

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH ASIA REPORT 2005

Weak governance, judiciary root cause of human insecurity

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Human security in South Asia can be advanced by addressing the root causes of insecurity and conflicts, such as economic inequality and weak governance institutions and judicial system, according to a report.

The armed forces and nuclear weapons are ineffective in reducing human insecurity, it said, adding that the root causes of conflicts should be addressed.

Stronger governance institutions and judicial system can advance human security by ensuring access to public goods, the report said.

The 'Human Development in

South Asia Report 2005: Human Security in South Asia' prepared by Pakistan-based Mahbub ul Haq Human Development Centre was launched by Ain o Shalish Kendra (ASK) in association with Manusher Jonno in the city.

"Bangladeshi people need to be sensitised to the idea of human security. We are only a stop-gap government, but we will try our best," said Adviser Geeti Ara Safiya Chowdhury at the report launching ceremony.

She also called for a greater focus on social, political and economic dimensions of security rather than on military security.

If South Asia is to return to its past glory, its women and children

would have to be given the same priority and their insecurity have to be eliminated, she added.

The adviser also called for an end to abuse of women and children through misinterpretation of religion.

ASK Executive Director and former adviser Sultana Kamal said the report found that weak governance is at the core of human insecurity in South Asia, which especially applies for Bangladesh.

Weak governance institutions fail to provide the security net for the most vulnerable people and increases human insecurity, she said.

"In Bangladesh, governance has to be improved to pave the way

for strengthening human security," she added.

Former adviser CM Shafi Sami said, "Democracy is far more superior to other ways to resolve conflict."

The country is perched on a 'dangerous precipice', he said, adding that the government, political parties and civil society members should discuss ways of getting out of the present situation in governance that undermine human security.

He also lamented the lack of funding for social, political and economic programmes.

Manusher Jonno Executive Director Shaheen Anam urged the government and the policymakers to pay greater attention to the report and take account of significant concerns during decision-making process.

"I urge the policymakers to make political commitment and take brave decisions," she said.

The report said human security, in addition to military security, entails protection from social, political, economic and natural disasters.

It said military expenditures in South Asia have increased by 50 percent between 1995 and 2004, but conflicts in the region are resulting from deep-seated feelings of injustice and disempowerment.

It also found that economic policies in the region have made people more vulnerable to international financial market shocks.

The incidence of tuberculosis (TB) has increased since the 1990s that means more people are now contracting the virus each year in South Asia, it added.

The report said that 40 percent of developing world's food-insecure people live in South Asia, while 40 percent of South Asia's population lives below the poverty line and 300 million people are chronically malnourished.



PHOTO: STAR

Adviser Geeti Ara Safiya Chowdhury, middle, former adviser Sultana Kamal, left, and former adviser CM Shafi Sami, right, launch the 'Human Development in South Asia Report 2005: Human Security in South Asia' at the National Press Club in the city yesterday.

ICRC needs integrated approach to meet challenges

Speakers tell BISS discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Carrying out humanitarian activities in zones of armed conflict or internal violence has always been a dangerous undertaking, and the ICRC has been dealing with this kind of risk for over 140 years, said Finn Ruda, head of the mission of International Committee of the Red cross (ICRC) in Bangladesh, at a lecture session in the city yesterday.

Citing examples of Afghanistan, Iraq, Sudan and Sri Lanka, he

highlighted how ICRC is facing challenges to carry out its humanitarian activities in those problem-prone areas and its policy to respond to these growing variety of situations.

The lecture session on 'ICRC in the contemporary world: Challenges to independent humanitarian operations' was organised by Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS) at its auditorium.

Speaking as keynote speaker, Finn Ruda said the nature of armed conflicts has been changing over time and depending on the region, number and intensity, but seriously affecting millions of people worldwide.

While presiding over the ses-

sion, BISS Director General Major General ANM Muniruzzaman underscored the need for holding an "integrated approach" to mitigate new operational challenges emanating from stakeholders and a revision of the operational principles of humanitarian law.

