

## IDLC, Unicef to improve healthcare in seven Sylhet tea gardens

STAR BUSINESS DESK

IDLC Finance and United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (Unicef) have entered into a partnership to improve maternal and neonatal health rights and nutrition for 7,000 women, 3,000 under-five children and 5,000 adolescents in seven tea gardens of Sylhet.

A memorandum of understanding in this regard was signed on Wednesday, according to a statement.

The IDLC will support renovation of water, sanitation and hygiene facilities and provide necessary medical equipment and logistics.

Unicef will ensure capacity building of health service providers connecting with government systems for sustainability.

Moreover, awareness campaigns will be run for 40,000 people on maternal, neonatal mortality and nutrition issues.

"We always try to go extra miles when

it comes to helping the society where they need it most," said Jamal Uddin, deputy managing director at IDLC Finance.

"This partnership will be setting example of corporate sector's championing role in addressing critical national issues together with relevant stakeholders," he said.

"Partnerships like this one will help reimagine how socially responsible private sector entities can contribute to the establishment of a better society for all children no matter where they are born and raised," said Tomoo Hozumi, Unicef country representative in Bangladesh.

"Without healthy and well-educated children, it is not possible to envisage sustainable development in any society be it economic or social," he said.

"The private sector has a critical role to play in this regard together with the government and other actors in the society," he added.

## QR codes, health passports: China's tech arsenal against a pandemic

AFP, Beijing

Daily life in China follows a rhythm of digital check-ins, with the QR code -- at offices, malls and transport hubs -- an integral defence against Covid-19 that helps to track, trace and isolate patients.

Now the country where the coronavirus was first detected is launching a digital "health passport" for its 1.4 billion population which it hopes will eventually re-start international travel.

Concerns over privacy and data harvesting have for now been

a "green" pass in the health app, a common practice at most offices, restaurants, shopping malls, sports centres and transport stations.

The system is linked with the user's ID and phone number, and is used to track their contacts, assess their health risk, and display the results of any recent Covid-19 tests or vaccines.

The nationwide app gathers geolocation data provided by phone operators, while other regional ones link to train and plane tickets, identity checks or screening tests. The digital health certificate extends that system by showing the holder's vaccine status

on the run for two decades, but ended up surrendering himself to the authorities after the health app had made it impossible for him to enter a store, get employment or move around without being detected.

In China, vast amounts of Chinese economic activity and payments are handled through digital apps such as WeChat. Consumers surrender data on their buying habits, travel, and other personal information for digital convenience. But worries over privacy and data security have been heightened by the health codes and fears it marks a rush of government surveillance into hundreds of millions of lives.

Last year, a law professor successfully sued a wildlife park for asking him to scan his face using facial recognition technology. The case was seen as a landmark challenge in the collection of personal data. Chinese people "are extremely attentive to" the privacy debate, Jean-Dominique Seval, a digital economy expert and a director at Soon Consulting told AFP. "There are discussions between lawyers and users on social networks. We can't say that [the system of app tracing] is completely 'Big Brother'... but it's not absolute data freedom either. It's somewhere in between and it's constantly evolving."

With its experience in managing the epidemic, Beijing is pushing for the adoption of a universal health code at the global level: a health passport to open borders. The initiative was also proposed in November at the G20 summit by President Xi Jinping. But although the new certificate is meant for travel in and out of China, it is currently only available for use by Chinese citizens and it is not yet mandatory.

There is also no indication authorities in other countries will use it when Chinese travellers go abroad. "To make possible a border crossing instantly with this passport... will require discussions between many countries that are likely to be complicated and lengthy," Seval added.



REUTERS/FILE

People scan a QR code to display their health status as they line up to be tested for the Covid-19 coronavirus in Beijing.

overshadowed by China's relative success in bringing the virus to heel. Here's how technology has spearheaded the fight against the pandemic.

China has established a nationwide system of digital "health codes", scoring citizens on whether they pose a potential coronavirus threat based around their travel history and proximity to people with the virus. Users have to scan a QR code to get

and virus test results.

Technically, the tracking app is not mandatory. But in reality, it has become impossible to move around China without it. Airlines require it before boarding a domestic flight and a clean health code is needed to enter a train station. In Beijing, taxis ask passengers to "check in" using the app before making a journey.

