Founder-Editor: Late S. M. Ali Dhaka, Tuesday, November 25, 1997

Anti-corruption Gyrations

A prominent Bangla daily yesterday made a laudable attempt to respond to a largely unwhetted public spirit of inquiry. The paper reveals that 711 cases of investigation and arraignment instituted by the anti-corruption bureau (BAC) against stalwarts of yester years hang fire. The processes have h 'nd year after year because of writs filed by the person or persons concerned or by their requests for revision before the higher court.

There have been 93 instances of investigations and case proceedings reportedly coming to a halt due to the writs. But, by far a larger number of 618 cases pend as the accused persons or groups sought revision of lower court verdict at the higher court with the standard procedures set in motion in that behalf.

The accused file writs by showing procedural or other defects and the courts too are cognisant of these in appropriate cases. Obviously the anti-corruption bureau has to streamline its approach so as to render it iron-clad from the legal point-of view.

We have a feeling that the anti-corruption bureau stands in need of adequate legal counselling before proceeding on a case. This can't be ensured by a retired district judge heading a law wing in the bureau or the cooperation routinely sought from the Attorney General through the Solicitor-General's office in the Law Ministry. The law ministry will have to devise ways for strengthening the process of making out cases properly and plugging the legal holes to quicken their disposal.

We are quite alive to the right of the individual to seek protection from higher courts and our respects for the judiciary hardly need any reiteration. Yet could the Law Ministry clear the air about the pending corruption cases and help make the provisions against corruption functional and ef-

Thoroughly Pointless

Perhaps this is only possible in Bangladesh. Wasting resources through shortsightedness and mismanagement. Normally the buzz word in the Third World is want of resources. We here seem hell-bent on proving to the world that even resource constrained countries can afford the suicidal luxury of not only failing to make the optimal use of whatever little they have but also squandering them. Why modern medical equipment capable of alleviating the sufferings of thousands would remain idle because of poor planning and mismanagement of the authorities? But that has been the case at five government hospitals where according to a report published in this daily yesterday, cobalt therapy machines - deemed pretty effective nowadays in cancer treatment, are lying idle. And what is the reason?

The report says that these machines were installed back in 1996 but could not be made operational because of a 'code displacement'. How on earth is that possible if the people who were in charge of them were up to the snuff and sufficiently responsible? And how can one rationalise delay of as long as six months in merely identifying the codes and another six months to reset them? One would struggle to find another devilish concoction of ineptitude and procrastination. That there was little planning about the whole thing becomes clear when we hear that hospital authorities are awaiting Chinese experts for the 'grand opening' of these inoperative healers when they have in their ranks people trained from China exclusively for that purpose. What is the point of it all? Whether it is foreign aid or investment from internally mobilised resources why should there be such a quixotic demonstration in the name of management and planning at all? More so in a poor country like ours where modern medicare is practically a luxury for an overwhelming majority of the population. Is not it criminal to be so very glaringly careless about public money? This sickening syndrome has almost become our national trait.

How long shall we continue to pay for putting

cart before the horses? Goodly Boost for a Minority

Whatever one feels about these beauty contests, the recent world pageants of both Miss Universe and Miss World have offered the subcontinent, India to be precise, platters full of pride and warmth. For three years running Sushmita and Aisharyya and Diana have been literally sweeping these contests. Very evidently there has been a shift in the ideas of the beauty of the human female form, influenced no doubt by the changing global equations. Plainly it's no more a whites-only world.

Anglo-Indians are an inalienable part of the Indian society. From all accounts, they seem to be a pretty remote lot. That cannot be true for whatever lives, lives because of certain positive factors. However, it is true that except for Aparna Sen's touching portrayal of this community in 36. Chowringhee Lane, theirs has been a presence unregistered in the arts and literature, the sciences and administration of the Indian society. We felt very good when Diana Hayden, an Anglo-Indian from Bombay Became Miss Universe on Sunday. This, we hope, would give her community a tremendous boost. In so many ways. They have been a very sporting people even in the direst of times.

Human beauty is mostly a matter of subjective perception. Even then it is very likely that some of world's most beautiful young women must now be living in the subcontinent. And beauties at that level are no more duds. Yes, some of the smartest youngest people live in these parts. That feels better.

Bangladesh Economy

Current Growth Prospects

The biggest weakness of Bangladesh economy today is to. persistence stagnancy of manufacturing sector which grew by 5.3 per cent in 1995-96 and the rate came down to only 3.3 per cent in 1996-97.