Emphasising the need of privatising humanitarian operation for a better output, he said it is highly important to examine the involvement of international politics to distinguish between humanitarian objective and business purpose.

Dr Abdur Rob Khan, Prof Syed Anwar Hussain, Prof Dalem Chandra Barman, Barrister AKH Morshed and Ambassador Muhammad Zamir took part in the discussion.

'Stop harassing RMG workers'

DU CORRESPONDENT

Garments Sramik Sangram Parishad yesterday urged the owners of garment factories to stop harassing garment workers, says a press release.

The Parishad leaders said taking opportunity of the state of emergency, a quarter of dishonest garment factory owners are

sacking workers and harassing them in different ways.

They were speaking at a meeting of the Parishad at Tophkana Road in the city yesterday.

The meeting was presided by Moinuddin Mandal while Baharane Sultan Bahar, Moshrefa Mishu and Advocate Mahbubur Rahman Ismail were

2,411 sacks of fertiliser seized

STAR REPORT

Joint forces led by the army during their drive against fertiliser hoarders in Sirajganj and Tangail recovered at least 2,411 sacks of fertiliser and arrested six hoarders on Wednesday night.

After receiving information on fertiliser stockpiling, the law enforcement agencies led by Maj Sharif Ahmed raided the Shimanta bazar area at Kazipur upazila of Sirajganj and seized 525 sacks of urea fertiliser and arrested Haidar Ali, a fertiliser hoarder, our Sirajganj correspondent reports quoting the army and police sources.

The arrestee was later handed over to police and a case was filed with Kazipur Police Station.

In Tangail, joint forces seized 1,886 sacks of different types of fertiliser and arrested five people from Sagardigha bazar at Ghatail upazila on Wednesday night, our correspondent reports.

The arrestees were two BSCIC (Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation) dealers Asheesh Kumar Saha and Abdul Jalil, and their employees Ainal Haque, Abul Hussein, and Arifur Rahman.

The joint forces seized the fertiliser from Sagardigha bazar when dealer Abdul Jalil was loading up trucks with the government-subsidised fertiliser that he had purchased for the purpose of stockpiling, sources said.

Outlaw killed in 'shootout'

UNB, Jhenidah

An underground operative was killed during a "shootout" between his cohorts and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) at Nayanpur under Jhenidah Sadar upazila on Wednesday night.

Police said Rab personnel arrested Jane Alam alias Janna, a cadre of outlawed Janoddh, at Gazaria Bagan under the upazila in the morning.

Following his confessional statement, Rab members along with Alam started for Nayanpur at about 11:00pm to arrest his accomplices and recover hidden firearms.

When they reached a place near Nayanpur, Alam's accomplices opened fire on the Rab men, forcing them to retaliate.

Alam received bullets during the "shootout" and died instantly, while his accomplices managed to flee.

Police said Alam was an accused in nine criminal cases including one for murder.

Indian national held with heroin

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) arrested an Indian national with 50 grams of costly high quality heroin from DMC char near the border in Godagari upazila yesterday.

The arrestee, identified as Arman Ali, hails from Lalgaola of Indian Murshidabad district.

BDR sources said Arman confessed that he brought the heroin from India and was taking it to Dhaka.



PHOTO: CPD

CPD Chairman Prof Rehman Sobhan presents Nobel Peace Prize winner Prof Muhammad Yunus with an Uttariya, a shawl, and a commemorative memento at a reception ceremony yesterday. CPD organised the ceremony at Spectra Convention Centre at Gulshan in the city. (Story on Page 16)

CPD reveals 12-point agenda for CG

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amendments. It does not require much time and these can be done very quickly even by June this year, he observed.

The government should take at least some short-term measures to implement these, he added.

To improve transparency of the financing of political and electoral activities, a law may be enacted as a promotion of political participation, which would provide legal mandate to the Election Commission to register political parties and seek information on their sources of finance and nature of expenditure, he pointed out.

