

Biodiversity and climate change

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resource conservation, development and enrichment. It will not only foster development in line with the sustainable development framework but will also be a masterpiece for Ministerial Committee and finally the Cabinet for authorisation and implementation.

National level initiatives addressing biodiversity conservation

In-situ and ex-situ approaches:

Bangladesh is implementing outstanding in-situ conservation approaches to sustain natural processes in nature reserve areas including Ramsar sites e.g. protecting the tigers in the Sundarbans. Ex-situ or 'off-site conservation' approach is also being implemented to conserve essential genetic materials in Bangladesh. For instance, an important gene bank for the conservation of genetic rice resources has been established at the Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI). But there are no gene banks for genetic animal resources in the country, which leaves opportunities for further research. Alongside, Bangladesh has been carrying out some outstanding projects in line with biodiversity conservation and climate change. The following section summarises three projects addressing this issue:

1.The Bangladesh Climate-Resilient Ecosystems and Livelihoods (CREL) Project: The CREL Project is USAID's initiative for Bangladesh to attain "increased responsiveness and resilience to climate change in vulnerable biologically diverse environments." Through this project, the Government is not only trying to increase the country's resilience by adapting the best scale up and co-management models but also enhancing the natural resource governance status of the country. They are doing so by addressing the

key legal, environmental and socio-economic aspects which directly pose threat to ecologically critical areas. The implementing partners of the CREL project include MOEF, Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock (MOFL) and Ministry of Land (MOL) of the Government of Bangladesh; international partners including World Fish Center and Tetra Tech/ARD and local collaborators including Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS), Center for Natural Resource Studies (CNRS), Community Development Centre (CODEC) and Nature Conservation Management (NACOM).

2.Bengal Tiger Conservation Activity, the "Bagh Project": Another example of biodiversity conservation is the Bengal Tiger Conservation Activity, commonly known as the "Bagh Project" by USAID and the Wild Team, BCAS and Smithsonian Institute, USA. This initiative is dedicated towards protecting tigers in the Sundarbans through minimising human-wildlife conflict, illegal wildlife trafficking, enhancing communications and enhancing conservation livelihoods. It is noteworthy that community participation adds benefit to conservation initiatives, where the local community are willing to share their indigenous knowledge for conservation activities. "Bagh Project" is an example of such community participation.

3.The Climate Resilient Participatory Afforestation and Reforestation (CRPAR) Project: This project is the government's initiative to commit towards forest conservation. They are doing so by enhancing the forest coverage through monitoring and participatory planning in the hilly areas and 9 coastal zones of Bangladesh. The government is target-

ing to establish newly afforested and reforested areas, support alternative livelihoods for the communities who are directly dependent on forest resources and to strengthen institutional capacity to manage the forestry resources in a much more sustainable manner.

Conclusion and recommendations Needless to say, it is evident that climate change is no longer a myth and that, we are losing our national

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resources. Both are happening very rapidly and simultaneously. Biodiversity and climate change therefore needs to be viewed through an integrated lens in Bangladesh. Else, these two intertwined predicaments will continue running, just like two parallel lines of a railway track. For that essential convergence to occur at some point of time, we need to take immediate actions. Following are some recommendations which demand rapid implementation and consideration:

1.Ensuring synergy between SDGs and FYP7: The initiatives of the FYP7 must integrate with the

targets set by SDGs in Bangladesh. Also, in order to ensure achieving the SDGs, the government tiers must not work in isolation. Every sector should be delegated their tasks, which are to be completed with a combined effort to share resource, experience and knowledge in developing the SDG strategies. Hence, biodiversity should be mainstreamed in the decision making process across all sectors. Lessons can be taken from grass-root levels e.g. from local communities whose indigenous knowledge can be implemented into conservation activities, as seen in the "Bagh Project". The inter-linkages and feedback between climate change and biodiversity need to be better understand in the case of Bangladesh ecosystems.

2.Reducing the knowledge gap: Sporadic research on climate change and biodiversity should be complemented by long-term effective research. Use of technological tools e.g. satellite imagery or Geographic Information System (GIS) to study climate change impacts on biodiversity should be facilitated. Progress reports and biodiversity database must be updated in a systematic and timely manner.

3.Ecosystem survey: A national level ecosystem survey should be carried out periodically by the government, non-government and international organisations as a part of monitoring and evaluation. For instance, at five years' interval. Conducting this survey will help the policy makers and implementing bodies to plan for the subsequent situation in line with the SDGs. International biodiversity based organisations, like the World Heritage Site and could extend their

support to the government in undertaking such initiatives.

4.Restoring biodiversity: In Bangladesh, there is a need to conserve and restore biodiversity and ecosystem services in the terrestrial, aquatic and marine environment. Key areas of investment for implementation must be identified through intensive engagement of governmental actors, NGOs, researchers, private sectors and the people at large.

