendments to the Financing Agreement of the 4th HPNSP with the World Bank as well as the Grant Agreement to remove technical requisites standing in the way of achieving certain Disbursement-Linked Results (DLRs) by MOHFW. This will help to improve disbursement from the World Bank.

MOHFW RECEIVES HIGHEST EVER ANNUAL BUDGET

The annual budget of the government for FY 2020-21 was approved by the National Parliament in June. As was expected, MOHFW received its highest ever annual budget (Tk. 29, 247 crore) to be able to respond adequately to the ongoing challenges posed by COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the Ministry of Finance earmarked a large block allocation (of Tk. 10,000 crore) for MOHFW to meet further contingent expenditure, if needed. It is worth mentioning that FY 2020-21 health budget is 5.1% of the total national budget, and this year the budget has increased by 13.66% over the budget of FY 2019-20.