He said the government should also initiate measures for enacting a Fiscal Responsibility Act to ensure sustainable macroeconomic and fiscal balance and to raise the level of public savings for development.

To stop election campaign financing by unaccounted for money generated within the economy or from outside it, the Anti-Money Laundering Act needs to be used effectively, he observed.

He pointed out the Bangladesh Bank, even though it identified a number of cases involving financial frauds, could not take punitive measures due to inadequate provisions in the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPc).

On the other hand, 7,000 taxpayers "whitened" around Tk 4,000 crore of black money by paying only 7.50 percent tax instead of 25 percent. The National Board of Revenue (NBR) should publish the names of those people who "whitened" their black money and will be participating in the election, the CPD executive director said.

Demanding the redefining of loan defaulters, the CPD ED observed that the current measures are not adequate to prevent loan defaulters from participating in the election, as a number of known large loan defaulters received the green signal from returning officers at the time of the now annulled elections.

The proposed Right to Information Act needs to be reviewed and finalised at the earliest to allow the caretaker government fight against corruption and to install accountability in public life.

Debabriya said most of the economic indicators of Bangladesh now enjoy some sort of stability and balance. Only the revenue sector is passing through a delicate time. The revenue sector demands immediate attention of the government.

He said the export earnings have been increasing by 26 percent and the flow of remittance went beyond \$4 billion. On the other hand, imports remained under control having 18 percent growth, which created a good balance, he added.

But the flow of foreign aid is declining; only \$50 million were disbursed against \$1.8 billion in the pipeline for the fiscal, Debapriya said. The easy way of getting aid has been stopped, he said adding that the aid flow also depends on good governance and corruption curbing.

During July-October last year Bangladesh experienced a 15.6 percent decline in foreign investment, he said, adding, the country also suffered due to the outflow of \$67 million against the foreign investment.

According to the CPD, the economy of Bangladesh has achieved an internal power to grow at a rate of 5-6 percent annually. Another two-three percent growth can be attained by ensuring good governance and the smooth functioning of the government, Debapriya pointed out.

He demanded review of development projects undertaken by the previous government and immediate cancellation of those projects that have no possibility of implementation at all.

The previous government spent around 50 percent of the money from development programme in the first quarter of the current fiscal, he noted. The flow of expenditure was high as huge amount of money was spent from block allocation, he added.

Due to the shortage of money, the government had to go for massive bank borrowing which may have a negative impact on the economy in future, he feared.

According to half-yearly economic analysis, the consumer price inflation went upwards in September and October last year

but it fell in November, Debapriya said. The new caretaker government should strongly monitor and supervise the markets of essential products to locate the syndicates controlling the markets and take necessary measures against them, he observed.

He pointed out that as the finance and commerce advisers of the current caretaker government is the same person he would be able to take appropriate decisions in control the market.

As there is an apprehension of production shortfall of Aman rice this year the CPD suggested the government take urgent measures for ensuring availability of fertiliser, diesel and power for irrigation of Boro crop which accounts for more than half of the total rice production in the country.

The government should take a battle-like approach to handling the current fuel and fertiliser crisis in the field level, Debapriya said.

The CPD ED suggested the new government to constitute a high-powered competent committee regarding investment proposal of Tata group, for recommending best possible economic price for natural gas and will settle other issues. An elected government must take the final decision in this regard, he added.

On the Phulbari coalmine project the government should also set up an independent committee of experts and local stakeholders which will assess the economic viability and social, environmental impact of the project area. An elected government would take the final decision, he observed.

Appreciating the current vibrant stock exchanges Debapriya said although the trade volume has been witnessing a massive surge breaking all previous records, the people also should know the weak side of the listed companies. For example, out of top-10 traded companies six did not give any dividend in the last five years, he disclosed.

CPD Research Director Mustafizur Rahman, research fellows Uttam Kumar Deb and Fahmida Akter Khatun were present at the conference.

