

St Martin's facing food security risk: Study

UNB, Dhaka
Environmental degradation caused by rapid population growth is leading to food security risks in the St Martin's Island, according to a recent study.
Overexploitation of fish and fisheries resources, unplanned and unregulated tourism, reduction and degradation of agricultural land, increasing settlements and infrastructures, and poor communication with mainland are identified as prime causes directly or indirectly affecting the food security.
Other factors include loss of sand dune vegetations for fuel wood and fodder collection, expansion of infrastructures, indiscriminate and uncontrolled exploitation of corals and shells and pollution by dumping of wastes by tourists and boat discharges, said the study.
The National Food Policy Capacity Strengthening Programme (NFPCSP) with financial support from Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), European Union (EU) and USAID conducted the study titled "Effects of

environmental degradation on food security in the St Martin's Island of Bangladesh".
Principal Investigator Mohammed Mostafa Feeroz of Zoology Department of Jahangirnagar University carried out the study from October 2007 to September 2008 with the aim to address the food security issues.
During the 12-month study, a total of 12 field trips were conducted in St Martin's Island and three in the Shahpari's Island (south-eastern tip of the country) of Teknaf.
A total of 95 households in St Martin and 49 in the Shahpari Island were interviewed. Both primary and secondary data were collected and used in this study.
The study identified the principal livelihood patterns of the local community as fishing, coral, shell and seaweed collection, fish drying, shop keeping, business and agricultural practices, coconut selling and providing tourism service.
Of these, fishing, fish drying, sale of

coconuts and agricultural practices are the most common livelihoods for subsistence.
Fishing and businesses including shop keeping are the major sources of income among the others.
Other supplementary sources of income are coconut and dry fish selling, shell extraction, tourist van pulling, agricultural tourism, hotel and motel services etc.
The study pinpointed that local food production and availability are further threatened for specific reasons. It includes lack of institutional protection measures and unawareness about the status and functioning of critical ecosystems, limited opportunities for alternative sustainable livelihoods and limited public awareness of environmental issues.
The major findings are scarcity of biodiversity, depletion of fish and fisheries as it is a major source of livelihood to the local people, loss of local vegetation, used as fodder and fuel, and loss of agricultural land to infrastructures.
The factors also include salinity of

the land and the non-availability of food to people in the market due to natural calamities such as storms, cyclones, high winds and sea level rise during the monsoon.
However, 70 percent of the respondents expressed their grave concern about the alarming reduction of fish and fisheries diversity and abundance nowadays.
Overexploitation to meet the increasing demand of rapidly increasing population of the island appears to be the main factor for the scarcity.
The study observed that during the last two decades, the population of the St Martin's Island has increased very rapidly, believed to be beyond the capacity of the island in immediate future.
Over the last decade (1996-2008), the population of the island has almost doubled.
The study recorded that around 30 percent of the land in the island are now available for agricultural crop production. The principal agricultural crops are rice, chilli, maize, onion, beans and watermelon.



PHOTO: STAR
Poribeshsammyata Basjogya Dhaka Bastabayan Parishad forms a human chain at Nittali in Old Dhaka yesterday demanding removal of chemical warehouses.

INT'L DAY OF OLDER PERSONS 'Take care, recognise efforts'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
The International Day of Older Persons was observed yesterday across the country as elsewhere around the world in a befitting manner.
The UN General Assembly designated October 1 as a day for elderly people in 1990, to recognise their contributions and to examine issues that affect their lives.
The theme of this year's commemoration is "older persons and achieving millennium development goals".
Different socio-cultural organisations observed the day by holding a number of programmes in the city.
Bangladesh Probin Hitoishi Sangho organised a discussion at the auditorium of social welfare department to mark the day.
Research Integration Centre (RIC), an organisation working on the problems and demands of the older persons,



PHOTO: STAR
Resource Integration Centre (RIC) and HelpAge International hold a rally at Shahbagh in the city yesterday on the occasion of the International Day of Older Persons.

held various programmes to mark the day.
The RIC arranged musical programmes in front of the National Museum at Shahbagh, at Dhaka University Teachers Students Centre (TSC) and at Rabindra Sharobar in Dhanmondi.
People from all sections raised their index finger in the air to express solidarity with the older people of the world.
Programme Director of RIC Abul Hasib Khan said the achievement of millennium development goal is impossible without recognising the poverty of the elderly persons in the society.
Speakers from the programme urged all to look after the older.