HE first half of the current fiscal year (1997-98), will be completed within just L over a month. During this period, production of Aman crop will critically determine the current growth prospects of the agriculture sector. If last year's pattern of agriculture-led growth is repeated, then the course of the economy will be largely determined by the end of the current calendar year. It is therefore time to look into the current growth prospects of the economy.

It is an extremely hazardous task, no doubt, since quarterly data of key economic variables are available, if at all, in a sporadic and piecemeal manner. Notwithstanding this serious limitation, I am undertaking this task, simply because lot of people are anxious to know the present status of the economy. Which way are we heading? I face this question, several times every day. The task is also essential since official pronouncements cannot afford to provide any independent assessment which is also politically acceptable. On the other hand, the Opposition would always try to draw the immediate

prospects with dark paints. First of all, let us look at what happened in the previous year. The GDP grew by 5.7 per cent during 1996-97 which was slightly higher than 5.3 per cent growth rate achieved during 1995-96. The primary contributor to GDP growth was the phenomenal bumper crops in successive

cropping seasons, so much so that the entire agriculture sector grew by an unprecedented 6 per cent in 1996-97 against 3.7 per cent in 1995-96. The question is can we expect the repeat performance of successive record

Window on Asia

harvest during current fiscal year? I doubt it since performance of agriculture sector is too much dependent on weather. Natural disasters are also frequent. Farmers of Bangladesh are fully aware of weather induced variability of crop production. It would therefore not be reasonable to put too much reliance

on agriculture for growth of GDP. Industry, manufacturing in particular, has been the prime mover of economic growth. Historically, this has remained valid - the world over. The biggest weakness of Bangladesh economy today is the persistence stagnancy of manufacturing sector which grew by 5.3 per cent in 1995-96 and the rate came down to only 3.3 per cent in 1996-97. Remember, 1995-96 was a hartal ridden year while the following year was politically much more stable. Yet, growth in manufacturing did not pick up. It may also be noted that other Asian countries at similar stage of development experienced over 10 per cent growth of manufacturing and we could not exceed half that figure and even that became unattainable in the recent past.

Prospects of Aman crop during the next 45 days are good. It may equal the harvest size of previous year but may not exceed it since there were lack of rain at the critical flowering stage in certain transplanted Aman areas of northern Bengal. The fate of subsequent crops cannot be guessed at this stage; while the results of crop diversification are not yet apparent through market arrivals of fruits, vegetables and varieties of other Rabi crops. Jute had a bumper harvest but returns were in the reverse direction. Its contribution to GDP growth tends to be marginal. There must be revival of manufacturing growth and the share of manufacturing in GDP must expand on a sustainable scale. However, present rends are otherwise. The share fell by 0.2 per cent in 1996-97. With such lack-luster performance, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to equal even the previous GDP growth rates of around 5 per cent.

It seems that the official outlook on the prospects of manufacturing growth is also rather bearish. Within this time of the current fiscal year, the government should have put in place a strong revivalist programme, consisting of, among others, a huge expansion of export processing zones, construction of factory buildings made available on hire-purchase basis, adequate financing for import of machinery and equipment and a highly supportive administrative (including custom clearance) process for manufacturing development. Earlier, I had suggested that the government should set up a Factory Development Company for supplying ready made factory buildings, like apartments with all utilities provided, to investors who would then install the equipment and be operational within 3 to 6 months only. In Thailand, the government-owned 'factory development company' played the lead role in manufacturing development. There is still time; a similar venture should be launched within the current fiscal year.

The domestic demand for manufactured goods and services are also lagging behind, at present Therefore, if farmers receive a fair return from the aman harvest, domestic demand for manufactured goods and services are definitely going to be pulled up during the next 7 months. It can be further reinforced if such fair returns are maintained for the subsequent Rabi crops. This is one area where a growth inducing programme is long over due. The prospects of immediate demand pull effects are realisable within the fiscal year and its probable inflationary effects need not worry us at this stage. Prices are fairly stable now. In fact, retail prices of rice are low by any standard and middle-class cost of living index as the measure of inflation is indeed too limited in scope to judge any possible inflationary impact on majority of our population. A populist approach to development calls for a fair return to farmers.

