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## UNDP quest for consensus on dev needs in CHT

By Special Correspondent

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is planning a series of workshops at district levels in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) to identify quick impact activities in a number of priority areas to accelerate pace of development, confidence building and reconciliation among all the stakeholders in the region.

Nay Htun, a UN Assistant Secretary General and UNDP's Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, revealed this at a press conference yesterday before leaving for New York ending a four-day visit to Bangladesh.

"Invitations would be sent to all groups to have a consensus on development needs of the people, forge better understanding and build confidence," he told reporters on the workshops the UNDP is planning at the three districts of the CHT.

Htun had been to the hills, visiting villages and meeting a number of people including the Regional Council (RC) Chairman Shantu Larma, officials and NGO activists.

"Everyone concerned welcomes peace accord. They all want peace that would bring in more development opportunities," he said about his trip to the hills.

**0.5pc loss in GDP**

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the power sector like a business enterprise is one of them," McKechnie pointed out.

"In countries like India, the energy sector is being unbundled by corporatising, forming regulatory mechanisms in order to ensure level playing field for all parties, and finally shifting assets from public sector to the private sector. Bangladesh is also going the same way," he said.

Focusing on the government's performance in power sector, the WB official said that PDB and DESA incurred a loss of 150 million dollars in 1998 representing a combined (PDB and DESA) system loss of 31 to 33 per cent.

"This is a bit alarming. The government was making some improvement regarding system loss for some years. But in 1998, the system loss level increased slightly again," he added.

The system loss of PDB and DESA in 1994 was 19.2 per cent and 31 per cent respectively. It fell down to 17.7 per cent and 30 per cent respectively in the following year, 17 per cent and 29 per cent respectively in 1996 and 16 per cent and 27 per cent respectively in 1997. "In 1998, PDB's system loss climbed up to 16.5 per cent and DESA's system loss climbed up to 28 per cent," McKechnie said.

"It is difficult to say why system loss has increased. It is widely known that the causes of system loss are theft, technical reason and low rate of investment in this sector," he pointed out.

He praised the government's achievement in negotiating the Meghna and Haripur private power projects saying that the prices of these projects were among the world's lowest. "By global standard, the pace of negotiation of these projects is actually satisfactory."

But he maintained that in many other sectors the government was slower than expected.

Regarding repayment of bills to private power developers and Production Sharing Contract (PSC) operators, he emphasised that improvement of electric revenue collection would help address the repayment issue to a great degree.

He added that private power projects should be expanded side by side with the improvement.

**Azad murder**

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after hearing of a case.

According to police, Jalil was arrested in the early morning. He was produced before the CMM's court and taken on a five-day police remand.

Meanwhile, Mosfequr Rahman Sabuj, brother of Azad, filed a case with Kotwali thana against Giasuddin, Abbas, Akram Babu, Selim, "BNP" Babu, Jahangir, Hasan and Mian.

Several police teams raided houses in Kafrul and cantonment areas last night to round up alleged killers of Azad. None, however, was arrested.

Meanwhile, DMP announced reward for providing information or help for arresting "Kala" Jahangir, who allegedly killed Azad on Tuesday.

Police said "Kala" Jahangir is an absconding accused. He is a resident of 587, North Ibrahimpur under Kaful thana.

"Kala" was buried in his village home in Burichang thana of Comilla district yesterday, said the family sources.

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that the UNDP plans to spur growth in the region which, according to Lockwood, had been neglected for the past 25 years.

They must catch up fast, Htun added.

Lockwood, replying to a question whether they were going to deal straight with the RC, said that UNDP dealt with the government through the ERD to channelise its work.

Htun identified some of the priority development needs of the hills such as water, sanitation, health and environment.

Lockwood added that the National Environment Management Plan could not touch down in the region because of trouble there. Now the sustainable management of the environment would be taken care of, including afforestation.

"We have placed funds for that," he told a questioner who pointed at the threats the environment is facing due to wholesale destruction of virgin forests in the hills that may also threaten the hill people whose life pattern is intricately related to environment.

Htun said that the whole issue of reforestation and management of the environment and conversion of forestland were discussed during his visit to CHT.

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