



WORLD BANK BANGLADESH NEWSLETTER

January - April 2010

“Greater results are within our grasp if we work together”: Isabel M. Guerrero

Ms. Isabel M. Guerrero, World Bank Vice President for the South Asia Region visited Dhaka to participate in the inaugural session of the Bangladesh Development Forum 2010. The Vice President commended Bangladesh for the progress since the last forum in 2005, which includes maintaining macro-stability and economic growth, improving human development and navigating the global food, fuel and financial crisis. “Examples of successful results are already here for us to see” stated Guerrero, “We have seen measurable improvements in the investment climate, another million rural inhabitants connected to reliable energy, and gender parity achieved in primary and secondary school. This shows that greater results are within our grasp if we work together.” During her visit, she confirmed the World Bank’s intention to provide Bangladesh exceptional support of US\$ 1.2 billion or more to close the financing gap for the Padma Multipurpose Bridge Project.

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Consulting Stakeholders for the new Country Assistance Strategy for Bangladesh

As part of preparing the new Country Assistance Strategy (2011 - 2014) for Bangladesh, the World Bank initiated a series of consultations with a broad range of stakeholders, including the government, civil society, private sector and development partners. Regional consultations in Chittagong, Jessore and Rangpur were held along with consultations in Dhaka. The purpose of these consultations was to receive stakeholders’ feedback on key development challenges and their views on strategic development priorities for Bangladesh, to guide the preparation of the Bank’s new strategy.

Showcasing IDA at Work: Results Tours to Project Sites

During the CAS consultations a group of Media stakeholders visited World Bank funded projects in Tangail, Jessore and Gaibanda to see how these initiatives are improving the people’s lives.

The tour to Tangail focused on World Bank’s support towards power generation and distribution, particularly in the rural areas of Bangladesh. Ellen Goldstein, Country Director, World Bank in Bangladesh accompanied the media participants. A Small Power Plant facilitated by the Investment Promotion Financing Facility (IPFF) Project was visited. The group also went to a remote village in Tangail which is powered by solar home systems. The homes are now lit up, allowing the children more time to study during the evenings. Furthermore small businesses are flourishing as they are now taking advantage of the available electricity.

To forge partnership and build rapport with local media stakeholders at the district level, a World Bank team along with the media representatives from Rangpur and Dhaka went to visit Ananda Schools (Schools of Joy). Ananda Schools, under the Reaching Out-of-School Children (ROSC) Project, demonstrates innovative approaches to bring poor and vulnerable children back to school.

The tour to Jessore and Satkhira was organized to visit an innovative private public partnership scheme for ensuring piped water in remote rural areas under the Bangladesh Water Supply Program Project (BWSSP). A Union Parishad was also visited to see the Local Governance Support Project (LGSP) that is providing UPs with greater resources and discretion to deliver local services.

Continued Support for Bangladesh Assured at 2010 World Bank-IMF Spring Meetings

A high level delegation from Bangladesh including the Finance Minister Abul Maal Abdul Muhith and LGRD Minister Syed Ashrafur Islam attended the 2010 World Bank-IMF Spring Meetings in Washington DC, USA. The World Bank reiterated its continued support to Bangladesh in its efforts towards achieving food security, ensuring social safety and meeting the growing demands for clean water and sanitation.

The Finance Minister also attended the launching of the global food security and agriculture fund. US President Barack Obama announced the \$200 billion fund, of which Bangladesh along with India, the Philippines and Vietnam would also be benefited. The Bangladesh delegation also held a meeting with Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Managing Director, The World Bank where the upcoming World Bank Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) for Bangladesh was discussed.

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Events

Singapore shares experience of nationwide e-Transformation with Bangladesh

The Singapore Government and the World Bank jointly organized in Dhaka the knowledge sharing event “The Singapore Experience – Ingredients for successful Nation-wide e-Transformation” on the ‘Singapore ICT Day event for South Asia’. The speakers shared experience from the remarkable journey of Singapore since 1980 on using ICT. The workshop focused on ICT’s role in public sector transformation in order to achieve the Government of Bangladesh’s vision of Digital Bangladesh. The event provided the opportunity for Bangladesh and other South Asian countries, who participated by video conference to learn and reflect from the Singaporean experience.

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Consultations: Seeking Inputs on Global Environment and Energy Strategies

The World Bank is holding consultations worldwide to finalize its global strategies for various sectors. The World Bank teams have been visiting countries around the world, listening to ideas and suggestions from government, civil society, the private sector, academia, public utilities, regulatory agencies, and others. Two consultations were held in Dhaka to hear the views and opinions of the local stakeholders for the environment strategy and the energy strategy respectively. During the Environment Consultation on March 2, discussions focused on the role of the World Bank Group in helping Bangladesh to achieve environmental sustainability and the kind of strategy the World Bank should pursue to achieve this. The consultation on the World Bank’s new energy strategy was also attended by the Chair and one of the key members of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Energy and Power along with government, private sector, think tank and academia.

