

Increased agri trade to ensure food security in S Asia: Study

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA, New Delhi

Increased agricultural trade among South Asian countries is the answer to achieve food security in the region than initiatives like Saarc Food Bank, said a study conducted by the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER).

In a study titled 'Food Security in South Asia: Issues and Opportunities', published by ICRIER, authors Surabhi Mittal and Deepthi Sethi said regional trade among Saarc countries is at present impeded by fairly high tariff and non-tariff barriers.

"At the regional level, increased agricultural trade between South Asian countries will play a far more important role in achieving food security than initiatives like the setting up of the Saarc Food Bank, which is essentially a mechanism to handle emergency situations," the study said.

It pointed out that South Asia, comprising Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka,

Maldives, has the highest number of people 423 million living on less than a dollar a day. The region has the highest-299 million undernourished and poor people and about 40 per cent of the world's hungry ones.

Quoting estimates by the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), the ICRIER study said, "Asia will account for about half of the world's undernourished population, of which two-thirds will be from South Asia by 2010."

The authors have suggested that reduction of trade barriers, ensuring simultaneously that policies do not distort domestic incentive systems would go a long way in promoting regional agricultural trade.

"It is also important for South Asian countries to address the issue of speed and efficiency of food movements from surplus to deficit areas across the region, particularly in a crisis situation. This would require addressing issues regarding the efficiency of transportation and transportation infrastructure and the

development of storage capacities within different countries," it said.

Pointing that the Saarc Food Bank has not been operational even during times of crisis, the study aims to identify issues relating to food security, policy initiatives taken to tackle these issues, evaluate these policies and suggest measures to overcome identified constraints.

"Making the region food secure will require action both at the national and regional levels," the study said.

The authors also said one of the major issues that many South Asian countries need to tackle is the tendency to move away from the cultivation of staples such as wheat and rice towards the cultivation of high value (cash) crops such as oil-seeds, sugarcane and horticulture.

"This could prove a particularly tricky issue to handle since it involves a trade-off between raising farm incomes and meeting rising domestic demand for staples," it said, adding that an integrated strategy that balances these two objectives will need to be put in place.

Inner Wheel Club donates Tk 1.53 lakh to AMCH

METRO DESK

Bangladesh Inner Wheel Club yesterday donated Tk 1.53 lakh to Ahsania Mission Cancer Hospital (AMCH), which is being constructed at Uttara in the city.

Inner Wheel Dist 328 Chairman Naz Afrin Rahman formally handed over a cheque for the amount to Dhaka Ahsania Mission President Kazi Rafiqul Alam at the Mission Bhaban at Dhanmondi, says a press release.

Inner Wheel Dist 328 Secretary Suraiya Alam, Treasurer Aliya Parveen, Farida Yeasmin, Bulbul Alam, Inner Wheel Club of Dilkusha Chartered President Tahera Wahid and presidents, secretaries and other leaders of various inner wheel clubs were present on the occasion.

Kazi Rafiqul Alam said Tk 23 crore more is needed to complete the construction work of the hospital. If this fund is available, the hospital can go into operation by June next year, he added.

He urged people from all walks of life to come forward and extend their help to make the venture a grand success.

BFUJ, DUJ concerned over attack on journo

DU CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) and Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) on Sunday expressed grave concern over the incidents of attack on journalists by leaders and workers of ruling party at different places across the country.

They also expressed concern over a criminal attack at the office of a local daily Fulki in Savar.

In a joint statement, BFUJ President Ruhul Amin Gazi and Secretary General MA Aziz and DUJ President Abdus Shahid and General Secretary Muhammad Baker Hossain said the criminals attacked Fulki office on Thursday morning and shot a computer operator as they did not find its editor.

The journalist leaders also expressed their concern over the failure of police to arrest the criminals even after three days of the incident.

They said since the present government assumed power journalists and newspapers have become a target of criminal attack.

Such incidents have been taking place one after another at different places across the country, they added.

The journalist leaders further said unruly workers of ruling party's student body Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) have recently harassed local correspondents of different media at Galachipa of Patuakhali district.

Before that the criminals filed two false cases against local correspondents of two esteemed dailies, they added.

The BCL cadres also harassed journalist Shaheen Ahmed of a local newspaper in Jessore yesterday.

The journalist leaders feared that practising independent journalism would be impossible if such attacks on journalists, which is unexpected in a civilised society, continues unabated.

They demanded exemplary punishment to culprits involved in those attacks.



PHOTO: STAR

As the price of sugar hikes to Tk 60-64 a kg, people are seen in a long queue in front of the National Press Club in the city yesterday just to buy it at Tk 42. Deshbandhu Sugar Mill is supplying the sugar at a lower rate, but one can only buy two kilograms of sugar. (Story on Page 1)

3-tier security in city during Eid, Puja

BSS, Dhaka

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) authority has taken up three-tier security measures during the holy Eid-ul-Fitr and the Durga Puja festivals to maintain peaceful law and order situation in the city.