Last spring, local media reported the case of a criminal who had been



Mamunur Rahman

## Apsis Solutions gets new CEO

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Information technology provider Apsis Solutions has recently appointed a new chief executive officer.

Mamunur Rahman will be managing business operations both at home and abroad, the company said in a statement yesterday. He previously served Australia-based TOLL Group in managing global IT operations and American Tobacco for 19 years.

## African economies likely to rebound 3.4pc this year

REUTERS, Nairobi

African economies are expected to grow by an average of 3.4 per cent this year, the African Development Bank said, as the continent recovers from its worst contraction in half a century.

The 54 economies shrank by 2.1 per cent last year, the AfDB said in its 2021 economic outlook report, as the coronavirus crisis disrupted economic activity across the continent.

"The continent-wide projected recovery... does not remove the threat of increasing poverty," the Abidjan-based AfDB said in the report, published on Friday.

## Canada jobs market bounces back, unemployment lowest in a year

AFP, Ottawa

Canada added a net 259,000 jobs in February, blowing past forecasts as the unemployment rate fell 1.2 percentage points to 8.2 per cent -- its lowest rate since March 2020, the national statistical agency said Friday.

The rebound, after two months of falling job numbers, coincided with a gradual lifting of pandemic restrictions as Covid-19 infections trended lower. But employment was still down about 600,000 jobs from pre-pandemic levels, said Statistics Canada. "The quick turnaround is reminiscent of the first wave (of Covid-19 illnesses) when employment rebounded far faster than expected as the economy began reopening," said CIBC analyst Royce Mendes.

Mendes suggested it could lead Canada's central bank to soon start tapering off

its quantitative easing program -- bond purchases to boost money supplies, ending and investment. Several Canadian provinces have gradually lifted lockdowns ordered by public health authorities in December, allowing many businesses, cultural and recreational facilities, as well as restaurants to reopen.

But several parts of the economy continue to struggle. There were gains in both part-time (+171,000) and full-time (+88,000) jobs; the number of self-employed workers was unchanged for a second consecutive month; and the private sector added 226,000 new employees.

In February, total hours worked increased by 1.4 per cent, driven mostly by gains in wholesale and retail trade. More people also returned to their traditional workplaces, leaving their home offices set up during the pandemic, as schools and offices reopened.

## How Toyota thrives when the chips are down

REUTERS

Toyota may have pioneered the just-in-time manufacturing strategy but when it comes to chips, its decision to stockpile what have become key components in cars goes back a decade to the Fukushima disaster.

After the catastrophe severed Toyota's supply chains on March 11, 2011, the world's biggest automaker realised the lead-time for semiconductors was way too long to cope with devastating shocks such as natural disasters.

That's why Toyota came up with a

business continuity plan (BCP) that required suppliers to stockpile anywhere from two to six months' worth of chips for the Japanese carmaker, depending on the time it takes from order to delivery, four sources said.

And that's why Toyota has so far been largely unscathed by a global shortage of semiconductors following a surge in demand for electrical goods under coronavirus lockdowns that has forced many rival automakers to suspend production, the sources said.

"Toyota was, as far as we can tell, the only automaker properly equipped to deal with chip shortages,"

said a person familiar with Harman International, which specialises in car audio systems, displays and driver assistance technology.

Two of the sources who spoke to Reuters are Toyota engineers and the others are at companies involved in the chip business.

Toyota surprised rivals and investors last month when it said its output would not be disrupted significantly by chip shortages even as Volkswagen, General Motors, Ford, Honda and Stellantis, among others, have been forced to slow or suspend some production.

## Prepare to address LDC graduation-linked challenges

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"But for Bangladesh to reach its current stage from that devastating position is such a great achievement," Mansur added.

The post-1972 assessment of Bangladesh was very frustrating as there was a general consensus that the international community would need to protect and support the country forever. However, foreign aid now accounts for just 1.5 per cent of the country's national income.

The noted economist also stressed the need to open up the local market for international players.

While tagging the local market as highly protected, Mansur said the country's average protection level is as high as around 27 per cent.

The average protection level in both India and China stands at 9 per cent, while it is 7.4 per cent for Asean countries.

"We need to build up a competitive economy as we can't progress much

with a protected economy," Mansur said.

The export volume of both Bangladesh and Vietnam was just \$1 billion in the early 1990s. Vietnam's current exports amount to \$270 billion against Bangladesh's \$40 billion.