5.Enhancing ecosystem based approaches: Ecosystem-based adaptation, like the "floating garden" can provide cost-effective solutions and multiple socio-economic benefits to Bangladesh ecosystem. As a tool for strengthening biodiversity management in the country, this approach should be mainstreamed into conservation and development policies by the Government. However, utilising both public and private resources and sustainable financing is required for its effective implementation.

6.Increasing opportunities in knowledge and biodiversity in marine systems: Marine boundary is now well established after the demarcation with Myanmar and India. Our knowledge about resource availability in these areas is limited. More research, exploration and extensive activities are needed to develop and understand the most sustainable use of these resources. The impact of climate change on the biodiversity of the marine system should be investigated and resource implications identified.

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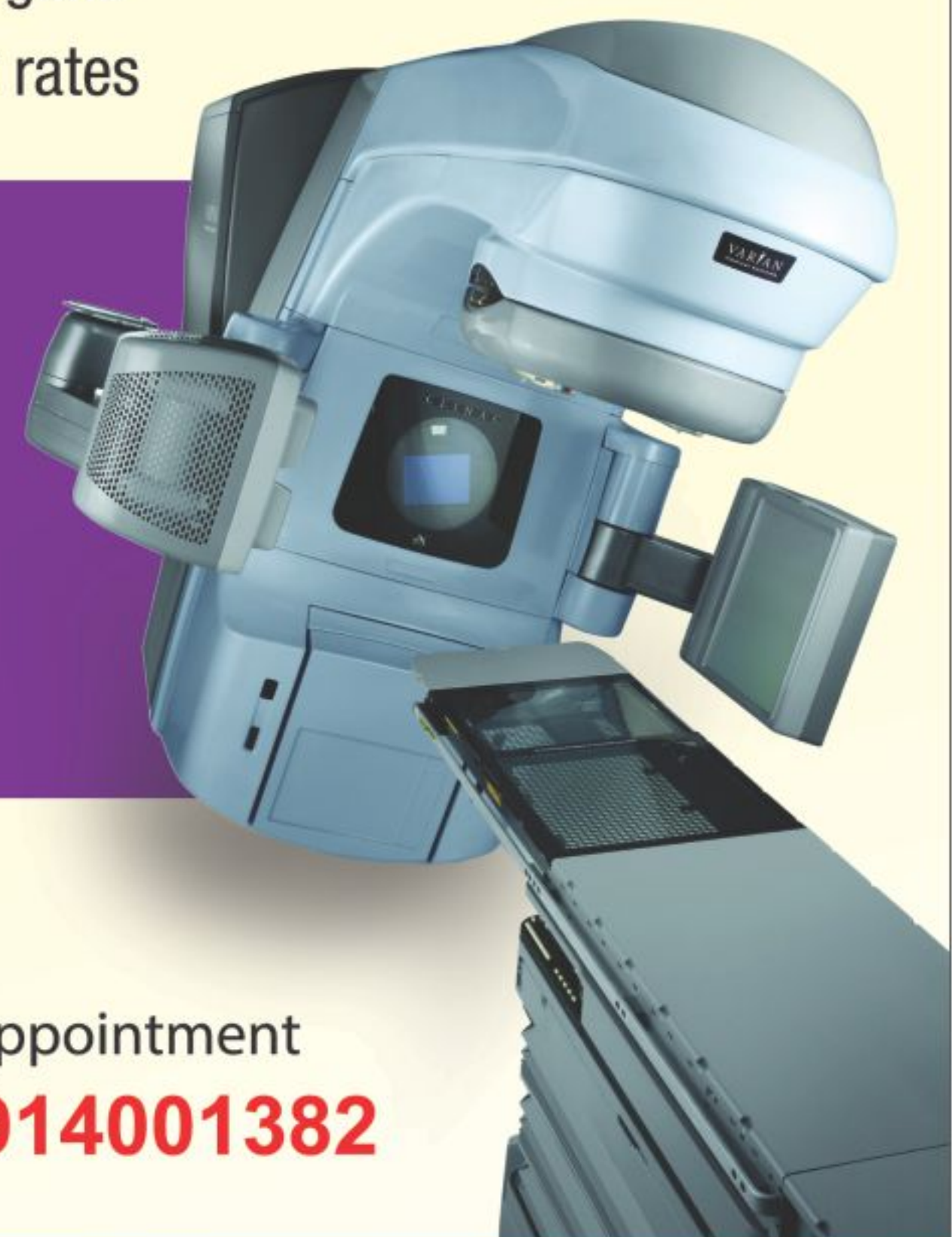
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