A total of 33,000 police personnel, including 2200 traffic police and 32 teams of which 14 teams of the women police of the Detective Branch (DB), would be deployed throughout the city during the two major religious festivals, official sources said here yesterday.

When contacted, AKM Shahidul Haque, commissioner of the DMP, told BSS that these three-tier security arrangements are being developed ahead of the Eid and the Durga puja.

The supervision mechanism of these security arrangements have already been finalised at a recent meeting held at the DMP headquarters, he said adding that normal holidays and leaves have also been cancelled due to these arrangements.

The commissioner said that special instructions have already been given to the field level officers to keep the traffic congestion at tolerance level by any means. Additional police forces including the detectives were also deployed to all major markets, shopping complexes and shopping malls as huge public have been gathering there ahead of the festivals, he added.

Shahidul Haque said, in addition to the normal deployment, special teams of the detective branch officials have already been deployed at Kamapur Railway Station, Gabtoli, Mohakhali and

PILKHANA CARNAGE BDR donates Tk 75,000 to Kalpana's father

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) authorities yesterday donated Tk 75,000 to the father of Kalpana, who was killed inside Pilkhana during the BDR massacre on February 25-26.

On behalf of BDR Director General Maj Gen Mainul Islam, Deputy Director General Brig Gen Obaidul Huq handed over a cheque for the amount to Soleman Miah, father of Kalpana, hailed from Rangpur.

Kalpana, an employee of Bir Uttam Fazlur Rahman School and College at Pilkhana, also used to work as a domestic help at the residence of the DG of BDR, says a BDR press release.

Work for welfare of all Prof Arefin urges students

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University Vice Chancellor Prof Dr AAMS Arefin Siddique yesterday called on the students to work together for the welfare of all irrespective of caste and religion.

"We all have to use our wisdom to make the life meaningful as well as to work towards promoting peace and happiness and ensuring welfare of mankind which is the key message of all religion," he said.

The VC said this while speaking as the chief guest at a seminar on 'Buddhism' at RC Majumdar auditorium at Dhaka University, organised by the Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies and the Centre for Buddhist Heritage and Culture.

He also said Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman believed in the people's right to practising their religion and he made the constitution a unique one by giving a new definition of secularism.

Prof Yusho Wakahara, Dr Kensuke Okamoto and Miki Eunki of Ryukoku University of Japan presented three keynote papers at the seminar.

Prof Sadrul Amin and Prof Sheikh Abdus Salam also spoke at the seminar presided over by Prof Dr Sukomal Baura, chairman of Pali and Buddhist studies department.

Indian asylum seeker on hunger strike dies in detention

AFP, Vienna

An Indian asylum seeker in Austria who had been on a hunger strike since August 7 to protest his imminent expulsion, died yesterday in a Vienna detention centre, police said.

The 20-year-old, named by police as Gaganpreet Singh K., had been placed in detention, pending his expulsion, on August 4, and stopped taking food three days later.

A doctor who examined him Sunday concluded that he did not require a transfer to hospital and could remain in the detention centre.

Vienna police said in a statement that it had called for an autopsy of the young man to establish the exact cause of death. The results were not yet available.

"Based on initial medical findings, no apparent link can be made between the hunger strike and the cause of death," it said.



PHOTO: COURTESY

Inner Wheel Dist 328 Chairman Naz Afrin Rahman hands over a cheque for Tk 1.53 lakh to Dhaka Ahsania Mission President Kazi Rafiqul Alam at the Mission Bhaban at Dhanmondi in the city yesterday.

Expand trade, economic cooperation

Malaysian king tells new Bangladesh HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The new Bangladesh High Commissioner to Malaysia AKM Atiqur Rahman presented his credentials to the King of Malaysia, Yang di-Pertuan Agong XIII, AL-Wathiqu Billah Tuanku Mizan Zainal Abidin Ibtai AL-Marhum Sultan Mahmud AL-Muktafi Billah Shah at the King's Official Palace in Kuala Lumpur on September 10, says an official handout.

Presenting the credential, the high commissioner stated that Bangladesh attaches great importance to its relations with Malaysia for strong bonds of brotherhood and time-tested friendship.

Atiqur Rahman mentioned that Bangladesh government seeks close engagement and meaningful cooperation with Malaysia and believes that the relations could be further strengthened through exploration of new avenues of cooperation especially through expansion of our economic cooperation and trade volume.

In reply, the King assured full cooperation from his office and the Malaysian government in the discharge of duties by the new high commissioner.

The King expressed satisfaction on the overall bilateral relations between Bangladesh and Malaysia. He viewed that existing ties could be further widened on trade and economic cooperation. He stressed that the two governments should explore avenues for improving the trade and investment ties between two countries.

The high commissioner appreciated the fact that a good number of Bangladeshi expatriates are involved in various development activities of Malaysia and are contributing in their own way to the economic transformation of both the countries.

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- ◆ Supervise Microscopy center and provide feedback for quality improvement.

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