

Investment in Power and Telecom Sectors

The government looks increasingly keen to attract private investment in key infrastructure industries like power and telecommunications. The cabinet recently cleared the way for securing private sector participation in setting up power generation plants in the country.

Utilities like power and telecommunications are crucial to generating economic growth. Present facilities in these areas are woefully inadequate. Electricity consumption in this country is not only among the lowest in the world but also in the region.

Investment on a massive scale will be required to upstage the existing facilities in the power and telecommunications sectors. Developing the proven six gas fields alone would call for an investment of more than eight hundred crore taka.

The government cannot obviously meet the cost of investment on such a massive scale from its tax revenues. Prospects for obtaining official development assistance from abroad for financing infrastructure development work are none too bright.

Alongside with the drive for private investment in utilities, there is also an urgent need for taking up rationalization measures. Such measures should seek to evolve standards for quality of service and pricing of the product.

Countless more have continued in high office despite suffering everything from diabetes, Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser) to strokes (India's Jawaharlal Nehru, Portugal's Antonio Salazar), manic depression (Lyndon Johnson of the US, Fidel Castro of Cuba, Muammar Qaddafi of Libya) and psychopathic disorder (Idi Amin, the self-styled "Son of God," who was forced to flee Uganda 15 years ago).

Arafat's Triumphant Move

Yasser Arafat's arrival in the newly autonomous Gaza Strip after 27 years in wilderness marks an important point in the Palestinian people's struggle for an independent homeland. His arrival there to a hero's welcome reflects the mood of the people who have had the painfully long history of living stateless.

Yes, the Palestinians have pursued a dream for much too long and Yasser Arafat has all along the way carried the beckon for them. So the Palestinian liberation and Arafat have almost become synonymous and this is despite dissident Hamas guerillas terming him as a traitor.

The tumultuous applause and cheers for Arafat at the time of his 25-minute speech upon arrival in a place where he was once a wanted man show how much respect and love he commands from his people. The charismatic leader has as well made a mental journey home through this short visit of only four days.

But Arafat is no stranger to such controversies and conflicts. He knows quite well the implications of his speech. He is still pushing for the original demand of the Palestinians. Whatever his opponents can say about his so-called compromising deal with the Israelis, the former guerilla fighter has never betrayed his people, nor will he ever give up the crusade.

If we are looking for one single action which will enable the poor to overcome their poverty, I would go for credit. Money is power. I have been arguing that credit should be accepted as human right. If we can come up with a system which allows everybody access to credit while ensuring excellent repayment...

Poverty is not created by the poor. Poverty is created by the existing world system which denies fair chances to the poor. If we can ensure truly equal opportunities to everybody in the society there is no reason why poverty should linger around us.

Chaffs and handouts help maintain and deepen poverty. These are invented to avoid giving equal chances to the poor. Handouts take away initiatives from people. Human beings thrive on challenges not on palliatives.

Mass production of a product leads to economy of scale under any production system. But there is nothing which makes it obligatory to organise this mass production under one roof. Home-based production can be as mass-scale production as in single roof wage-based factory system.

Through wrong conceptualisation the agricultural world quickly moved into plantation economy and enslaved people. In its impatience and arrogance, the world refused to see the opportunities through

Does the Capitalist System Have to be the Handmaiden of the Rich?

by Prof Muhammad Yunus

potential entrepreneur, we'll build a system to give everybody a chance to materialise his/her potential. The heavy wall between the entrepreneur and the labourer in this world will be meaningless. In addition, if labour had access to capital this world will be very different from what we have built now.

There were nearly 800 ponds of various sizes and shapes under this project with a combined water-body of water of over 1000 hectares. The Government tried to grow fish in these ponds. They failed because government employees used the resources to benefit themselves rather than the government and the people.

Stolen fish from the ponds by the villagers was identified by the government officials as a major cause for the failure of the project. Government records show that the actual annual fish harvest remained below 50 tons.

Grameen brought in new management style, new termination and drive. Poor people around the ponds were organised into groups to become partners in the pond management and share the harvest on a 50:50 basis.

