The Baily Star

Founder-Editor: Late S. M. Ali Dhaka, Saturday, September 21, 1996

For God's Sake

While vesterday's issues of all the daily newspapers dedicated huge space in their front pages to an urban problem - typical of our dear Dhaka and which assumed monstrous proportion on Thursday - some of them went a step further to echo city dwellers' reaction: Is there no end to it?

Indeed, water-logging along with a few other problems plaguing Dhaka for a long time has lived such an unchallenged life so far, that hopes of authorities' intervention and a change for the better in the overall situation look extremely bleak; so bleak and frustrating that people seem to have reached a point where auto-suggestion in the vein that suffering is the general lot of Dhaka dwellers and there is no such thing as urban management would be better idea to cultivate than grumblingly hope for a better changed future.

What happened to Dhaka on Thursday was only extended illustration of city dwellers' plight due to water-logging. If it is bad on other days, it turned worse on that day. A reception meant for the PM in the heart of the city had to be delayed by six hours; Secretariat building, the nerve centre of all government functions looked like a vertically projected island and a minister went back home as his car broke down in a sunken road. If life of the VIPs can undergo such forced and undesirable changes in their day's routine, what happened or generally happen to the 'little men or women' is only imaginable.

There is a Bengali proverb about water entering one's ears. Thursday's disruption of civic life due to water-logging and the enhancing influence it had on city's traffic congestion is got such coverage because the VIPs had a taste of urban suffering too. The proverbial water into the ears.

We do not think this water entering, if one may speak metaphorically, is enough. Because the immediate reaction of those in charge of city management is tinged with unfeeling formality. The City Mayor expressed his concern though it is not DCC's 'job' to take care of water-logging, blamed WASA, suggested the formation of a high powered task force and reiterated the necessity of a coordination among the utility services. Then, WASA had its own story to tell. Delay in the completion of culvert boxes due to legal wrangle, non-availability of operators to run the suction pumps borrowed from BADC. The list can only lengthen.

Everyone seems keen as mustard to come up with an excuse and passing the buck appears to be the ultimate goal in the life of government officials. Is this the price the tax-paying citizens have to pay for believing and taking part in the struggle for government of the people, by the people and for the people? For God's sake, do something.

Sound Business Practice

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has once again reiterated her government's pledge to bolster the private sector for achieving the desired growth rate in country's economy. The exclusively entrepreneurial emphasis was aired in a reception accorded to her by the FBCCI on Thursday.

Her accent on the private sector was accompanied by a call for sound business practice: The government in cooperation with the opposition can really contribute to the growth of a very positive atmosphere. But for an overall improvement in the situation, the local businessmen have to believe in

sound business practice. The Prime Minister particularly concentrated on default culture in connection with sound business practice. The culture of loan default is not limited to economy in its ill effect. Politics being so blindly partisan these days, the action against the defaulters can easily become a far cry from being even handed. Any party-based attitude in dealing with the business community will not create the healthy business climate that the PM is telling about. Difficulties — otherwise avoidable — in streamlining a system, arise as partisan interpretations vitiate the political atmosphere.

Once this idea of sound business practice strikes root in the consciousness of the businessmen, governments will find it easier to play the role of facilitators. Besides, an integrated, business community, not smudged or divided by the undesirable trace of partisanship, will be able to contribute more significantly to the economic growth of the country. We want a mutual establishment of the two trends: the implementation of the government's pledge for support to the private sector for injecting new life into our economy and the sound

business practice. Vanishing Trick on the Buriganga

Can it be true? Seeing that only one paper has reported it prominently the element of disbelief persists although details have been published making it quite convincing. A second bridge connecting the metropolis with the west bank of Buriganga, called the Babu Bazar-Zinjira bridge is under construction at a cost of some 133 crore Taka: The Multispan bridge will be 1479 meters long all told and of the 20 pylons needed to be erected four that would stand on the river have been completed. The bridge, everything going by schedule, should be commissioned in February '98. This all is old hat. On Thursday, in a matter of minutes, two of the pylons on the river standing 10 feet clear of water simply vanished from sight. The workers numbering about a score and working on these jumped into the

river and swam ashore. No, the pylons did not really vanish. Both of these just went down 20 feet — ten feet beneath water surface. We do not remember seeing or hearing of such weird happening, or even to have read about anything like this although we are quite fa-

miliar with the Leaning Tower of Pisa.

we cannot take chances with bridges.