"We need to reach that level," said Mansur, also a former official of the International Monetary Fund.

He also said that the country should work to strengthen its international political and economic diplomacy to achieve its various interests, such as securing the generalised system of preferences-Plus after graduation.

Mirza Azizul Islam, a former adviser to a caretaker government, said that since the country may face challenges such as the loss of duty-free access to different international markets after graduation, efforts should be given for bilateral, regional or sub-regional trade arrangements to attain duty-free or less-duty export facilities.

Islam went on to say that even after facing 14 to 15 per cent duty on exports to the US, the country is doing much better compared to its LDC peers.

Prof Mustafizur Rahman, a distinguished fellow of the Centre for Policy Dialogue, said Bangladesh needs to take preparatory measures in the next five years to ensure a smooth transition to the developing status and make graduation sustainable.

Rahman underscored the need to enhance the capacity of local institutions as well as strengthen their negotiation skills.

He also called for opening a negotiation cell like the WTO Cell under the commerce ministry to deal with the complex negotiations.

Sheikh Mamun Khaled, pro-vice-chancellor of the Canadian University of Bangladesh, and Prof Shibli Rubayat-Ul-Islam, chairman of the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission, also spoke.

## Apparel exports: resilience and future challenges

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Thus, given how sensitive apparel demand appears to be to economic downturns, lowering Bangladesh's export concentration in that industry will be an important way to diversify its risks and crisis-proof the country's exports in the future.

The second policy challenge is the significant headwinds that are likely in store for Bangladesh's exports.

After the global financial crisis of 2008/2009, the world experienced a prolonged period of "slowbalisation",

where trade growth slowed dramatically. Such a scenario is likely over the next few years.

Indeed, after a difficult winter in Europe and North America, growth in apparel orders for the spring have been disappointing and suggests that the rate of recovery seen at the end of 2020 will likely slow down.

The past year has been an incredibly challenging one for Bangladesh's exports. Cancelled orders and reduced employment had left both firms and workers in a precarious position.

While the near-term prospects appear better than one would have expected at this time last year, there are nonetheless significant challenges ahead. But the resilience shown in 2020—both among producers and workers—provides a hopeful outlook for the future.

Reshad N Ahsan is an associate professor of the department of economics of the University of Melbourne and Kazi Iqbal is the senior research fellow of Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies.

## BIDS launches book on Bangladesh's development journey

FROM PAGE B4

"These volumes are an apt tribute to our national hero who has inspired the struggle for an independent Bangladesh through his sacrifice, vision, and courage."


"Bangabandhu dreamt of a free, equitable and prosperous Bangladesh, and even during the brief period that he was in power before being assassinated on August 15 in 1975, he was able to put in place the

basic structure of governance and broad policy directions that would admirably serve the country on its development journey."

"In dedicating these volumes to the memory of Bangabandhu, we not only recognise his wisdom and leadership but also acknowledge that the history of the last 50 years in every field, would have been different, had he not been present," said BIDS.


At the event, Centre for Policy

Dialogue Chairman Prof Rehman Sobhan was the chief guest while Economic Affairs Adviser to the Prime Minister Mashur Rahman and International Relation Affairs Adviser to the Prime Minister Gowher Rizvi were guests of honour. Secretary of Planning Division Mohammad Jainul Bari, Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation Chairman Qazi Kholiqzaman Ahmad, BIDS Research Director Binayak Sen also spoke.



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Date: 10-03-2021

Memo No. Bog-Pau/Xen/2020-2021/673

### Invitation for Tenders

e-Tender Notice No. 13/2020-2021

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of the below schemes/packages:

