

Reassess Cox's Bazar dev plan to tackle Rohingya crisis: Report

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Reuters file photo used for representation

Improving community-based preparedness, strengthening local organisations, developing knowledge transfer and capacity-building programmes are required for making the disaster management activities effective, a policy report has suggested.

Preparedness against the backdrop of Rohingya crisis, it also called for reassessing the Cox's Bazar development plan and integration of disaster management as part of long-term development to tackle the problem.

Dr Alistair D B Cook, an international scholar on disaster relief programme, presented the highlights of the report at a public lecture on 'Complex Humanitarian Emergencies and Disaster Management in Bangladesh: 2017 Rohingya Exodus'.

Privately-run BRAC University's Centre for Peace and Justice (CPJ) organised the programme at a city conference centre on Sunday.

Dr Alistair is the coordinator of Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Programme at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore.

BRAC University Pro-Vice-Chancellor Prof Mohammad Tamim and CPJ Research Coordinator Muhammad Badiuzzaman were also present at the programme.

According to the policy report, Bangladesh's geographical location in a disaster-prone area has prompted the country to institutionalise disaster management and coordination.

The report was prepared last year, on the backdrop of Rohingya crisis, to identify lessons learnt and factors which may impede effective disaster management and coordination among different agencies.

The report made a set of recommendations to enhance the efficiency of disaster management programmes in Bangladesh.

"Streamline and revise approval processes for incoming relief goods, funds and personnel drawing on regional experiences like the Philippines," the report suggested.

It also called for developing an approval process for international non-governmental organisations (INGO) that help enhance local agencies' capacity.

Taking the Rohingya issue into consideration, the report called for re-evaluation of the Cox's Bazar development plan and integrating disaster management as part of a long-term development.

"Post-disaster infrastructure development can be a catalyst for the long-term growth of Teknaf and Ukhia."

For non-governmental organisations, the report suggested establishing a formal and accessible feedback system for beneficiaries to providers, and a peer-to-peer feedback mechanism between humanitarian organisations.

It also called for introducing structured knowledge-transfer and capacity-building programmes with coordination among local and international humanitarian organisations.

According to the report, Bangladesh is exposed to both slow and quick onset disasters including annual floods, cyclones, salinity intrusion, earthquakes and landslides.

In addition to natural hazards, the South Asian nation is also at risk of emergencies stemming from political developments within and outside the country such as political violence, military involvement in politics, and large-scale population movements.

Since 25 August 2017, Bangladesh is a refuge for some 646,000 additional Rohingya refugees, the report added.