The incident must soon be explained by the engineering contractors and their consultants but, most importantly, by the R & H Department. If this can happen now where is the guarantee that the completed and commissioned bridge would not buckle and even crumble. The Kalabagan collapse of the seven-storey house has been followed by the collapse of a two-storied one in the Ekrampur-Sutrapur area. There is a talk all around of there being 6000 houses running the risk of collapsing in Dhaka City alone. Bridges are built for longer years than residential utility houses. Houses can be just sheer private whims — the RAJUK formalities glossed over with money and gifts. But a bridge is a different thing. It means so much to economy and society and yet always dangles as a sword over unsuspecting life by the hundreds! We should not,

Quarter Century of Development: How Far, How Fair?

Poor savings rate resulted in a dismal state of investment. Complimentary economic institutions failed to crop up along with economic reforms. "Failure of governance was undoubtedly the greatest of all failures and an independent state, a the major cause of failure in other areas." from 64 per cent to 98 per cent."

YOW that Bangladesh has crossed the 25th year as proper assessment of its quarter century development experience is of urgent necessity. The expectations that seemingly propelled the wheels of our freedom movement were, among others, higher economic growth and greater well-being of the people. The most important questions that obviously loom large in the minds of the people are: to what extent were the dreams fulfilled? What are the sizes and the sources of both success and failures? What factors contributed to a deviation between what we expected and what we achieved so far?

A straight jacket answer to the above questions is a difficult task. This owes partly to the data availability and partly to the differential perceptions about development in many minds. However, despite these limitations, professor Azizur Rahman Khan of the University of California. Riverside recently presented a brief resume of Bangladesh's development experience of a quarter century in a seminar organised by the BIDS in Dhaka. Professor Khan touched upon a plethora of issues. For space constraint, we

decide to pick up a few. **Growth and Structural** Change

Bangladesh seems to have performed better by achieving a faster rate of growth in GDP in comparison to the rate achieved while it was called East Pakistan. Between 1975-1993, the GDP growth rate averaged 4.3 per cent per year compared to 3.2 per cent of the period 1950 to 1970. However, in the different sub-periods of the post independence era, this was in evidence some marginal changes

in the growth rate of GDP. A 3.2 per cent growth in the pre-independence period implied a per capita trend of annual growth in GDP by 0.66 per cent per year. This is the period when population boomed at an average annual rate of 2.52 per cent. High growth rate of population continued to chase Bangladesh until the second half of the 1970s at 2.7 per cent per year. However, the growth rate of population decelerated

during the late 1980s and the 1990s to settle at two per cent per year. Thus, in the late 1970s when population growth rate was astoundingly high at 2.7 per cent, the per capita GDP of Bangladesh grew at a feeble rate of 1.46 per cent per year. This rate of per capita GDP growth appeared 2.2 times as high as in the pre-independence period. During the period - late 1980s to the early 1990s when population growth rate slowed down, the per capita GDP of Bangladesh increased at an anmual rate of 2.2 per cent — a rate which is 3.3 times as high as in the pre-independence period. And since living standard is a function of per capita income. needless to mention "the average living standard of the people of Bangladesh has, therefore, grown at a much faster rate during the period since independence than it did during the period of partnership with

In absolute terms, therefore, Bangladesh as an independent state made certain strides (in . GDP per capita terms) over its status as a wing of the then Pakistan. However, if one considers the relative growth rates (i.e. comparing the growth rate of Bangladesh with the neighbouring countries) complacency tends to wither giving place to frustration. For example, the rate of GDP growth accelerated in South Asia as a whole during the second half of the 1970s and continued to speed up in the 1980s. In terms of growth rate during this period. Bangladesh lagged significantly behind others. "Indeed the differences in per capita income between India and Bangladesh and between Pakistan and Bangladesh have increased sharply since

Pakistan

the independence of Bangladesh on the eve of independence. (in 1970) India's per capita GNP in current US dollars was 4 per cent higher than the per capita GNP of Bangladesh. The differ ence increased to 43 per cent in 1992. The percentage differences between per capita GNPs of Pakistan and Bangladesh over the same period increased

Now let us look at the structural changes in the economy. One of the important indicators of development of the economy is the extent of structural change, - a composition of output and employment away from the agricultural sector to the manufacturing and services sectors. From 1975/76-1993/94, available evidence tends to show that agriculture's share to GDP fell by 15 percentage points and the vacuum was filled in by the increase in the shares of construction, public administration and services. However, the proportion of the GDP originating from the manufacturing sector remained

