

World Population Day

What will be the implications if we do not reach replacement fertility by 2005?

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THE Bangladesh 2001 population census suggests that adjusted population of Bangladesh was 129.2 million. Sustainable Human Development Project of the Socio-Economic Infrastructure Division estimated the population as about 133 million indicating that there was a deficit of population of about 3.8 million (about 38 lac). Recently ESCAP released their data sheet where population of Bangladesh is shown as 143.5 million in 2002. This difference between the Bangladesh 2001 census figure and the ESCAP estimate is 14.3 million (one crore and 43 lac) while the difference between the ESCAP and the Planning Commission estimate is 10.5 million. How do we reconcile with the large difference of the population figures between sources? What implications it has on the sectoral planning of the government? Poverty reduction is one of the important strategies of the government. If half of the population is poor then what is that figure? How do we estimate the resources that will be required for the poverty alleviation programme? Although 2001 census is complete but when the population by age structure and by sex will be available no body knows. Because of closure of Statistics Division the responsibility lies with the Planning Secretary of the Planning Commission. Any statistical estimate is sensitive for national planning. How could we reconcile with the statistical figures from the same agency that is also direct user of the statistics?

The population size and its implications on different sectors need serious attention. Fertility has begun to decline from mid 1980s but since mid 1990 it has stalled. Many researchers explained that family planning programme as the main driving force for this decline while

the role of social and economic change has been less emphasized. Several researchers reviewed the demographic and socio-economic trends in the country and concluded that Bangladesh has remained socio-economically static, however, a strong commitment to family planning programme has made the difference. The proportion of girls enrolled in school has been doubled between 1980 and 2002. Because of emphasis by the government primary school enrolment is nearly universal. Rural micro-credit programme opened the door for poor women to participate in income generating activities and earn independently. This opportunity also helped rural women to move outside

Bangladesh provides a unique opportunity to study the impact of various policy options on future population growth. The decline in fertility and increase in life expectancy has resulted in the reduction of proportions in the young age groups and increased proportions in the work force, with some increase in the proportion of the older population. If this fertility trend continues to achieve NRR=1 by 2005, it is expected to have significant implication for the timing of population stabilisation. If we do not achieve NRR=1 by 2005 then a five years delay in the achievement of replacement fertility will add additional 45-50 lac to the total population. A lower population growth rate

rates, the young age structure generates considerable momentum for future growth because the population reaching childbearing ages continues to expand. Women are having fewer children than women did in the past, but there are more women having these children compared to the past. Their numbers are large and no matter what the family planning programme does, population will continue to grow in the future.

What happens if Bangladesh does not achieve demographic goal? If the demographic objective of the FFYP is not achieved by the year 2005 there will be a significant impact on potential future population size. For example, in scenario

numbers. There will be a prospect of increasing numbers of destitute people who are illiterate, homeless and unemployed. Basic services in Bangladesh have been unable to keep up with growing population size. As agriculture and other formal sectors have failed to absorb the increased number of young people entering the labour force, the number of people without land or paid employment will be increasing in the coming years.

The major implication of population growth would be observed in the social sector. In education sector it would require double of the present level of resources to provide for more teachers, classroom facilities, equipment and infrastruc-

ture development. A dismal scenario would also be observed in the health sector where both primary and specialised health care services are still inadequate. There will be serious demand for services from doctors, nurses, hospitals and other specialised facilities. Besides, there will be an immediate impact on land. At present population density is 834 persons per square kilometre, which will further increase to 913 per square km in 2005 affecting existing man and land ratio considerably. The population pressure will make per capita land ownership smaller and as a consequence of that rural poverty will also increase.

In addition, rural to urban migration will increase population size particularly in big cities causing increased urban poverty. In urban areas poverty will lead to environmental hazards. Rising urban



All health information to keep you up to date

Men's health after 50

After the age of 50, prostate gland frequently enlarges. A normal prostate is about the size of a table-tennis (ping-pong) ball. This is the gland that surrounds urethra. The urethra is the tube that carries the urine from the bladder to outlet. In fact sometimes from about 40, the prostate begins to grow due to changes in the balance of the male sex hormones. If the prostate enlarges, one may find that the flow of urine is restricted. If this happens you may have to go more often, or you may have to wait for longer periods before the flow starts. All of this is normal with aging, but let your doctor (if possible, surgeon) know what is happening. If the prostate grows even larger, it may become impossible to pass urine because of the blockage caused by the gland pressing on the urethra. Surgery or Prostatectomy can cure the condition.

