

**PRESS RELEASE**

**World Bank Chief Economist, South Asia at IIMA**

**March 15, 2018 | Ahmedabad**

On March 14, 2018, the Research and Publications department of Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad hosted Dr. Martin Rama, Chief Economist for South Asia, World Bank. Dr. Rama threw light upon the correlation between the nightlight and GDP growth of various geographical areas within South Asia. This topic was not something many had heard of before, thereby eliciting interest in many students.

Dr. Martin Rama is the Chief Economist for the South Asia region of the World Bank, based in Delhi. Before that he was the Director of the World Development Report (WDR) 2013, on jobs. Previously, for eight years, he was the Lead Economist for Vietnam, based in Hanoi. Prior to moving to operations, he spent ten years with the research department of the World Bank. Dr. Martin Rama gained his degree in economics from the Universidad de la República (Uruguay) in 1981 and his Ph.D. in macroeconomics from the Université de Paris I (France) in 1985. Back to his home country, Uruguay, he worked in CINVE, the country’s largest think tank. In parallel with his World Bank duties, he was visiting professor in the graduate program in development economics at the Université de Paris I until 2005.

According to Dr. Martin, the primary reason behind this study was that many developing countries find it challenging to measure the GDP growth rates with certainty given the presence of the informal sector, which is often not reflected in the official figures put out by the concerned national authorities. South Asia thus, was a great region for this study, given the proliferation of informal sector in South Asian countries like India, Pakistan, Bangladesh etc. He started the seminar outlining the idea behind the research, the way in which the research was conducted, the results of the research and more. The luminosity observed from satellites acted as a good proxy for estimating the economic activity and the nightlight intensity yielded some interesting results as well. For example, the research showed that parts of India like Rajasthan and Gujarat indicated high level of per capita income when compared to the eastern states like Odisha, Bengal etc. The Leh region of Jammu and Kashmir also showed high per capita income rates. Cities like Kabul and Quetta in Afghanistan and Pakistan also showed similar results which raised eyebrows since many people perceived them as lull cities trapped in circumstances unfavourable for business. The North-east part of India and majority of Afghanistan on the other hand, showed low levels of economic activity, which is on expected lines. Another interesting insight was the low figures in Nepal since after the earthquake and the adoption of the new Constitution by the State. The economic blockade in the landlocked state and the aftermath of the earthquake are testimonies to this hypothesis. Finally, state and district wise GDP numbers were also put forth in this research which led some students to ask whether this could help in the development of these cities or districts in any way possible, given the Smart City Mission is on full throttle. A limitation that Dr. Martin stated was the changes in weather patterns or seasonality that might have affected the data a bit. Still, most of the data, i.e. estimated GDP figures were in sync with the measured GDP numbers, barring a few exceptions. This was one of the many evolving ways in which one could gather data and use it to project GDP with minimal fluctuations.

Over 40 students and members of the IIMA community attended the talk. *Mr. Aditya Govil, a PGP student and coordinator of the Public Policy Club at IIMA said “The insights that the talk provided was appreciated by the entire IIMA community and we hope that Martin Rama visits the campus again”.*

For more info, please visit IIMA’s Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/IIMAOfficial/

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**About Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad (IIMA)**

Established in 1961, the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad (IIMA) is recognized globally for excellence in management education. One of the top management schools in the world, IIMA educates leaders of the enterprises.

The Institute’s strategic priorities include: strengthening connection with its various constituencies, including academics, practitioners, alumni, and the community; nurturing a high performance work environment of stretch, autonomy, and teamwork; and strategic growth while maintaining emphasis on quality.

As per the latest ranking by The Economist, IIMA is No. 1 School in the world on the parameter of opening up new career opportunities for students. The flagship Post Graduate Programme (PGP) is ranked 21st in the Financial Times Masters in Management Ranking 2017. As per the Financial Times’ Global MBA Ranking 2018, IIMA’s Post Graduate Programme for Executives (PGPX) is ranked 31st in the World. IIMA has been ranked as #1 Management institute as per the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) rankings of Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.

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