Foreign Trade

According to the data released by Dr Khan, the share of merchandise exports to GDP rose heftily from 2.4 per cent 1975 to 5.6 per cent in 1980 and to 9.9 per cent in 1993. Along with the rise is the share of exports to GDP, the composition of exports during this period was marked by radical changes

There is, perhaps, no room for exuberance over what has been happening to the export sector over the years. Dr Khan mentioned some of the points to ponder with before jumping to the conclusion that we are on the verge of an export-led growth. First, the export-GDP

Beneath the Surface

by Abdul Bayes

virtually stagnant during this period. Dr Khan is of the view that the proportion of output contributed by industry and modern sectors, the sectors that are supposed to spearhead eco nomic growth and transforma tion in an economy rose by very little over this whole period.

Investment and Savings An account of the half decade before independence (1965-70) shows that the share of gross investment to GDP was 11.6 per cent. Out of the total, 8.4 per cent was accounted for

by domestic savings and the remaining 3.2 per cent was made up by the net capital inflow. 'After rising to the outlying peak rate of 16 per cent in 1980/81, the rate of investment since the mid-1980s stayed just under 13 per cent of GDP until it recovered a little in 1992/93 ... However, private investment as a proportion of total investment increased from about 50 per cent in the mid 1980s to

about 55 per cent in the early

ratio is only about two thirds of the ratio in the low income countries. Second, the external sector holds an undiversified export basket. RMG, the hero of the export sector, overwhelmingly dominates the total earnings. "Bangladesh has so far not been able to diversify into technologically advanced labour-intensive goods such as electronics and other manufactures." Third, the value additions from RMG is very low and this has been the case for a pretty long time. Fourth Bangladesh's exports are not only featured by commodity concentration but also being gripped by the spectre of unhealthy geographic concentration of exports trade. For example, in 1992/93 more than three-fourths of exports were on board to the OECD countries The volume of exports to the LDCs is very meagre and the growth rate is very feeble, too However, India accounts for about seven per cent of Bangladesh's imports and for

only 0.1 per cent of her exports Dr Khan in his tidy deliberations also pointed at the prevailing Indo-Bangla trade imbalance and the ways of handling it. He is of the view that preventing illegal imports from India merely by administrative and military methods does not seem practical. Clearly the reason behind illegal Indian imports is that the cost of legally crossing the tariff and non-tarrif barriers is greater than the risk of illegally crossing the administration and military obstacles to free trade." Tariff reduction is. therefore, one of the important

steps to start with. Why is there a surge in Indian imports into Bangladesh? Bangladeshi Taka steadily appreciated vis-a-vis a basket of 15 currencies The rate of appreciation is 11 per cent and this implied that a tradeweighted unit of these 15 foreign currencies in real terms received 11 per cent fewer Taka in 1993 than in 1987. The appreciation of the Taka against the Indian Rupee has been much greater, 32 per cent since 1987! It should be pointed out here that the greater appreciation of the Taka would be adductible to the aggressive exchange rate adjustment by India.

Economic Reforms and Limitations

There is no denying the fact that Bangladesh travelled a long way distance economic reforms. Unfortunately these reforms failed so far to bring forth any substantial improvement either in terms of the rate of growth or in terms of the quality of growth. The failure of the reforms, allegedly sprang from an exclusive reliance on the enhancement of the efficiency of resource allocation by making the incentive schemes more rational. Dr Azizur Rahman Khan attacked the on going preoccupation with resource allocation on few fronts: (a) In the absence of economic institutions which make economic agents obey the rules of the game, tinkerings with ra-

sources. In fact, in Bangladesh, the absence of reform-friendly institutions continues to militate against a smooth operation of programmes and the success is thus recoiled. (b) While incentives such as protection. subsidies etc have been hastily withdrawn, the strategy rebounced in the absence of proper substitutes of those incentives. Substitutes are necessary because, by and large, Bangladesh's industrial sector embraces a number of infant industries. The substitutes would be, for example, large scale infrastructural development, investment in education. training in human capital development, efficiency in public administration, carefully targeted supports etc. "In the absence of a system of promotion to induce entrepreneurs to invest in industries or the absence of institutions to make economic agents obey the indicators of allocative efficiency economic reforms Bangladesh have so far produced disappointing results. These failures must be traced to the failure or generally perhaps the single most important explanation of the relative stagnation of the country.

tionality of prices and other in-

dicators might not necessarily

lead to a better allocation of re-

Concluding Remarks During the last quarter cen-

tury. Bangladesh bagged a number of successes and also faced a few failures. Some of the achievements include: maintenance of a reasonable rate of growth, the reduction of absolute poverty from its dismally high level in the immediate post-independence period, substantial reduction in fertility or the rate of population growth. These achievements are joined by the growth of exports and its composition, stability in prices, etc.

