

# UNDP hatches fresh anti-poverty programme for Asia-Pacific region

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 6: The Asia-Pacific region may have the distinction of having the world's most impressive economies — with growth doubling every 10 years — yet it has the most number of poor and illiterate people in the globe, reports IPS.

This situation has confounded experts at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the UN agency aiding third world countries to build up their capacities for sustainable development.

But now the UNDP has hatched a major new programme to attack poverty in the Asia-Pacific region that will be different from other such initiatives in the past.

The region has all the expertise, all the institutions, but what's wrong?" asks UNDP Asia-Pacific programmes division chief Sebastian Zacharia.

"This is what we're going to do," he says: "See what went wrong, what has been successful and how they can be adapted and tested in other areas. Because not all of them were failures, there were some good ones like Malaysia and

South Korea."

The programme, scheduled for launching in May, will bring together the anti-poverty projects of the UNDP, the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the UN Volunteers (UNV), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Asia and Pacific Development Centre (APDC).

Current estimates of absolute poverty in the Asia-Pacific range from 800 million to about one billion people, with higher levels of poverty in the South Asian countries.

Despite the efforts of governments and assistance from UN agencies and multilateral donors, the results have been uneven.

The most successful ones have been those that thought about both aspects from the beginning, like Malaysia, where per capita income grew from US 100 dollar three decades ago to 3,000 US dollar today.

The UNDP plans to look at the experience of these countries, learn from them and devise an integrated approach

using a combination of policies that include decentralisation, using non-government and community-based organisations, provision of credit and skills and capacity-building.

There is so much information available and so fast it can't be disseminated," Zacharia said.

He adds that while the UNDP already has programmes already operating on the national level in each country as well as a regional credit programme, this is the first time it is attempting a regional integrated and cohesive approach.

Other development experts have noted that integrated approach is needed so various UN agencies and international organisations can coordinate their projects and avoid duplication and waste of resources.

"What we're finding now is that there are four things that are essential," says Zacharia. "One is micro-economic policies that are conducive to development and equitable distribution. Second is the institutional framework — decentralisation is essential if you are to have grassroots development."

Third is that the poor will remain poor unless they have access to credit," he continues. "And they must also have access to skills, not for the poor to start industrial conglomerates, but for micro-enterprises."

But due to the limited resources available, countries to be covered will be selected according to "need and opportunity."

Still, the programme will have a special focus on the seven South Asian countries that account for a majority of unemployed persons was 8.7 million, the BLS reported.

This means one district in each of the South Asian countries will be chosen for the development of what the UNDP calls a 'replicable' model.

Zacharia says every country has the eradication of poverty as their primary objective but they go about in different ways. Some went the socialist path emphasising equity rather than growth. Others adopted the free market system, which pursued growth to the neglect of distribution.

## Unemployment rate in US declines further

WASHINGTON, Feb 6: The US unemployment rate declined in January for the third consecutive month to its lowest level in three years, according to USIS.

However, totally redesigned household survey techniques employed for the first time by the Department of Labour's Bureau of Labour Statistics (BLS), together with revised population estimates based on the 1990 census, made it appear as though there was an increase.

The nation's jobless rate stood at a seasonally adjusted 6.7 per cent of the labour force in January, and the number of unemployed persons was 8.7 million, the BLS reported.

Under the old methodology used in the BLS monthly survey of 60,000 US households, the unemployment rate had fallen from 6.7 per cent in October 1993 to 6.5 per cent in November and to 6.4 per cent in December.

Had those survey techniques continued, BLS officials said, the January rate would have been recorded as 6.3 per cent, instead of 6.7 per cent.

Testing before the congressional Joint Economic Committee February 4, BLS

Commissioner Katharine Abraham cautioned against attempts to directly compare the old and new figures.

Changes to this survey require that we rely on our payroll survey even more than usual for our view of current labour market developments, she said.

The bureau's monthly survey of business establishments showed that 62,000 new non-farm payroll jobs were added in January. During the four previous months, payroll employment gains had averaged about 191,000.

Abraham said the small increase in payroll employment was due primarily to the California earthquake and to record cold weather across much of the eastern half of the United States.

"Indeed, the weakness in the payroll survey was quite concentrated in weather-sensitive industries in January, while other industries continued the pattern of moderate growth that has prevailed for some time," she noted.

In the January household survey, questionnaires were computerized and revised to get a more accurate picture of discouraged workers.

## Dhaka Stock Prices

At the close of trading on February 6, 1994

### BD Lamps leads losers

Star Report

The Bangladeshi Lamps incurred a loss of Tk 100.00 per share on Sunday while the turnovers on the Dhaka Stock Exchange and the price index rose.