However, the major thrust to manufacturing growth should originate in the international market. The first quarter performance of garment export was good. What about other manufactured export? Today, export growth is too much dependent on garments only. Investment in manufacturing in the recent past show certain promise. New manufacturing enterprises have come on stream in the export processing zones. With a speedy settlement of the crisis in shrimp export as well as revival of leather sub-sector. prospects of a relatively more diversified export

> base may be possible before the end of the fiscal year.

There have been persistent allegations that our manufactur ing enterprises are not competitive. Even with-

in the domestic market, they are losing out to imported goods from India. Textile is one area where growth prospects are supposed to be absolutely enormous since backward linkages to garment industry alone can lead to a huge expansion of manufacturing. Yet, the reality is otherwise. We are limping on the growth track. The obvious conclusion is: handicaps are too strong and we may not be fully aware of them all

Two obvious limitations which are often reported in the newspapers include lack of bank credit to meet financing needs of enterprises and the other is shortage of electricity. However, within this fiscal year, the government may try to resolve the liquidity problem of export-oriented manufacturing but I doubt if power supply can be augmented within this short period. It is to the discredit of the government that the administrative processing of the proposals from independent power producers require much longer than 10 months, while it is stipulated that those electricity generating units must come on stream within 10 months. If bureaucratic delays could be avoided, then a huge positive change would be visible immediately. Certain bold decisions are called for.

Apart from agriculture and manufacturing. the beginning of the transit trade as well as handling of the international merchandise trade of Nepal by ports of Bangladesh can add considerably to income of the services sector. Low-cost housing is another sector of activity, where potentials of expansion are considerable. The thousands of apartments under-construction in Dhaka at present are all geared to the upscale market where possibility of a glut is considerable in the very near future; while, low-cost flats are in tremendous short supply. A large scale rural works programme will also boost up rural income and through multiplier effects, contribute more than the net outlay in Taka to GDP. The expanded telecom services by private sector companies, independent power producers and other interested private investors in infrastructure development, if allowed to play their due role, would be able to contribute substantially in rejuvenating the economy. The services sector constitute over 48 per cent of GDP. If the abovementioned programmes result in 8 per cent growth of the sector, then the total GDP would tend to grow by as much as 4 per cent It may also be noted that, unlike private investment in manufacturing, the government is in a position to influence the service sector much more through the programme activities cited above.

According to official government position, GDP should grow by 5.8 per cent during the current financial year. It is not an impossible task - even if agriculture production does not match its unprecedented performance of the previous year. However, the government may wish to pay immediate attention to the suggestions made above. There ought to be determined efforts. Unless we strive, we cannot achieve.

OPINION

Why Blame Doctors Only?

Dr Sabrina Rashid

we had a very difficult time con-

firming our tickets but on

other loss to the country.

and be more patriotic.

the same and to be improved

works. He or she works not only

six days a week, unlike others,

but also both in the morning

and the evening. He or she

therefore has no time to spare

for his or her family, friends,

relatives or recreation and

hobbies. His or her whole life

means nothing but work and

work. Even when s/he is sick or

tired to his/her very bones, s/he

can't take a day off but has to

drag him/herself to work.

His/her body maybe aching for

the comfort of bed but if he or

she puts his/her head on the

pillow, the patients are going to

suffer, for they may be more

sick than the doctor.

Now let's see how a doctor

bad as that!

Lately, many are blaming doctors for their poor service. Nobody seems to be satisfied with the doctors of our country and so they are going abroad to seek better and more satisfactory service. Not only that, doctors from a neighbouring country are now regularly visiting Bangladesh to give better service to the Bangladeshi patients, who are sick and tired of

local doctors! Since all the commodities from outside are flowing unhindered into our markets, why not doctors too? It is quite a big and good market of patients! After some time, we will hear engineers and accountants also coming into our country in the name of free market economy. It is all right if there is a fair exchange, but not otherwise.

So, doctors have earned quite a bad name now in our country. But what about other professions. Do they give very satisfactory service unlike the 'awful' doctors? Probably it is only the doctors who give some service at least, others hardly give any service at all, most of

the time. What about bank employees, for example? That day, a relative of mine narrated how after waiting for hours together he could get his job done finally. The bank officer of a government bank at last came into the office after a long break, and did the job so slowly that my relative couldn't help but to complain. At that, the official said, "Why don't you take your account to another bank?" What an advice! A loss not only to the bank he is working for, but also to the country, as it is a government bank.