Grameen provided the capital and know-how; poor people provided their labour. Stealing of fish was brought down to near zero. The poor, who under the previous regime, either stole fish for themselves or stole fish as agents of others, now became growers

the people-based agriculture. Let me give some examples from Grameen how people-based production can be organised in a large scale and benefit the poorest. Help Them Learn How to Catch Fish

In 1986 Government of Bangladesh invited us to take over a large fisheries project. The project was not getting off the ground after investing several million dollars of donor money. We were not sure whether we should get involved in the project.

Encouraged by the results in our fisheries project we have now created a non-profit, non-stock new company called Grameen Fisheries Foundation. The new company has taken over all the fisheries projects of Grameen Bank, including a shrimp farm. Bangladesh has nearly two million ponds, endless other water-bodies with excellent possibilities to grow fish.

Why doesn't it get done now? Because in a capitalist world we are told that we'll have to wait around until we find a "greedy" entrepreneur to discover this as a new opportunity to make money.

entrepreneur. I think it is time we pay serious attention to them. Let me add a few more examples from Grameen experience. Grameen Check: People-based Textile Industry

Grameen had neither any intention nor any qualification to get involved in the garment industry of Bangladesh. But somehow we got drawn into it. There are half a million weavers in Bangladesh with over a million handlooms in their possession. Over eighty per cent of textile requirement in Bangladesh are made by these weavers in their handlooms.

About two years back we came to know that Bangladesh imports US \$ 80 million dollars worth of handloom product called "Madras Check" for Bangladeshi garment industry to make garments for North American and EEC countries.

Then we got another explanation why this cannot be produced worldwide, end of John Mitchell's further political ambitions. Just how do you start to assess the likelihood of surviving to, let alone in, political high office?

Grameen Check: People-based Textile Industry. Grameen had neither any intention nor any qualification to get involved in the garment industry of Bangladesh.

Grameen had neither any intention nor any qualification to get involved in the garment industry of Bangladesh. But somehow we got drawn into it.

About two years back we came to know that Bangladesh imports US \$ 80 million dollars worth of handloom product called "Madras Check" for Bangladeshi garment industry.

Then we got another explanation why this cannot be produced worldwide, end of John Mitchell's further political ambitions.

On a life insurance basis there is roughly a 10 per cent chance that your head of state will die violently — and a 20 per cent risk they may suffer a disabling stress-related illness.

At least 19 presidents, prime ministers or their deputies, from South Africa's apartheid exponent Hendrik Verwoerd in 1966 to Mohammed Boudiaf of Algeria in 1992, have fallen victim to assassins' bombs or bullets in the past 30 years.

Countless more have continued in high office despite suffering everything from diabetes, Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser) to strokes (India's Jawaharlal Nehru, Portugal's Antonio Salazar), manic depression (Lyndon Johnson of the US, Fidel Castro of Cuba, Muammar Qaddafi of Libya) and psychopathic disorder (Idi Amin, the self-styled "Son of God," who was forced to flee Uganda 15 years ago).

Recently the sobering hazards have been further accentuated by the recent aircraft crash deaths of the Rwandan and Burundian presidents, Juvenal Habyarimana and Cyprien Ntaryamira, and the equally sudden demise from heart failure of Britain's main Opposition leader, John Smith.

These three mortalities almost coincided with the high-speed accidents that robbed Grand Prix motor-racing of two top acts — Roland Ratzenberger and Ayrton Senna.

Yet the premiums payable by political leaders exceed even those paid by world class race car drivers. Only the leaders and the syndicates who insure them such as those at Lloyd's of London ("all risks considered") know the precise figures.

Although Lloyd's brokers cheerfully discuss the lion-tamers they have insured against being eaten (the fate of at least 20 this century) and the circus fat ladies covered against anorexia, politician clients are a closed book. Disclosures could tempt the gods.

France's Charles de Gaulle survived an alleged 31 plots against his life in just 22 years to 1966 — and died peacefully in old age, but US President John Kennedy was felled during his 46th year in the first peacetime attempt on his life.

How Safe is Your Nation's Leader?

Nicola Cole writes from London

Given the growing risks, it is arguably amazing that anyone lives long enough to take or retain high political office. France's Charles de Gaulle was reputedly the subject of more than 30 assassination plots. Has national leadership, asks Gemini News Service, become a chance to die for your country; and is survival a lottery?