This is a procedure to correct an enlarged prostate; which is a common and safe procedure in our country. Of course like other surgeries, a good operation theatre and a qualified Surgeon is needed. The operation should not make you impotent, as is feared by many men. In some cases a man may no longer ejaculate sperm, which as an alternative goes into his bladder. But he still receives all the other sensations and has an orgasm.

Besides that, when prostate begins to grow, one of the changes that may happen is prostate cancer. Most of them are slow growing and often do not shorten life. A man may have 'prostate cancer' without it causing him any physical problems. If treatment is required choices include surgery, radiotherapy and hormone therapy.

Did you know

Seventy years of research into blood groups and their relation with other diseases has associated Group A to risk of stomach cancer. More recently, the ABO group has been linked with threat of various cancers, toxemia of pregnancy, diabetes and arthritis. Heart disease takes place more often in people with blood Group A.

Next: It's about epilepsy

The continuing population growth is considerably eroding Bangladesh's development achievements and steadily diminishing its already tenuous ability to provide a decent quality of life for the vast majority of its people. Bangladesh is already facing a human and ecological crisis and has no choice but to act quickly, through quality family planning services and other social programmes, to slow the current rapid pace of population growth.

the homestead.

Experience suggest that population growth and socioeconomic development are interrelated. Changes in population size and structure affect various economic and social factors relating to income, education, health and employment.

Conversely, demographic factors such as fertility, morality and migration are affected by changes in socio-economic conditions. Besides, the determinants of demographic changes are embedded in social systems and are influenced by collective perceptions and public policy. This article examines the overall situation of Bangladesh if replacement fertility transition is not achieved by 2005. It also discusses the implications if target is not achieved on social and economic conditions.

will mean that the problem of overcrowding will not be as severe as expected. It is commonly hypothesised that as rural population density increases, productivity decreases since landlessness increases, and more people will live under poverty. Due to increase in rural poverty, rural to urban migration will increase, where overcrowding is always a serious problem, and urban poverty may also increase. The expected large increases in population size over the next decades in Bangladesh will make the difficult task of reducing poverty and bringing about sustainable development even harder.

A major consideration is to recognise the implications of population momentum, a consequence of the current young age structure, in turn a result of high fertility in the past. But even with declining fertility

NRR=1 by 2005 the population will be 147m in 2015 as against 153m in 2015, a difference of 6 million population between the two assumptions.

If Bangladesh fails to act immediately to reduce population growth there will be enormous social and economic implications. Agriculture is the primary source of subsistence and income for the vast majority of the population. But continued population growth is undermining Bangladesh's limited natural resource base, jeopardising the agricultural economy on which most Bangladeshis depend for a living. The rapid population growth has contributed to fragmentation of land ownership and increased landlessness. The high population growth is likely to result in grater depletion of resources, making it difficult to support the growing

development. A dismal scenario would also be observed in the health sector where both primary and specialised health care services are still inadequate. There will be serious demand for services from doctors, nurses, hospitals and other specialised facilities. Besides, there will be an immediate impact on land. At present population density is 834 persons per square kilometre, which will further increase to 913 per square km in 2005 affecting existing man and land ratio considerably. The population pressure will make per capita land ownership smaller and as a consequence of that rural poverty will also increase.

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Palestinians are fighting against occupation forces

MOHAMMAD AMJAD HOSSAIN

THE speech by US President George W. Bush on 24 June 2002 on the idea of the creation of Palestine state without Palestinians' elected president Yasser Arafat received severe criticism from Palestinians while welcomed by Israelis as it falls in line with the policy of Israeli premier Ariel Sharon. At the concluding session of 57-member OIC meet at Khartoum on 28 June the organisation extended its support to Yasser Arafat and urged the United States and countries of the European Union to put pressure on Israel to vacate the occupied Arab territories and resolve the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis on the basis of Saudi peace plan.