The darker sides include: the failure to arrest the worsening trend in the distribution of income, poor performance on the education and human development fronts. The poor savings rate resulted in a dismal state of investment. Complimentary economic institutions failed to crop up along with economic reforms. "Failure of governance was undoubtedly the greatest of all failures and the major cause of failure in other areas."

Revitalising the Union Parishad: Issues and Policy Options

LMOST ALL the major political parties of ▲ Bangladesh have pledged in their election manifestoes to revitalise the local government system of the country with sufficient arrangement to finance their activities for details, see the Daily Shangbad. August 20, 1996). The recent announcement of the government regarding the formation of an eight-member commission for local government seems to have generated some optimism among these concerned with local politics and administration. Meanwhile, the State Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs has informed the Parliament that the government is planning to hold election to 4,451 Union Parishads of the country in early next year (The Daily Star, August 3, 1996). But the tradition of forming local government reform commission or routine election to the local bodies would not be enough to

revitalise the local bodies. The Union Parishad (UP) is a formal political institution constituted by law. A UP consists of a chairman and nine members elected directly by the residents of the union of 10 to 15 villages. The union body is assisted in its functions by a fulltime secretary, a couple of chowkiders and a defadar. These bodies have been entrusted with wide range of responsibilities in the sphere of economic development and social welfare. Schedule one has listed 38 municipal functions that a UP may undertake in-

cluding a final catch-all phrase : "Any other measures likely to promote the welfare, health, safety, comfort or convenience of the inhabitants of the Union or visitors" [The Local Government (Union Parishads) Ordinance, 1983, Article-33.] For financing their activities, the bodies have been authorised to generate funds form six internal sources. Their expenditures are also supplemented by different types of government grants. But the surveys and studies conducted so far, have found the UPs in Bangladesh are in a doldrum. They could not develop as effective institutions in the countryside either in mobilising resources or in undertaking the development activities entrusted on them. Their financial sources were found inadequate, tax assessment faulty, financial rules and regulations complex and outdated, they enjoy very little autonomy due to their heavy dependence on government grants, political interest of the union leaders and lack of incentive or non-accountability in taxes, and not surprisingly, the central government's unwillingness to free them from its firmancial dependency - all these have led to the develop-

ment of the Union body as a superfluous institution surviving on government grants. Why is this so? What may be the policy options to break such an stale-

mate? Two contradictory views have so far been provided by researches concerned with local politics and administration. One is the political economy school based on Marxian interpretation of the nature of the state and its relationship with the local government. The basic idea of this approach is that the state in capitalism is an instrument of class domination. Local government institutions are designed to integrate local vested interests since local politics tend to be dominated by those who are locally powerful.

Most of the studies on the local government in Bangladesh. fit nicely within the framework provided by the school of political economy. During the last few decades. Bangladesh has experienced a series of local government re-organisation programmes (Basic Democracies, Compulsory village Co-op-

revolutions and structural changes in the political order. This powerful explanation of the school although seems convincing under the contemporary political situation, social revolution is a distant possibility. Moreover, such a radical approach, would not come within the purview of the recent transition of Bangladesh to

democracy

The alternative policy option is advocated by the revisionist school which prefers less radical policy initiative. Slow and careful organisation of the rural poor avoiding direct confrontation with local elite. using of conscientisation techniques, emphasis on functional literacy and training in economically useful skills. providing credit to disadvantages etc. These are some of the approaches of 'conscientisation suggested by the revisionist school and supported by the foreign donor agencies. The ineffectiveness of the rural local bodies has further led to the

source mobilisation (RM). This sort of political commitment should be supplemented by fulfilling the following three preconditions: a) The targeted amount of resources to be mobilised by the UP should be specified in the national development plans (Like the Five-Year Plan and the Annual Development Plans etc.); b) Government expenditures on ac count of the UP should be reflected in the ADP of the government in order to ensure public accountability: and c) The tradition of combining the position of local government Ministry with the Secretary General of the ruling party should be