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[Energy Strategy Consultations](#)



Bangladeshi Undergraduates Shine at Economic Forum

The South Asian Economics Students’ Meet (SAESM) is an initiative of the South Asian Economics Forum which realized the importance of promoting, understanding and discussing key economic and development related issues that are central to South Asia. It was initiated in 2003 by the Departments of Economics of four leading Universities in South Asia; University of Delhi, University of Dhaka, Lahore University of Management Sciences and University of Colombo. The main objective of this program is to provide a platform for young future economists to learn and share their views and experiences relating to current economic issues of South Asia. The World

Bank Public Information Centers of the South Asia Region, in partnership with SAESM launched the publication titled "*Economic Challenges to make South Asia Free from Poverty and Deprivation*" which contained thematic papers presented by SAESM students at the 5th SAESM held in New Delhi 2008. The event was attended by SAESM students and co-ordinators and gave the student contributors from India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka a chance to share their personal experiences at SAESM and how it has benefited them in strengthening their regional links and network.

Project News

Round table on 'Urban Transport Institutional and Financial Issues'

A Roundtable was organized to discuss the international best practices of the institutional and financial issues for urban transport. The World Bank funded Clean Air and Sustainable Environment (CASE) project facilitated the roundtable that was joined by more than 30 Government officials. The project is supporting the Government of Bangladesh in its efforts to improve the urban transport in Dhaka. The CASE project in corroboration with Government's Strategic Transport Plan for Dhaka would prepare transformative investment for urban transport in Dhaka including Bus Rapid Transport.

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Research & Analysis

Connecting to Compete 2010: Trade Logistics in the Global Economy

The capacity of countries to efficiently connect manufacturers and consumers with international markets is improving around the world. The Connecting to Compete 2010: Trade Logistics in the Global Economy, highlights the need for further progress to spur faster economic growth and help firms benefit from trade. The survey on trade logistics sees Germany as the top performer among the 155 economies ranked in the Logistics Performance Indicators (LPI). India is the top performer among South Asian economies ranked number 47 while Bangladesh has improved its ranking to 79 from 87 in 2007.

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Global Economic Prospects 2010

South Asia appears to have escaped the worst effects of the global economic crisis, according to the Global Economic Prospects 2010. However, the region's GDP growth of 6% in 2009 has remained unchanged from 2008. The report explores both the short- and medium-term impacts of the financial crisis on developing countries. It presents evidence that the financial boom played a critical role in the growth boom experienced by developing countries between 2003 and 2007. However tighter conditions in the future are expected to result in weaker growth over the next 5 to 15 years.

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Promoting Economic Cooperation in South Asia: Beyond SAFTA

The cost of weak regional cooperation tends to hurt the poor more than the other segment of the population. Over 500 million people, most of them very poor, live in the Indus and the Ganges–Brahmaputra river basins. These great basins are shared by six nations and sharing of these resources is a matter of political sensitivity and tension. The report looks at the many policy and institutional constraints that contribute to the present state and have made South Asia one of the least integrated regions of the world.

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Project Snapshot

Solar Panels are Changing Villagers' Lifestyles

Sabina Begum of Kostwari village, a mother of two children, purchased a solar panel at the cost of Tk 29,000 only four months ago. 'I bought it to help my son and daughter study and charge their mobile phones,' she said, "My husband, who is working in Saudi Arabia, sent us the money and asked me to use it to improve our lifestyle. My children now have more study time and are doing better at their schools". In another corner of the village, Hossain Ali Sikdar, owner of a poultry farm spoke excitedly about his solar panel. 'I have been benefited by these panels as I use solar power for my poultry farm which needs 16 hours of light a day" said Sikdar. "My business is faring much better now and I'm earning more" he adds with a smile.

Through the Rural Electrification and Renewable Energy Development (RERED) project the World Bank is supporting the Government achieve its goal of providing electricity to its entire rural population by 2020. The \$321 million initiative has connected 630,000 rural homes to the national electricity grid and provided about 320,000 remote households with solar home systems. The project has also connected another 270,000 households in remote rural areas through solar home systems.

[Project Profile](#)

Blog Corner

[When More Roads Mean More Congestion](#) - Zahid Hussain

[Fiscal Story of Bangladesh: Not There Yet, But Can Get There?](#) - Abul Basher

[They Shall Overcome; Some Day . . .](#) - Naomi Ahmad

New Arrivals at Public Information Center

- [Bringing Finance to Pakistan's Poor: Access to Finance for Small Enterprises and the Underserved](#)
- [Doing Business 2010: Reforming through Difficult Times](#)
- [Moving Out of Poverty: Rising from the Ashes of Conflict](#)
- [Empowerment in Practice: From Analysis to Empowerment](#)
- [More than a Pretty Picture: Using Poverty Maps to Design Policies and Interventions](#)
- [Linking Up and Reaching Out in Bangladesh: Information and Communications Technology for Microfinance](#)
- [Two Dragon Heads: Contrasting Development Paths for Beijing and Shanghai](#)
- [Safer Homes, Stronger Communities: A Handbook for Reconstructing after Natural Disasters](#)

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