How to keep more girls in school? Lessons from Bangladesh
Mushfiq Mobarak
Posted on: 9/24/2012 2:49:22 PM
Tags: Conditional cash transfers,Bangladesh,Exports,Girls' education

For years developing countries have been trying to increase parents' incentives to send their children, particularly girls, to school and keep them there. This column looks at the success of Bangladesh, where the number of girls in school now exceeds the number of boys. It argues that money talks – but it's the money that educated children will earn once they leave school that talks loudest.

Microfinance and predatory lending: The same old story?
Anand Swamy, Latika Chaudhury
Posted on: 9/19/2012 11:45:06 AM
Tags: Microfinance, economic history, colonialism

Once hailed as a near-miraculous way of lending money to the poor, microfinance is now often seen as exploitation – and governments are stepping in. This column looks at another point in India's history, where lawmakers have intervened in lending practices: following the Deccan Riots between farmers and moneylenders in 1876. It argues that in hindsight this was an overreaction – and perhaps there is a lesson for today.
Developing a Land Acquisition Policy for India

The Land Acquisition Bill is a key piece of legislation under consideration in the Indian Parliament. This column argues that the current policy on compensating landowners, as proposed in the Bill, is misguided and could adversely affect the pace and character of future growth in India. It draws lessons from economic theory as well as the failed land acquisition experience in Singur to propose a workable model for determining appropriate compensation for land acquisition.

The Indian Parliament is currently considering a Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Bill (LARR Bill), as are various state legislatures. These are likely to affect the pace and character of future growth in India in a significant way. Setting up new industries, service establishments and real estate development will inevitably require land to be acquired from rural areas. Hence legal rules and government policies for the process by which land is to be acquired, and how current owners are compensated, will play a critical role. The dramatic developments in Singur and Nandigram in West Bengal a few years ago drew national attention, and have influenced both the outcomes of the 2011 state elections in West Bengal, as well as framed the discussion regarding the Land Acquisition Bills currently being drafted.

The West Bengal fiasco has naturally generated calls for adequate compensation of those displaced. Reinforcing this are accounts of how various Maoist rebellions in other parts of India have been fuelled by the