An expert committee should be assigned to simplify and update the rules and regulations of the UP finance. Rates mentioned in the Model Tax Schedule (MTS) regarding tax and non-tax revenues should also be re-adjusted in consideration of the changed economic conditions and increase in the ex-

can take advantage of the more efficient collection mecha-

nisms of the larger government. One definite advantage of the transfer of the above cited taxes to the UPs is that it will not impose any fresh burden on the tax payers as they have already been paying them to the central government. Moreover, this will also not pose any administrative problem to the union authorities because they can make use of the ongoing administrative arrangement in respect of the assessment and collection of these taxes. But it has been found in several studies that land-based taxes in Bangladesh are generally undervalued and the rate of tax evasion is very high. So if this tendency can be properly checked, resources from the LDT. IPTT and land would be

much higher than the present. There is also considerable scope to increase the revenues from the existing sources through the improvement of assessment system. Staff of the UP should be provided with the necessary training and expert

Bangladesh, some of the experiences of the "Sharamdan week" of the Uttar Pradesh of India and the "Sarvodaya Movement" of Sri Lanka may serve as useful guides in mobilising the non-monetary finance in the rural areas through the institution of UP in creating the necessary economic infrastructure The political leadership of the country has also an important role in this regard in enthusing the masses with zeal for national reconstruction and selfreliance. Professor Nurul Islam estimated that if 20 million individuals of the adult male labour force are made liable to pay head tax, and if three days in a year were fixed as compulsory labour requirements for everyone, then 60 million mandays would be contributed in kind (Nurul Islam, 1979:210). If the richer section of the community commute their compulsory input by making equivalent financial contribution converted at the prevailing wage rate, then the fund that would generate may be utilised in employing the landless labourers and the unemployed destitutes (especially women) in other development projects.

The continuation of some

foreign aid dependent pro-

grammes like the Food for

Works (FfW) and Rural Mainte-

nance Programme (RMP) has created a paradoxical situation

for the development of self-re-

liance among the people. Such

programmes have affected the

local initiative in mobilising

funds internally. These pro-

grammes should, therefore, be

withdrawn gradually.

During the last few decades, Bangladesh has experienced a series of local government re-organisation programmes initiated by the successive regimes holding state power. Ostensibly, all these programmes aimed at making the Union body more participatory and capable of implementing development programmes at local levels. But despite all the rhetorics, the reform initiatives were ultimately intended either to extend state control down to local levels or to register the support of local elite for the party in power

erative, Gram Sarkar, Upazila Parishad etc.) initiated by the successive regimes holding state power. Ostensibly, al these programmes aimed at making the Union body more participatory and capable of implementing development programmes at local level so. But despite all the rhetorics, the reform initiatives were ultimately intended either to extend state control down to local levels or to register the support of local elite for the party in power. A case point here would be the combining of the position of the Ministry of local government and the Secretary General of the ruling party. Another indicator that our study confirms is that the central government, instead of mobilising resources from below, has been showing itself politically more interested in channeling funds to the local bodies with the ultimate motive of using them as political support base in the countryside (Harry W.Blair, 1989:234). There has never been any conscious effort to make the Union Parishad financially selfsufficient and administratively capable of delivering welfare to local residents. As a result of this political expediency, these local institutions have remained very weak and ineffec-

To overcome this trend, the prescriptions suggested by the political economy school are

vast growth of NGOs and has led aid donors to try to sidestep the state/government by working with these organisations. Some of the international donor sponsored studies have suggested to the extent that certain resource mobilization responsibilities of the Union Parishad loperating, maintaining, and collecting revenues from hats, bazars, ferry ghats and jalmahals) should be given to the NGOs on profit-sharing basis

(Blair: 114, 262) It is too early to make any comment on the consequences of involving the NGOs with the local government. However, one of our major objectives as reflected in the Fourth five Year Plan (1990-95) of Bangladesh is "increase self-reliance", and the strategy adopted is to step up efforts for internal resource mobilization to provide complementary fund for development. A determined effort is therefore, needed to revitalise the rural local bodies for effective mobilisation of local resources. Following are some of the policy optons/recommendations that emerge from different studies on UP deserve careful consideration.

The resource base of the UP needs to be strengt lened which will depend very st ongly on the actual willingness of the central government. There should therefore, be a clear and workable government policy regard-ing the role of the UP in re-

penditure of the union bodies The existing sources of revenue of the UPs have proved inadequate for RM as well as to meet the increasing expenditure of them. They should, therefore, be provided with additional sources of revenue to augment their income.