BSF abducts two boys

UNB, C'nawabganj

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) abducted two Bangladeshi boys from Jominpur border in Shibganj upazila yesterday morning.

Witnesses said the Indian border guards of Sukdevpur camp picked up Jahangir, 12, son of Golam Mostafa, and Abul Kashem, 13, son of Shuku Miah of Jaminpur village from the zero line at about 10:00am.

Family sources said Jahangir and Kashem were going to their relatives' house in India.

BDR admitted the incident and said they have already sent a proposal to the BSF for holding a flag meeting.

Obituary

Namita Barua Mutsuddi, a freedom fighter and a teacher of Wari Government Primary School, passed away due to cancer on January 23 at the age of 59, says a press release.

Namita, wife of labour leader Ranjit Barua, left behind her husband, one son and one daughter to mourn her death.

Death anniversary



former minister, says a press release.

He died on this day in 1998. On the occasion, Quarkhwani and doa mahfil will be held and foods and cloths will be distributed among the destitute and orphans.

Qulkhwani

Qulkhwani of advocate BA Rashid, a freedom fighter and former treasurer of Bangladesh Supreme Court Bar Association, will be held at Baghata village in Narsingdi after Juma prayers today, says a press release.

Relatives, friends and admirers have been requested to attend the qulkhwani to pray for salvation of the departed soul.

Rabia Khatoun



On the occasion, Quarkhwani, milad and doa mahfil will be held at Rangs Water Front, Plot No- 1 D-6, Road-15, Gulshan-1 in the city.

Relatives, friends and admirers are requested to attend the milad and doa mahfil.



Rise in temperature likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather will remain mainly dry over the country with partly cloudy sky over southern part in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Light to moderate fog may also occur over the river basins of the country during early morning, Met Office said.

It said night temperature may rise slightly over the country.

Highest temperature 28.8 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rangamati and lowest 07.0 degree Celsius at Srimongal.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:40pm today and rises at 6:42am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature		Humidity in in celsius	
	percentage			
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	26.5	14.8	74	54
Chittagong	28.5	12.7	74	80
Rajshahi	25.8	10.8	80	67
Khulna	25.8	13.5	78	68
Barisal	26.6	11.4	89	73
Sylhet	28.2	12.4	59	47
Cox's Bazar	28.5	13.5	71	78

ILLEGAL ABORTION

Doctor arrested for wrong treatment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police arrested a woman doctor on Wednesday night in connection with the death of a pregnant woman at a clinic in the city's Hazaribagh area.

Dr Gulshan Ara, owner of Gulshan Ara Health Care Unit, was arrested on charge of performing an illegal abortion and giving the patient wrong treatment.

The victim was identified as Rehana Akhter, 35, wife of Salek Sardar, a resident of Tajuddin slum in Hazaribagh.

Her family members said Rehana, who was eight months pregnant, was going to Azimpur Maternity Hospital at around 11:00am on Wednesday to seek an abortion. But a group of brokers lured her to Gulshan Ara Health Care Unit, saying that she can have an abortion there at a cheaper rate.

Rehana's condition deteriorated when the doctor gave her an injection and she died half an hour later, they said.

"My sister died due to wrong treatment," claimed Mujibur Rahman, brother of Rehana.

As the news spread in the area, a mob laid siege to the hospital demanding arrest of the doctor and others involved in the incident, police said.

Later, police rushed to the spot and arrested Gulshan Ara.

The body was sent to Sir Salimullah Medical College morgue for autopsy.

Gulshan Ara, however, said they tried their best to save the patient.

Discussion

Hazi Sahabuddin Social Welfare Foundation will hold a discussion and distribute 'Hazi Sahabuddin Memorial Scholarship'. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 5:45pm.

Discussion

Save the Youth Forum will hold a discussion titled 'Child abuse: Current laws and their implementation'. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 3:45pm.