



Union Minister for Water Resources Saifuddin Soz launching the UNDP Human Development Report in New Delhi on Thursday. *UNI*

India ranks 126 on Human Development Index

NEW DELHI (UNI): The Human Development Report (HDR) 2006 released here on Thursday ranks India 126 on Human Development Index (HDI) out of 177 countries, up by one notch from last year's position.

The HDI is a composite index developed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and is regarded as a measure of the life chances of an individual.

While birth is regarded as an accident of obility. Ever since the HDI was coined by UNDP, a number of state governments, as well as the Centre bring out HDI as a measure of opportunities.

The Index comprises three parameters — life ex-

pectancy, health and education.

The Report was released by Union Minister for Water Resources Saifuddin Soz who commended the report saying that it will provide a better understanding of the complex issues and arriving at solutions to benefit all sections of society.

The 17th global report has its theme 'Beyond Scarcity: Power, Capacity and the Global Water Crisis'.

The HDI value went up from 0.602 in last year's report to 0.611 in HDR 2006.

Another index drawn up by the HDR is Human Poverty Index. India ranks 55 from among a sample of 102 developing countries. The HPI vaue stands at 31.3 as per the HDR 2006.

The Report says that In-

dia is on its way to achieving the Millenium Development Goal on water, having made progress in enabling access to water to its rural and urban population. However, access to sanitation is lagging and there was a need to accelerate progress in this field.

UNDP Resident Representative Maxine Olson said in parts of India groundwater tables are falling by more than one metre a year, jeopardising future agricultural production. She said while water availability as delivered by nature was critical, equally important are policies, institutions and infrastructure through which people secure access to predictable flows of water.

India receives a mention in several sections of the report in terms of how community action in water management has revived local economies. This has happened as a result of several grassroot leaders who have shown the way and led communities to manage resources, however, scarce.

Citing experiences from Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, the report says that equitable distribution of water and sanitation services was greatly enhanced when access and management rights are transferred to communities themselves.

The Report says the Total Sanitation Campaign in Bangladesh has been scaled up from a community based

project to a national programme that was achieving rapid growth in providing access to sanitation.

India is among the countries that have adopted the Bangladesh model, the report observes and cites the success of Midnapore district in West Bengal in scaling up sanitation from 1 per cent to near total coverage as a result of this campaign.

The Report says the conflicts over water have been an exception and not the rule. It refers to the fact that more than 200 water treaties have been negotiated. Some of these treaties — such as the Indus Basin Treaty between India and Pakistan — have remained in operation even during armed conflicts.