Leaders are sick... and sick statesmen abound. US vice-presidential candidate Tom Eagleton knows it well: he lost his chance of high office in middle age through opponents' revelations about his three nervous breakdowns.

Joseph Stalin in the Soviet Union (arterial disease, alcoholism), Britain's Winston Churchill (three strokes), Dwight Eisenhower of the US (heart attack) also bear witness, but all remained in office after these afflictions.

Salazar, the reactionary architect of modern Portugal, was allowed after a brain operation to go on believing himself to still be dictator, though real power had passed to other hands.

Lesser figures have been toppled by everything from off-guard comments while jet-lagged — a continual risk for would-be leaders — to outbursts by neglected partners.

Income tax burden. Sir, I fully support the opinion expressed in the article "Fresh income tax burden on individual assesses" by Md Nurul Haque, published on 23.06.94 in your esteemed daily. It has given a clear picture of sufferings of a regular tax payer with limited income.

Youth exchange programme. Sir, Youths are the dynamic and progressive force which are the most needed elements in bringing about progress in the world and improving quality of life on this planet.

Government transports. Sir, Once again misuse of government and public sector corporations' transport seems to be on the rise. Most of the time — before, after and between pick up and drop off from residence to office, the government transports are being misused family members of officers who are entitled to allotment of cars.

husband until he decides to step down from President Nixon's campaign," shouted Martha "The Mouth" Mitchell, forthright wife of Tricky Dick's campaign director, the former Attorney-General. Result? Media coverage

Staying on. Longest-serving government leaders. Kim Il Sung (North Korea 1953), Fidel Castro (Cuba 1961), Robert Mugabe (Zimbabwe 1980), Subandrio (Indonesia 1968), Muammar Qaddafi (Libya 1969), Hafez al-Assad (Syria 1970), Daniel arap Moi (Kenya 1978), Saddam Hussein (Iraq 1979), Mahatma Mohamad (Malaysia 1961), Hosni Mubarak (Egypt 1961), Longest reigning monarch King Hussein of Jordan (1952).

Result? Media coverage. Gemini News.

To the Editor...

Letters for publication in these columns should be addressed to the Editor and legibly written or typed with double space. For reasons of space, short letters are preferred, and all are subject to editing and cuts. Pseudonyms are accepted. However, all communications must bear the writer's real name, signature and address.

Income tax burden. Sir, I fully support the opinion expressed in the article "Fresh income tax burden on individual assesses" by Md Nurul Haque, published on 23.06.94 in your esteemed daily. It has given a clear picture of sufferings of a regular tax payer with limited income.

Youth exchange programme. Sir, Youths are the dynamic and progressive force which are the most needed elements in bringing about progress in the world and improving quality of life on this planet.

Government transports. Sir, Once again misuse of government and public sector corporations' transport seems to be on the rise. Most of the time — before, after and between pick up and drop off from residence to office, the government transports are being misused family members of officers who are entitled to allotment of cars.

twent them. Exchange of youths of different countries helps generate will and intention in them of doing good to each other and the less fortunate in each others' countries.

It provides the youth of the world an opportunity to make their contributions to development both individually and collectively, as responsible members of the local, national and international communities.

During the autocratic rule of H M Ershad, the government vehicles were red license plates and the public sector corporation transports had blue number plates. But at the end of his rule this system of distinguishing official cars was abruptly abolished.

that demand. When a pay commission was set up after two-three years of that event it recommended abolition of all time scales and the government accepted that recommendation also.

This is highly unjust and unethical. Hence, it is felt that class one officers should be allowed at least two time scales. They may be allowed the second time scale on completion of twenty five years of class one service and with at least ten years in the existing scale.

Time Scale. Sir, Time scales were introduced for the cadre service officers about two decades ago for providing incentive to the officers in a situation where the officers are eligible for promotion but where the scope of promotion is limited.

When a pay commission was set up after two-three years of that event it recommended abolition of all time scales and the government accepted that recommendation also.

This is highly unjust and unethical. Hence, it is felt that class one officers should be allowed at least two time scales. They may be allowed the second time scale on completion of twenty five years of class one service and with at least ten years in the existing scale.

Time Scale. Sir, Time scales were introduced for the cadre service officers about two decades ago for providing incentive to the officers in a situation where the officers are eligible for promotion but where the scope of promotion is limited.