It is also interesting to note that 88 countries did not extend unanimous support to Bush's proposal for the removal of Yasser Arafat. US President Bush's latest speech actually negates the very concept of promoting the values of democracy which the United States religiously

follows. Moreover, his speech is held responsible for the failure of following the change in Israeli segments of the Palestinian popula-

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reflects the attitude of Ariel Sharon towards Yasser Arafat. That means Ariel Sharon was successful in his persuasion to convince President Bush about his policy towards Arafat. Sharon had been by now six times to White House since he took office.

It may be relevant to point out that Israeli Premier Ariel Sharon has been bent upon removing Arafat from power on the pretext of his failures to contain 'terrorism' or suicide bombing of Israelis. In fact a simmering campaign began against Yasser Arafat at the talks at Camp David in July 2000. This has turned into a sustained campaign directed at isolating and removing Arafat.

Despite American assurances that the Palestinian leader would not

the talks, Arafat was singled out as scapegoat for failure of talks.

When a new Palestinian uprising started in late September 2000 because of Ariel Sharon's visit to Muslim shrine in Jerusalem again Arafat was labelled as the instigator of the renewed violence between Palestinians and Israelis. By intensifying the focus on Arafat and Palestinian violence Israelis succeeded in downplaying Israel's continuing military operation and occupation of Palestinian territories. The more Israel succeeded focusing on Arafat and Palestinian violence, the more it was able to obscure the brutal realities of its military occupation.

The campaign to isolate and remove Arafat has been intensified

leadership from Ehud Barak to Ariel Sharon. The enmity between Ariel Sharon and Arafat is not politically or militarily strategic. It is absolutely personal in nature. It may be recalled that Ariel Sharon founded 101 unit of Israeli military to destroy Palestinian 'fedayeen' in the early fifties, his attempt to pacify Gaza in late sixties and 1982 invasion of Lebanon where the PLO was headquartered at the time, are the glaring examples to corroborate this fact.

The Israeli actions in early spring 2001 demonstrated that they had a dual long term strategic purpose. By cordoning off the major Palestinian towns from each other and constructing a network of check points and trenches, Israelis would be able to effectively isolate major

territories. On the other hand, the Israeli incursions militarily have undermined the authority of Palestinians to protect their people or lands and thus systematically erased the diplomatic gains from Oslo accord. The fact is that the leaders of Western countries have so far ignored the important point that Israel is an occupying force that is killing Palestinians who are fighting for their freedom. In this context one can legitimately question the wisdom of the Western leaders that when Israel commits acts of aggression against civilian population living under their control does not that constitute terrorism?

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The only way forward on Palestine

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PRESIDENT George W. Bush's speech on June 24 has reconfirmed the general feeling that this American administration, like most of its predecessors, is not interested in bringing justice, and therefore peace, to the Middle East. Bush's persistent calls for Palestinian reforms, both institutional and individual, is a clear signal to the world that the U.S. is not willing to place the slightest pressure on Israel to "reform" its brutal and savage policies. Israel's "incurSIONS," a soft term employed by the media to describe the colonizing state's aggressive invasions and re-occupations, are needed, we are told, for its self-defence. The U.S. government and the media have adopted this line quite dutifully; hence any discussion in the U.S. on the ground realities of occupation in Palestine has been totally absent.

So, after much deliberation and planning on ways to change the U.S. policy mindset of unilateral support for Israel, what have those concerned with American "unevenness" in the Middle East, to put it rather mildly, come up with? It is often argued that American Muslims and Palestinian sympathizers are in a vicious battle against various Zionist entities and institutions in this country, foremost among them is the formidable pro-Israeli lobby, AIPAC. Also, and by extension of these mini-battles, there is the larger struggle to create sympathy in the American government, particularly in Congress. The entire equation is reduced to which group can put forth more money to buy off these institutions and politicians -- American Muslims and Palestinian sympathizers or American Jews and their Zionist allies.