Rubber worth Tk 30 lakh seized

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet
Raw rubber worth Tk 30 lakh was seized from a mechanised boat on the river Ratna while the item was being smuggled to Dhaka from Habiganj yesterday afternoon.
Police said locals first stopped the boat at Bolakipur in Baniachang upazila, which was carrying about 10,000 Kg of rubber.
As the owners failed to show any genuine and valid document, police seized the rubber and arrested Fazlu Miah, union parishad member of Satkapon, from the boat.
Police said some organised gangs have been engaged in rubber stealing from the government-run rubber gardens in Habiganj and in Moulvibazar.
They have chosen waterway to evade law enforcers' queries, added police.

25 commit suicide due to stalking in nine months

Says ASK report
STAFF CORRESPONDENT
At least 25 women committed suicide in the country in last nine months this year due to stalking while 17 others, including a woman, were killed for protesting the stalkers, said a report of human right organisation Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK).
According to the report, 19 women fell victims of "fatwa" and three of them were beaten with "dorras" during the period.
Four other women were given "hilla marriages" while six others ousted from their villages through "fatwa", said the report prepared by monitoring reports published in 12 newspapers.
It says at least 406 women were raped during the time adding 56 of them were killed after the rape and five raped victims committed suicide.
Some acid was thrown on 60 women and 17 housemaids were killed and 68 others injured in separate incidents of torture while 28 others died mysteriously.
The report says 66 people were killed in 'crossfire' by different law-enforcement and intelligence agencies while 29 others died due to torture under the custodies and 80 people were killed in mob beatings.
Some 49 people were killed in border firing and 58 died in jail custodies.
Cases were filed against 32 journalists, 35 others received death threats while two journalists were killed and 105 harassed.

Amend vested property return act

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Bangladesh Hindu-Buddha-Christian Oikkya Parishad yesterday submitted a memorandum to the prime minister with a 7-point demand, one seeking changes to "Vested Property Return (amendment) Act" in light of the Supreme Court verdict.
The parishad General Secretary, Advocate Ranadas Gupta, handed the memorandum over to PM's personal secretary, said a press release.
Their other demands include a clear definition of vested property on the basis of Supreme Court's orders, return of all properties grabbed after 1974 and formation of tribunals at districts to dispose of the cases.
The press release claimed that a number of eminent personalities including 13 parliament members signed the memorandum.

Ratanpur school publishes magazine

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Ratanpur Abdullah High School of Bramhanbaria published a magazine titled "Jonaki" yesterday to enhance quality education, said a press release.
On the occasion, the school in Nabinagar upzila arranged a launching ceremony participated by its former students, teachers, governing body members and dignified personalities.
The students were urged to be honest and patriotic citizen of the country.
Former ambassador Abdus Salam, educationist M Abdur Rasul, cancer specialist Dr Majur Kader, deputy secretary Kazi Abdul Noor, among others, were present at the function.

Shun politics of revenge, join JS

Obaidul Quader urges BNP
UNB, Dhaka
Awami League presidium member Obaidul Quader yesterday urged the main opposition BNP to shun politics of revenge and join the coalition for strengthening democracy in the country.
"Real democracy and effective parliament still remain beyond our dream. Today revenge, conflict and politics have become synonymous," he said at a discussion at the Dhaka Reporters Union (DRU).
Janatar Pratyasha, a social organisation, arranged the discussion titled "Shunning politics of revenge for advancement of democracy".
Obaidul Quader said, "We are not building bridge of understanding. We are building a wall of conflict and division, which does not augur well for democracy in the country."
He criticised BNP for not joining the current session of parliament on the pretext of "so-called lack of congenial atmosphere".
Mentioning the ongoing political crisis in Nepal, the AL presidium member said if the foundation of democracy is weak, many untoward incidents will occur, giving rise to new political crisis in the country.
About the caretaker government, he said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has already shown her interest to continue the system for holding the next parliamentary elections.