I don't think doctors are as

money for sustenance and when Then what about Biman you are sick, your bed is the employees. When we travelled sweetest heaven on earth. No to Far East, every time we were amount of money can mean delayed before boarding the more than the softness of the plane, never could we get on it at bed at that time when a person scheduled time and delayed not is sick. But this poor person a for half or one hour, but for doctor, has to forsake this 'luxthree or four hours at least. ury which is but a necessity at Also the same excuse every such times, for his patients' time, "For unavoidable circumsake. For they may not be as stances"! Everybody doesn't sick as him but have come from have so much time to waste at far-off places and have spent airports (and what a boring money, time and energy to see place it is!). Once, from Calcutta the doctor. Not all of them can

the doctor fails to turn up at boarding the plane we were work. But do they appreciate shocked to see almost half the this sacrifice of the doctor? Oh, plane empty! What a loss to the country! What is difficult to To them, a doctor is a mafathom is, who is being benechine — he or she has to be at fited by flying an empty plane? work round-the-clock, s/he can If every passenger gets a service never be sick or tired. They as poor as this, who would fly never even bother to look at the on 'Biman' the next time? Anwatch when they visit the doctor and turn up when the work-So why blame doctors only, ing hours are over and demand when each and everyone of us is

afford to make a second trip, if

service even if it is not an emer-

But it is far from truth. Be-

cause when you have enough

gency. After that they want the doctor to be polite and gentle. Another thing — if the patients want doctors' time and attention to their satisfaction, they shouldn't go for ordinary ailments like common cold and flu to the specialists. The rule is first to go to a general practitioner and then, if need be, the doctor will refer the patient to the specialist, whom he or she thinks suitable. This will decrease the rush at the specialists and will allow them time to give to more complicated cases Misdiagnosis can also be made because of this reason for which our doctors are earning quite a bad name. But who is to be

blamed?

Iraq — Deja Vu

Saddam will have to do somehing really rash to take the crisis to a boiling point.

HE periodical madness that seizes the world concerning Iraq, is once again on the A agenda. For the last six-and-a-half years, this has a very familiar ring — the Security Council, the White House, the scurrying of diplomats - all ending up into nothing.

To recapitulate very briefly: Saddam Hussein. President of Iraq fell into a trap and swallowed up tiny Kuwait in one foul swoop. The US built up a worldwide coalition and smothered Iraq into pulp. Territories in northern Iraq, inhabited largely by Kurds and the south inhabited by Arabs, wd off fr m mother -fly zor s for Iraq. territory and were Iraq has recovered reight in the outh and through a clever n mo: than mear ago ands of Kur funded managed to expel t and trained by the CL

The Kurdish north rbid erritory for Iraq as the force f arc. rivals and Barzani fight it out. rkey ratine troops and planes to fight Kurdish guernilas Thus northern Iraq is an area where Saddam's writ does not run and Turkey and iran exercise considerable influence.

Saddam Hussain continues to pay heavily for his folly of brief conquest of Kuwait six-and a-half years ago Iraqi aggression of Kuwait is the favourite topic of the Security

Council, when it is short of topics. The leader is the sole superpower USA, who has been carrying on a relentless campaign against Iraq and highly Rather the market appears to take the news of personalised one against Saddam Hussein.

The latest crisis involves the inspectors of weapons, whose activities appears to be severely curtailed by Saddam Hussein. There is the usual threat and counterthreat, flying of US spy plane the U2, the Security Council debate, US attempt to drag the entire Council behind her, dragging of feet by three permanent members of the Council, China, France and Russia.

Much water has flown down the Euphrates since Saddam was caught red handed trying to snatch tiny Kuwait. Oil-rich Iraq provides lucrative market to the major members of the Security Council. Thus the majority of the permanent members of the Security Council, although ready to force Saddam to allow the inspectors to do their job without hindrance, they are unwilling to start military action against Iraq. This is the bottom line and there is ceaseless diplomatic pirouette.

As US tries to line up permanent members of the Security Council, Saddam has been attempting valiantly to line up support for him. The Security Council appears divided about how far it will go to punish Saddam for frustrating the attempts of the Council to totally destroy mass destruction weapons that Saddam is supposed to hide from the prying gaze of the inspectors. Saddam has solidly lined up the Arabs behind him.