But the scope for mobilising resources through direct taxes in the rural areas is very limited mainly due to the general poverty of the people. Moreover the elected union leaders are generally found unwilling to levy direct taxes on the electors. The political explanation is that taxes are not popular measures. In this circumstances the possibility of increasing resources of the UP without putting additional pressure of taxes on the people should be explored. At present, the central government levies certain taxes which are generally considered to be of local nature. To improve the resource position of the UPs, the central government should gradually withdraw itself from these sources, and transfer a part or full of their income to the respective UPs. Some of the potential sources are: 1) Immovable Property Transfer Tax (IPTT) and 2) Land Development Tax (LDT).

This would ensure a substantial income for the UPs and also increase their potential for autonomy. Land constitutes the most convenient and reasonable tax base in Bangladesh. But its contribution constitute less than one per cent of the total tax revenues. Moreover, more than 86 per cent of these revenues are eaten up by the collection machinery. Therefore, such an arrangement would effect the national exchequer very little. This is a fairly common practice in some developed countries like the United States, where a portion of the federally collected petrol tax is turned back to the states. and at the state level, a portion of the sales tax is turned back to the countries and municipalities. The theory is that the smaller and less able localities

guidance in assessing the 'union rate'. Attempt should also be made to improve the collection of taxes either in cooperation with the central government machinery or through the appointment of regular collectors. The exemption of land tax up to 25 bighas (8.3 acres) has lessened the workload of the revenue officials (Tahsildars) to a considerable extent. Utilisation of the expert services of these revenue officials in collecting some of the UP taxes may be

given a trial. Training and orientation of the UP leaders are expected to result in mobilisation of resources from the sources prescribed in the Ordinance. Shorter training courses/workshops may be held annually at the Divisional level to review the performance of the UPs. This would also provide the local leaders with uptodate information on government rules and regulations.

The present auditing system of the UPs and related rules are all directed towards accounting for the resources that flow from the central government. This should also be geared to ensure accountability for raising and spending of resources locatly.

There should be a systematic grant-in-aid code which would induce the UPs to maximise revenue from their local sources. What seems appropriate is a system of cost-sharing arrangement between the cen--tral government and the UP for development activities which it is expected, would encourage more RM at union level. Therefore, some of the grants must be made conditional. The UPs must satisfy certain prescribed conditions in order to qualify for such grants. The specific grants given to the UPs should be matched by local contributions. In case of general purpose grants, in order to qualify for them, UPs would have to ensure that their local collection would reach a definite percent-

age of the grants. In a capital shortage and labour surplus country like

The UP taxation system to a larger degree depends on the willingness of the people because the parishads do not have the capacity to force them to pay. But the present isolation of the Union body from the mainstream of development efforts of the government doesn't provide the tax-payers with any incentive to contribute to the UP fund. A functional co-ordina tion between the UP and the different nation-building departments would therefore, ensure people's participation in local level planning in one hand, and on the other, it would make the supplies and services of the central government sensitive to local people's desires and needs Such an arrangement would increase the confidence of the people in the local government institution and also motivate them to pay the different UP Moreover, it has further

been suggested that if all transactions at union levels concerning nationality and other certificates, seeking of political office, loans from Banks, transfer of immovable property etc., are made contingent upon presentation of an updated tax receipt from the respective UP. it would ensure-regular collection Generating income of the UP

from small-scale investments is another avenue that deserve exploration. The UPs may be encouraged to plant coconut and other fruit bearing trees on the roadside of the Union, cultivate fallow lands and undertake pisciculture in Jalma hals/ponds etc. And for all these activities, arrangement should be made to provide them with credit facilities.

The writer is a Professor of Public Administration at Chittagong University.

Faridabad and Gandaria roads are in bad shape

Sir, Faridabad and Gandaria are well-known residential areas of old Dhaka city. But nowadays most of the roads of this locality are in a very bad shape. Specially Hari Charan Roy Road, K B Road, Karimullahbagh I G Gate, Dinnanath Sen Road, Distillary Road, Dhalkanagar Lane and Nabin

Chandra Goswaini Road are in very bad condition. As a result, people have been suffering much for want of modern communication facilities.

We urge to the authorities concerned to take steps for repairing of the roads. Mahbubuddin Chowdhury

Faridabad, Dhaka-1204.

Fast food

Sir, Fast food has become

not honest

Mostafa Sohel Banani, Dhaka

college and university-going students, even laymen are fascinated in this regard. But it is unfortunate to say that people who are doing this business are The price of food is ridicu-

very popular in our country.

The office para and school,

lous, standard of food is lowquality, and similarly they are to be out of fashion.