The share price of the company fell from 550.00 to 450.00 leading the 15 losers out of 48 issues traded. The Green Delta Insurance and the Eagle Star Textile also suffered significant losses.

The Beximco Synthetic (Debenture) led the gainers numbering 20 with a rise of Tk 20.00. The share prices of 13 issues remained unchanged.

The Ambee Pharma with 18750 shares became the top contributor to the total volume of the day.

The 6th ICB M Fund (2180), Quasem Drycells (9650), Bengal Food (1995), Monno Ceramic (1240), Beximco Synthetic (9420), Ctg Cement (1630), Eagle Star Textile (2000), Beximco Ltd (3300), BGIC (1470), Rupan Oil (1200) and the Bata Shoe (1480) were also major volume leaders.

A total of 62044 shares changed hands at Tk 8763561.50 as against 50299 shares worth Tk 738361.00 of the previous day. The changes showed increases of 23.350 per cent and 18.689 per cent in the total volume and the value respectively.

### Trading at a glance

DSE All Share	534.31707
Price Index	
Market Capitalisation	
Turnover in Tk	24307623735.20
Turnover in Volume Tk	62044
Value Tk	8763561.50

Company's name	Change Number (per of shares share)
Gainers (20)	
National Bank	1.00 120
6th ICB M Fund	4.46 2180
Bengal Carbide	0.92 40
Stinger BD	5.16 32
Alas BD	0.25 1200
Quasem Drycells	0.13 9650
Bengal Food	2.71 1995
Shire Pukur Jute	9.76 55
Ambee Pharma	2.48 18750
Beximco Pharma	13.71 1695
Ibnsina	6.00 10
Beximco Synthetic	0.35 9420
GQ Ball Pen	1.12 945
Monno Ceramic	2.91 1240
Usmania Glass	0.84 15
Ctg Cement	5.25 1630
Apex Footwear	1.60 940
ICBL (Deb)	3.75 24
B Synthetics (Deb)	20.00 2

Losers (15)	
5th ICB M Fund	0.45 90
BD Lamps	0.12 30
Eastern Cables	0.12 210
B Thal Aluminium	0.52 280
Ctg Vegetable	0.63 150
Saiham Textile	0.70 110
Padma Textile	2.72 120
Pharma Aids	1.23 30
Kohinoor Chemical	0.11 10
Beximco Infusion	3.28 250
Beximco Ltd	2.78 3300
BGIC	3.58 1470
Green Delta	12.83 60
United Insurance	4.29 10

Issues (13) unchanged	
IFIC (25), Aftab Automobiles (100), Aziz Pipe (5), Aman Sea Food (40), Dhaka Vegetable (240), Rupan Oil (1200), BD Oxygen (250), Quasem Silk (200), Desh Garments (10), Dularia Cotton (20), Apex Tannery (205), Bata Shoe (1480), Beximco Pharma Deb (5).	

Debtors (15)	
5th ICB M Fund	0.45 90
BD Lamps	0.12 30
Eastern Cables	0.12 210
B Thal Aluminium	0.52 280
Ctg Vegetable	0.63 150
Saiham Textile	0.70 110
Padma Textile	2.72 120
Pharma Aids	1.23 30
Kohinoor Chemical	0.11 10
Beximco Infusion	3.28 250
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## Exchange Rates

The following are the Sonali Bank's dealing rates to public for some selected foreign currencies effective as on February 6.

(Figures in Taka)						
Currency	Selling	Buying	TT & OD	TT	OD	CD
US Dollar	40.1275	40.1575	39.9195	39.8350	39.7125	
Pound Sterling	59.3084	59.3528	58.5189	58.3950	58.2155	
DM	22.9072	22.9244	22.5489	22.5011	22.4320	
F Franc	6.7671	6.7721	6.6616	6.6475	6.6271	
C Dollar	30.0732	30.0956	29.6089	29.5459	29.4551	
S Franc	27.3968	27.4173	26.9653	26.9082	26.8255	
JP Yen	0.3712	0.3714	0.3615	0.3609	0.3597	
Indian Rupee (AMU)	1.2825	1.2863	1.2722	1.2564	—	
Pak Rupee (AMU)	1.3245	1.3285	1.3138	1.2875	—	
Iranian Rial (AMU)	0.0229	0.0230	0.0227	0.0225	—	

Al T. T. (DOC) US Dollar Spot Buying Tk 39.8772

Bi Usance Rates:

30 Days DA 39.5708 39.2880 39.0052 38.7225 38.1569