The Islamic world is supporting him although not very noisily. Turkish papers reported recently that the Turkish government had requested the US not to use the military base at Incirlik in Turkey should she decide to strike Iraq. What a sea-change in the attitude of Turkey compared to 1991, when the war broke out between the US and her allies and Iraq. Turkey under the leadership of President Turgut Ozal had cut off pipeline carrying Iraqi oil to world market. An identical action had been taken by Saudi Arabia.

Lor king at the crisis today, one conclusion is nescapable : nobody is prepared to press the outton and start a war all over again. It looks nore like shadow boxing. Indeed, the US appears to beat the pseudo-war drums which sound very unconvincing. Saddam Hussein, who by now has become a past master in this game of hide and seek, plays it to the hilt. He adds

> new public relations twist to his stance like filling his Presidential palace with children, to be used as 'human shield' against US strike!

Interestingly, the stock market of oil has become wise through long experience. We don't see panic reactions in the market. sabre-rattling in stride. The price of oil in the

Arshad-uz Zaman

world has remained remarkably steady. There is interesting development in the international oil market. The early oil of Azerbaijan will be carried by pipeline from Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan on the Caspian Sea to Ceyhun on the Mediterranean coast of Turkey. According to press reports, the US is fully backing Turkey for the year's shutdown of the Iraqi pipeline following the Gulf War. Turkey paid very heavily due

to lost revenue. As the war of words continue at the Security Council and various capitals of the world, there is no war fever as such. The world media, particularly the CNN has been trying valiantly to portray the crisis surrounding Saddam Hussein. Yet the vast majority of the world remain unconcerned if not downright apathetic. Saddam will have to do something really rash to take the crisis to a boiling point. After his debacle in Kuwait more than six years ago, it is unthinkable that he would have the stomach for another fight with the mighty US.

Transit route with Nepal

Sir, Nepal received transit rights to Bangladesh through Fulbari-Banglabandh route beginning September 1, 1997 This is a provisional arrangement to be reviewed by India after six months of its operation. So far, only three trucks carrying lentils from Nepa have passed through this route and thus putting serious quest tion marks on its utility and viability. If such underutilisation of the facility and the route continues, India will be too happy to rescind such magnanimous gesture towards its smaller neighbours. The transit treaty itself was not properly negotiated, making it unfavourable to the parties concerned (Nepal and Bangladesh) As the Nepaleese authorities failed to negotiate better terms (often the case with other neighbours like Bangladesh). However, saving the treaty and transit accord would be to the advantage of both the countries. There is enormous potential

of bilateral trade between these two countries, which is presently grossly underutilised. Bangladesh could import lentils, fruits (which are far cheaper in Nepal) and possibly other agro produces. Nepal, in turn, could import garments, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, melamine and many other products from Bangladesh, which are superior in quality and competitive in price, compared to the available poor quality products from India and China.

Despite this apparent potential, nothing is happening in our bilateral trade. Bangladesh has a full-fledged Mission in Kathmandu and two of the local leading private banks are partly owned by Bangladeshi banks. Isn't it time by these relevant agencies to look into this trade opportunities? I would urge Bangladeshi trade bodies, government etc., to look into this seriously.

Syed Zahir Sadeque (By e-mail) Kathmandu, Nepal

Dhaka-Bhairab railway track

Sir. Bangladesh Railway is government-owned and government-managed organisation. But it has been suffering from various operating bottlenecks. As Railway is a very important mode of onland transport linking the entire length and breadth of the country, its healthy growth naturally contributes to the economic development of the country.

ent dailies regarding the project of doubling the railway track between Dhaka and Bhairab with an estimated cost of Tk 200 crores has drawn my attention. I am a student of Civil Engineering and conducting a research project entitled "The Impacts of Dhaka-Laksham Direct Railway Link on the Railway Transportation of Bangladesh" under the supervision of Dr Moazzem Hossain, Assist Prof of Civil Engg, BUET Its initial estimation showed that the above direct link will significantly reduce the rail distance (will also reduce travel

A recent news item in differ-

hours) between Dhaka and Chittagong. Apart from saving in travel time, there will be significant reductions in the vehicle operation costs as well. Although we

time approximately to two

will be able to figure out the definite cost/benefit ratio after completion of the current research project in about six months time; it is certain from our initial estimate that this project will be economically more viable than the current track doubling project under consideration. Besides, the direct link project of ours will serve the objectives of the Dhaka-Bhairab double track

projection of the Barry Barry However, one may think of three major river bridges. namely, Gomti, Meghna and Shitalakhya as a barrier to the direct railway link between Dhaka and Laksham. But so far I know our ministry has plans to build the second highway bridges across those rivers which can be shared by our proposed Direct Railway Link and thus the economic viability of the project would be even more potential.