Tender ID No.	Package name	Scheme name	Procurement method	Tender/proposal document price (in BDT)	Tender document last selling date & time	Tender closing date & time
1	IUIDP-2/BOGP-16	(1) Improvement of Road at Halanchapara start from 2nd By-Pass H/O Mr. Notice to East Para Land of Mr. Loya Miya Via Chan Bitur Salam Jame Mosque by Bituminous Dense Carpeting DC (Ch. 00m-400m) at Ward No. 21 (2) Improvement of Carpeting Road start from (i) Nishindhara Mondal Para More to Hakir More Road via south side 2 Nos. Police Battalion Gate (Ch. 00-506.00) (ii) Attapara Main Road crossing to Atapara Nilchad Saloon More (ch 0.00-265.00) (iii) Attapara to Jaypurpara Connecting Road (Ch 368.00-490.00m) (iv) Allahmatata Eidgah crossing to Brindabon Connoting (ch 0.00-151.00) (v) Upashahar 32 Nos. Road (Ch 0.00m-90.00m) by Bituminous Dense Carpeting DC at Ward No. 01 (3) Improvement of Carpeting Road at (i) Brindabonpara Dakkinpara More to Abbas Bridge Road (Ch 00-300.00m) (ii) Fulbari Graveyard Road (Ch 0.00-209.00m by Bituminous Dense Carpeting DC at Ward No. 02 (4) Improvement of Carpeting Road start from Kamargari Zahed Metal More to Nurani More Road by Bituminous Dense Carpeting (Ch. 0.0m-400.0m) at Ward No. 04 under Bogura Paurashava District Bogura.	LTM	2,000.00	30-Mar-2021 Time: 17.00	31-Mar-2021 Time: 13.00
2	IUIDP-2/BOGP-17	(1) Improvement of Carpeting Road start from Chalk Sutrapur Begum Bazar More to Namajghor More via Namajghor Bazzar Road (Ch-00.0m-700m) by Bituminous Dense Carpeting at Ward No. 05 (2) Improvement of Carpeting Road start from (i) Naitapara Jute Godown Road (Ch 00-906.00) (ii) Haji Zillur Rahman Road (Ch 0.0-400.00) by Bituminous Dense Carpeting at Ward No. 06 (3) Improvement of Carpeting Road-widening start from Rahman Nagar Shahid Jubber Club More to PWD Office (Ch. 0.0m-550.0m) by Bituminous Dense Carpeting at Ward No. 10 (4) Improvement of Carpeting Road start from Colony Ctg. Hotel More to Chalklokman More Road (Ch. 0.0m-700.0m) by Bituminous Dense Carpeting at Ward No. 12 under Bogura Paurashava District Bogura.	LTM	2000.00	30-Mar-2021 Time: 17.00	31-Mar-2021 Time: 13.00
3	IUIDP-2/BOGP-18	(1) Construction of RCC Drain at Both side of Rahman Nagar Shahid Abdul Jubber Club to PWD Office (Ch-0.00m- 350.00m) at Ward No. 10 (2) Improvement of Carpeting Road at (i) Jaypurpara Labus Garage Road (Ch 00-250.00m) (ii) Joypurpara Bottola Road (Ch 30.0-350.00m) by Bituminous Dense Carpeting at Ward no-17 (3) Improvement of Carpeting Road start from Naitapara to Koipara connecting Road (Ch. 0.0m-700.00) by Bituminous Dense Carpeting at Ward No. 20 (4) Improvement of Carpeting Road at (i) Jamil Madrasha Road (Ch 00-393.00m) (ii) Thanthania- Gohail connecting Road (Ch 0.00-586.00m) iii Bihary Colony six by lane (Ch 0.00-450.00m) by Bituminous Dense Carpeting at Ward No. 12 (5) Construction of RCC Drain at Shahid Abdul Zabar Road (North side) (Ch. 0.00m-320.0m) at Ward No. 07 under Bogura Paurashava, Bogura.	LTM	2000.00	30-Mar-2021 Time: 17.00	31-Mar-2021 Time: 13.00
4	IUIDP-2/BOGP-19	(1) Construction of RCC Drain at Malgram Barshi Khal West Side of Wonderland (Incomplete Portion) (Ch. 210.00m-360.00m) at Ward No. 09 (2) Construction of RCC Drain at Maltinagar Settlement office to Vatkandi Bridge (Ch. 0.00m-400.00m) at Ward No. 11 (3) Construction of RCC Road at Choto Kumira Graveyard (Ch 0.00-320m) at Ward No. 15 (4) Construction of C.C Road at Godarpara West Para H/O Mr. Enamul Haque to H/O Ronju Sarker (Ch. 00m-300m) at Ward No. 15. (5) Construction of RCC Road at 1st By Pass Vober Bazar Dhomok Para H/O Mr. Abdul Hamid (Ch. 00m-320m) at Ward No. 15 under Bogura Paurashava District Bogura.	LTM	2000.00	30-Mar-2021 Time: 17.00	31-Mar-2021 Time: 13.00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fee for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited by online through any registered banks branches up to 12.30 on 31-Mar-2021. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

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