

## E-commerce boom creates jobs amid pandemic

A Monitor Report

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Dhaka : A boost in e-commerce businesses, fuelled by the trend of staying home amid the coronavirus pandemic and shopping online, has generated jobs in the sector while other areas of the economy are struggling to cope up with the situation.

During the lockdown last year, a huge number of people began ordering products from groceries to food to consumer electronics online and continued the practice after the restrictions were lifted, according to reports.

Now as Bangladesh is going through another lockdown, people who lost jobs in other sectors are getting involved with e-commerce, some launching their own businesses while others getting employed by e-commerce firms.

A clothing vendor in Dhaka's Mohammadpur seeking anonymity, had to shut his business in the 66-day lockdown last year. Finally, he joined an online food company as a deliveryman.

The story of an anonymous restaurant worker in Dhanmondi is almost alike. He also joined an e-commerce firm as a deliveryman after losing his job.

Nearly 100,000 people like them have joined the e-commerce platforms' in delivery, packaging, technology, marketing, advertising and other sections in the past one year, according to Asif Ahnaf, Director at e-Commerce Association of Bangladesh or e-CAB.

"We hope it will be possible to create 500,000 jobs in the sector over the next three years if the growth trend continues," he added.

Foodpanda, a food delivery firm, said it raised the number of its riders who deliver the food by 50 per cent in the past one year as it expanded its business.

The e-commerce firms had faced a crisis of manpower when the first lockdown was imposed last year. Later, most firms recruited more workers for smooth business.

Zia Ashraf, Co-founder and Chief Operating Officer of Chaldal.com, an online grocery firm, said they increased their manpower from 867 in February 2020 to 1,606 in December. Now it has a 2,263-strong workforce. It has around 700 deliverymen while the others work at warehouses and other sections.

Super shop Shwapno revamped its delivery services for orders taken online and via phone during the lockdown last year. It has nearly doubled the number of its deliverymen from 35 to 66 in a year, said Mehjabin Badhon, Head of Shwapno's Customer Analytics.

According to the commerce ministry, it has trained on e-commerce business more than 1,500 youths in Dhaka and Chattogram as part of a project to help the sector boost and create jobs.