

Employment has to be solved in the countryside

S Bari interviews ARTEP Director

Employment generation is one of those development catchwords, like poverty alleviation and grassroots participation. How to get our unemployed and under-employed populace off the streets and into the fields and factories is the object of countless projects. The International Labour Organization advises governments on the employment issue through its Asian Regional Team for Employment Promotion (ARTEP).

ARTEP Director, Dr Rizwanul Islam, a Bangladeshi, is in Dhaka on mission from his New Delhi headquarters, and spoke to The Daily Star about his experiences in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Daily Star (DS): What is ARTEP, and what are you doing in Bangladesh?

Rizwanul Islam (RI): ARTEP, the Asian Regional Team for Employment Promotion, implements the Asian Employment Programme of the ILO. We provide technical assistance and advisory services to countries in the region.

DS: How are you assisting the government in Bangladesh?

RI: Well, the Planning Commission will soon start work on the Fifth Five Year Plan, in which employment is to be treated as a major objective. Instead of only working from the assumption that investment will lead to employment, it is being suggested that employment creation be the starting point. It is sort of working backwards. In this initiative of the government's, ARTEP is playing a supporting role. We are currently carrying out an exercise on employment promotion.

We think this is a good approach, to keep employment as a major objective in the economic planning. ARTEP is assisting the programme technically and UNDP is providing the financial assistance.

DS: You have had years of experience in Southeast Asia and South Asia, and have seen employment schemes that have met with success. Can you tell us about experiences in the region that Bangladesh could learn from?

RI: There is certainly a lot to be learnt from other Asian countries. We don't always have to look to the West for lessons. Indonesia, for example, is very similar to Bangladesh in many ways. The experience of Java island is one that is very relevant here. In the last two decades, Java's productivity and employment rate have skyrocketed increased very substantially.

DS: What were the ingredi-

ents of Java's success; how can we emulate those?

RI: Indonesia took a two-pronged approach to the problem. For one, there was enormous emphasis on agricultural growth. They gave importance to the introduction of new

DS: What mistakes are governments likely to make in their enthusiasm to generate jobs: what pitfalls should we be wary of?

RI: Mistakes which are typically made include adoption of inappropriate technology in

the private sector was encouraged by government policies.

DS: Closer to home, in the SAARC region, are there any employment tips we can share among us?

RI: Unfortunately, the degree of success within the SAARC region is lower than in South-East Asia. India, to a certain extent, has succeeded in alleviating poverty. The programmes of the government have played an important role there.

DS: What happened to our region? The "Tigers" of East Asia have left us pretty much behind.

RI: Well, in the case of Bangladesh, employment is mentioned as a priority area for action. And urgent action is needed. There is a proliferation of self-employment programmes, run by both government agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). What I feel is that an overall strategy is lacking.

We need one strategy, that will focus on investment and growth as a whole. In the process, sufficient employment must be generated. Areas that can be identified are agriculture, rural industry and other industries.

You cannot overemphasize the importance of agriculture. Sixty-five per cent of all employment in this country is accounted for by agriculture. Only 14 per cent is in manufacturing, and of that, only 3 to 4 per cent is accounted for by formal manufacturing.

Employment therefore has to be solved in the countryside. It is still possible to increase the productivity of employment in agriculture. Conditions will also be created for the growth of rural industry, as I have said before. Side by side with this, we need to work on modern manufacturing for exports.

DS: Are you saying that there is no place for small self-employment schemes such as those promoted by various NGOs?

RI: Not at all. The problem of underemployment is so acute that one particular strategy is not enough. The self-employment projects have their need and place, especially as the strategy of employment generation through growth alone takes time to work. For the strategies I mentioned before to work, we are looking at the long-term. The self-employment schemes are essential for the present, and for the medium term.

DS: Thank you for sharing your opinions.



Dr. Rizwanul Islam

technologies based on new seeds, irrigation and fertilizers. There was an intensification of agriculture. This leads naturally to increase in employment opportunities. Before, Indonesia was deficient in foodgrains. Now they are self-sufficient.

Secondly, and simultaneously, there was an emphasis on industrialization, especially non-oil based industries. It was a primarily export oriented strategy.

This two-pronged approach, with dual emphasis on agriculture and manufacturing led to Indonesia's success. It is important to remember that the manufacturing was primarily based on exports.

RI: The private sector played the main role, of course. But the private sector must adopt policies that are favourable to the growth of the right kind of industry and technology. It is an indirect but crucial role. The government provides an environment conducive to growth. The same happened in Thailand, where

The same is true of China, which is another country we can learn these lessons from.

Rupali Bank reduces lending rates

To Promote Industrial and Commercial activities in the country, Rupali Bank Ltd fur, , ther reduces its lending rates on loans and advances with effect from March 1, says a press release.