The problem with this method of seeking influence on U.S. Middle

East policy is that it misses the long-term reasons why the United States has supported Israel. Briefly, Israel has served as an extremely faithful "watchdog" and protector of U.S. interests in the Middle East as well as elsewhere. The United States has relied heavily on Israel to carry out its "dirty work" both in the region and beyond, from helping in defeating radical nationalist movements in Jordan, Lebanon, as well as in

industrial complex profit enormously from it and American business generally benefits from the stability that militarily-powerful Israel provides to the region. Only after taking into consideration all these primary factors which determine U.S. policy toward Israel, can we gain a more appropriate understanding of the role of mainstream and conservative Jewish organisations in the United States,

world, demonstrate that there is an enormous potential for positive change. For example, there are some specific actions that citizens here in the United States are taking, following the lead of their counterparts in Europe, such as a boycott of Israeli goods and a divestment campaign. Based on the model of the divestment campaign against apartheid South Africa, college students and local citizens are

term and long-term. The movement for justice in Palestine in the United States today is comprised of numerous and variegated groups, although generally sharing the common commitment to progressive social and political ideals. Organizations and formations which are concerned with issues of global economic justice, with racism abroad and at home, with gender justice, with the crimes and immorality of U.S. foreign policy, from Colombia, to Iraq, to Palestine, are part of a movement that is challenging the injustices and oppression that so heavily permeate this world.

The Palestinian solidarity march in Washington, D.C. on April 20th was a remarkable demonstration of the dedication of progressive American groups to the struggle for justice in Palestine. Arabs and Muslims were amazed by the sheer numbers of Americans, including many anti-Zionist Jewish groups, who stood side-by-side with them to protest against the Israeli atrocities in Palestine. The struggle for Palestine, in my opinion, can only be successful if Muslims realize that this issue, although extremely urgent at this juncture, is not the only issue on which they ought to take a position. To show those forces that are allied with Muslims for the cause of justice in Palestine that Muslims see justice and equality as principles with which to lead their lives and are concerned in applying these principles to all places and issues in the United States, in the world, is the present-day Muslim jihad. This means that Muslims need to be at the forefront of causes such as having universal health care, ending racist practices and police brutality, struggling for gender equality, showing solidarity with all those who suffer the wrath of U.S. foreign policy, be they Muslim or not, and most of all, challenging those institutions, particularly huge corpora-

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Palestine, and serving as a conduit for U.S. arms to regimes and movements too unpopular. The main reason why Israel is so crucial for the Middle East today is because of its solid reliability as a "local cop on the beat," as the Nixon administration put it, that would help the U.S. control the region and its abundant resources, and prevent any indigenous nationalist threat to emerge.

This is not to deny other contributing factors that have made this "special relationship" so sturdy and unbreakable. Both the liberal establishment as well as Christian conservatives, it seems, have inherent pro-Israel biases based on a variety of reasons ranging from sympathy for Jews generally, messianic theology, and even, to a large extent, anti-Muslim sentiment, particularly after September 11th. The sheer military might of Israel, with its awesome arsenal of weapons of mass destruction, has also impressed the ruling elite here, because sectors of the military

including the infamous lobby group AIPAC. While recognising that these Jewish organisations have mobilised considerable lobbying resources, financial contributions from the Jewish community, and citizen pressure on the news media and other forums of public discourse in support of the Israeli government, it is imperative to note that these efforts are attempts to solidify an already existing relationship, not to create one. That the ruling circles of this country and their mouthpieces -- the politicians and the elite news media -- will continue to have a strategically rational propensity for generous, and often totally blind, support for Israel is a fact which those who believe that lobbying and buying off Congressmen would do the trick, must comprehend.

The above analysis should not be taken to mean that there is no way left to bring about change in U.S. Middle East policy. Recent developments here in the United States, as well as in Europe and the Arab

pressing their colleges and universities and their city councils to cease doing business with those companies which invest in Israel. The divestment campaign has spread like wildfire to at least 30 campuses across the U.S., including, et al, the University of California at Berkeley, Princeton, Harvard, MIT, Cornell, and Tufts. A worldwide divestment campaign against Israel will play a critical role in dismantling its criminal apartheid regime against the Palestinian people living in occupied Palestine as well as in Israel itself.

Boycotting Israeli goods and the divestment campaign are just two particular forms of action being taken right now to stop the carnage in Palestine. However, it must be realized that, although this or that method of action and resistance is important, the overall trajectory that a concerted and broad movement for justice in Palestine takes is much more crucial in influencing the situation in Palestine, both short-