Enforcement of private university act soon: Nahid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
The government will soon start implementing the Private University Act involving all stakeholders, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid said yesterday.
"We have passed the law after holding talks with private university association for one year, so that they [private universities] can run their institutions successfully," the minister said.
He also said though the private universities are making valuable contribution to the country's higher education, many of them are yet to achieve any success in ensuring quality of education.
Nahid made the remark at a programme organised by the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB) to mark its sixth founding anniversary.
Questions have been raised regarding rented campus, lack of educational atmosphere and standard of education in many private universities, he said.
"The authorities of these unsuccessful universities could not meet the requisites, which they promised during the launching of their universities," the minister said.
Nahid alleged that the students, who got admitted to these universities by spending huge amount of money, are affected as they failed to get proper education in a congenial educational atmosphere.
"It can't be acceptable. We will not let education turn into a tool of business," said the minister.
Thanking the ULAB authorities for launching their own campus, Nahid urged the authorities concerned of all universities to play a more responsible role by giving quality education as well as ensuring standard of their universities.
ULAB founder Kazi Shahid Ahmed, Vice-Chancellor Prof Rafiqul Islam spoke on the occasion among others.

Students must know about technology

Says Zafar Iqbal
A RU CORRESPONDENT
Every student must have knowledge on technology as well as institutional education, said eminent writer Prof Muhammad Zafar Iqbal on Thursday at Rajshahi University.
Addressing as a key speaker at a discussion titled "Higher education to technology: Bangladesh perspective", he said, "Computers must be used as a tool to develop our technological knowledge."
Zafar Iqbal also called upon the university authorities to start such an education system where students will graduate with technological knowledge.
Quoting a statement of Albert Einstein that imagination is more important than knowledge, he said we have to make use of our imaginations because it is very important for our life.
Newspaper Readers Forum, a voluntary organisation at RU, organised the discussion on the occasion of its 21st founding anniversary at Zaki Nazrul Islam auditorium on the campus.
Arif Hasnat, founder president of Newspaper Readers Forum, and its adviser Prof Sadequul Arifin Matin also spoke at the programme.

Rokeya Rashid

METRO DESK
Rokeya Rashid, an active litterateur and sub-editor of the pioneering 1960's women's journal "Lalana", a retiree of the World Food Programme, passed away on Thursday in Dhaka due to kidney and cardiac problems at the age of 66.
She left behind her husband Mohammad Haroonur Rashid, retired secretary to the Government of Bangladesh, former chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission and principal of the Civil Service College, and two daughters.
She will be buried at Banani Graveyard after namaz-e-janaza today after Jomr prayers at Masjid el Magferah in Sector No# 3 of Uttara.
Her qulkhani will be held on October 8 after Asr prayers at her residence House No# 2, Road No# 7A, Sector No# 3 in Uttara.
All friends, relatives and well-wishers are requested to attend the janaza and qulkhani and pray for salvation of the departed soul.

Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka
Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at a few places over Sylhet division and at one or two places over Dhaka, Rajshahi, Rangpur, Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions in next 24 hours till 6:00pm today.
Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met Office said.
Country's highest temperature 35.2 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore and Comilla and lowest 24.7 degrees at Rangamati.
Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max:	Min:	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	33.8	26.0	69	63
Chittagong	33.6	25.5	69	75
Rajshahi	34.3	24.8	83	76
Khulna	35.0	26.0	74	73
Barisal	35.0	25.5	73	77
Sylhet	34.3	25.6	83	77
Cox's Bazar	33.7	26.0	65	71

Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Today is the 7th death anniversary of Mohammed Hashem, a freedom fighter and former member of the Constituent Assembly of Bangladesh.
On the occasion, Doa and Milad mahfil will be held at his Green Road residence in the city and at a madrasa in Muchargara of Comilla's Muradnagar.

UCEP starts technical school at Gazipur

METRO DESK
Chirs Austin, country representative, DFID Bangladesh, praised the role of Underprivileged Children's Educational Programs (UCEP-Bangladesh) in developing the underprivileged children into productive human resources for Bangladesh.
He was addressing as the chief guest at the inaugural ceremony of UCEP Gazipur Technical School at North Shalna of Gazipur on Thursday, said a press release.
UCEP-Bangladesh, an NGO working for the uplift of the distressed and poor urban working children, organised the function.
The DFID country chief unveiled the inaugural plaque of the building. He also visited different trades of the technical school and talked to the students and teachers.
The Chairperson of UCEP Board of Governors Ubaidur Rob and Vice Chairperson Parveen Mahmud FCA and its Executive Director Aftab Uddin Ahmed also spoke on the occasion.
Association members of the organisation, foreign diplomats, donor representatives, government officials, journalists and local elites were present.
UCEP extended its program to Gazipur in 2009 with establishing five integrated General & Vocational (IGV) Schools and a Technical School for the underprivileged working children of the district.



PHOTO: STAR
DFID Country Representative Chris Austin inaugurates UCEP Gazipur Technical School at North Shalna on Thursday.