Interest rates have been reduced on different categories of advances namely term loan to large and medium scale industry from 13 per cent to 12 per cent working capital other than jute industry from 13.50 per cent to 13 per cent, jute trading from 16 per cent to 15.50 per cent jute and jute goods export from 10 per cent to 9.50 per cent other export from 10 per cent to 9.50 per cent other commercial lending from 16 per cent to 15.50 per cent. Urban house a) residential from 14.50 per cent to 14 per cent. b) commercial from 16 per cent to 15 per cent.

Gold, dollar finish lower in New York

NEW YORK, Mar 5: The US dollar fell against European currencies Thursday after Germany's central bank failed to make an expected cut in interest rates. The dollar gained on the yen on hints of Japanese intervention to prop it up, says an AP report.

Gold prices were mostly lower. On the New York Commodity Exchange, gold bullion for current delivery settled at 329.00 dollar, unchanged from Wednesday. Republic National Bank said gold slipped five cent an ounce to a late bid price of 328.75 dollar an ounce.

After advancing against the mark in European trading on expectations of a German rate cut, the dollar fell sharply when the Bundesbank's policymaking Central Bank Council left key rates unchanged at its bi-weekly meeting.



Ann Hamilton, Director of World Bank for South Asia calls on Chowdhury Kamal Ibe Yousuf, Minister for Health and Family Welfare at his office on Thursday. — PID photo

Brazil expels 3,000 illegal Indian gold prospectors

BRAZILIA, Mar 5: About 3,000 of an estimated 10,000 illegal gold prospectors have been expelled from Indian territory in northern Brazil under an operation launched last month by federal authorities, official said yesterday.

Operation Free Forest, launched February 25, has prompted many of the gold seekers known as 'Garimpeiros' to leave without incident, said a spokesman for the National Indian Foundation (FUNAI), the state agency responsible for Indian matters.

The gold seekers have been operating in the Yanomami Indian reserve covering some 9.4 million hectares (23 million acres), an area the size of Portugal in the states of

Roraima and Amazon inhabited by about 9,000 Yanomamis.

Most of those leaving were taken by an air force plane to Boa Vista after undergoing medical exams and being questioned by authorities.

"Any contact between non-Indian's and Indian's is harmful," the FUNAI spokesman said. The Yanomamis are abandoning Manioc-growing to go begging to the Garimpeiros. They are undernourished and many have malaria. "With the withdrawal of the Garimpeiros, they can begin a process of detoxification that will leave them as before, or almost."

Plots of private jets who are generally paid with 60 grams of gold per flight by the gold hunters have been

grounded by air force surveillance, officials said. Air force helicopters also are being used to locate gold seekers in riverbeds.

The three-month operation Free Forest launched by federal authorities is expected to cost 1.5 million dollar, FUNAI estimates it will require an additional 1.5 million dollar to monitor the region afterward to prevent gold hunters from returning.

One gold hunter interviewed in Boa Vista said of the operation, "in three months, they (Garimpeiros) will be back, like the previous times. The Tuxauas (tribal chiefs) want us in the region because we give them food and clothing."

Shipping Intelligence

CHITTAGONG PORT

Berth position and performance of vessels as on 04.03.93.

Table with columns: Berth No., Name of Vessels, Cargo agent, L. Port arrival, Local Date of Leaving, Leaving.

VESSELS DUE AT OUTER ANCHORAGE

Table with columns: Name of vessels, Date of arrival, Last Port call, Local agent, Cargo, Loading port.

TANKER DUE

Table with columns: Name, Date, Port, Type, Cargo.

VESSELS AT KUTUBDIA

Table with columns: Name of Vessels, Cargo, Last Port call, Local agent, Date of arrival.

VESSELS NOT READY

Table with columns: Name, Cargo, Last Port, Local agent, Date of arrival.

VESSELS AWAITING INSTRUCTIONS

Table with columns: Name, Cargo, Last Port, Local agent, Date of arrival.

VESSELS NOT ENTERING

Table with columns: Name, Cargo, Last Port, Local agent, Date of arrival.

MOVEMENT OF VESSELS FOR 05.03.93 & 06.03.93

Table with columns: Outgoing, Incoming, Vessel Name, Date.

The above were the Thursday's shipping position and performance of vessels of Chittagong port as per berthing sheet of CPA supplied by HRC GROUP, Dhaka.

Price Index

Table with columns: Essentials, RICE, Pajon, VEGETABLES, Brinjal, Karolla, Latak, Tomato, Cauliflower, Gourd, OTHER FOODGRAN, Flour.

Exchange Rates

The following are the Commercial Banks' BC selling, and TT (C), OD transfer buying rates for some selected foreign currencies effective on March 5 and 6.

Table with columns: Currency, Selling B.C., T.T. (C), Buying OD Transfers.

Authorized dealers will apply T T clean buying rate for purchase of remittances of Bangladeshis working abroad. Note: AMU—Asian Monetary Union.

Dhaka Stock Prices

Weekly comparison: At the close of tradings on February 25 and March 04, 1993

Table with columns: Company, February 25, March 04, High, Low.

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