Considering the above issues, would the Ministry of Communication kindly wait until the completion of our research project (about six months from to-date) to grant green signal to the Dhaka-Bhairab double tracking pro-

Md Saidur Rahman Milan Dept of Civil Engineering BUET, Dhaka

Upgrading agrieducation

Sir. Unfortunate but true, the Bangladesh Agricultural Institute (BAI), the then Bengal Agricultural Institute, Dhaka since its establishment in 1938 during the British regime by Sher-e-Bangla A K Fazlul Huq had witnessed almost no development during the Pakistan rule. On the other hand, agrieducation institutions established during the same period in the then West Pakistan saw tremendous development. For reference I would like to put forward the following facts:

1. The Punjab Agriculture College at Lyallpur (now Faisalabad) was established in 1905. In 1960, this college was upgraded to the status of a university which is now known as the University of Agriculture, Faisalabad (UAF).

2. The King George — V Institute of Agriculture at Sakrand in Nawabashah district was established in 1939. It was renamed as Sindh Agriculture College and shifted to Tandojam, Hyderabad in 1955 which was upgraded to university status as Sindh Agricultural University (SAU), Tandojam.

3. A full-fledge College of Agriculture was established in 1956 as a constituent unit of the Peshawar University which was converted into Faculty of Agriculture of the same university and later upgraded to North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) Agricultural Univer-

All the above mentioned universities in Pakistan are offering under-graduate and postgraduate courses in different

branches of agriscience. In case of Bangladesh Agricultural Institute, its status was degraded from constituent institute (as Faculty of Agriculture) of Dhaka University to only an affiliated college under Bangladesh Agricultural University in 1964. After independence, efforts were undertaken by governments to upgrade the status of BAI but none of the efforts came out successful owing to a very many reasons. The present government has been

paying due attention to the development of BAI. A development scheme has been undertaken for the strengthening of BAI. The Agri-Education Wing of the Ministry of Agriculture and BARI are currently working to upgrade the status of BAI with a view to solve its long-

It is sincerely hoped that the government will take urgent steps to expedite its effort to makes BAis and ideal seat for learning in agri-education.

standing problems.

M Zahidul Hague BAI. Sher-e-Bangla Nagar. Dhaka-1207

One-way traffic

Sir, I would invite the Mayor of the city corporation to visit Road No. 6 of Dhanmondi R/A. between 08:00 and 08:45 in the morning and 13:45 and 14:30 in the afternoon to see things for himself and decide whether this road could be made open to oneway traffic only for easing traffic congestion.

Four educational institutions, one diagnostic centrecum-clinic and Dhanmondi Police Station are located on this road. All types of vehicles - from cycle rickshaw to heavy 15 ton police truck — ply this road and it becomes miserably congested during peak hours. Please have a heart — the children are in a sorry plight.

A Parent Dhaka

"Waiting for a phone"

Sir, "Waiting for a "Phone" a letter written by Shamim Ahsan on the 21st November happeris to be a cry of thousands of people. T&T is going from bad to worse. When cable TV first came to our country, we thought that the standard of BTV would improve. What can I say, the rest is history. BTV never did prosper. Then when mobile phones came along we thought that T&T would improve its quality.

Again, what can I say? The monopolistic attitude of the BTV days are long gone. Not only have mobile phones connected half of Dhaka, very soon they will spread all over the country too. Some vendors even offer ISD lines. All this and more services are offered for less than a third of the total cost added up for T&T.

By the way, this Total Cost = charge+Line Govt. charge+Telephone set price + Govt. donations+Lineman's donation+cost of 2 to 3 shoe soles+ and the list goes on and on.

Why bother dishing out 3 times as much when you can have an advanced, high-tech gadget like a mobile phone in your disposal, which can not only do everything and more than a conventional T&T set would do, on top of that these are mobile. Healthy contests are always advised. That way the price will be brought down as well as the quality improved. But T&T operates like every other government organisations in the country - rules are . followed which were implemented during the British rule. What needs to be done now, if we want to save our ailing telephone. TV. radio, power and transportation sectors is mass privatisation. People are willing to pay more. Why are then the government and bureaucrats so scared to implement

such a thing? Masroor Ahmed Deepak (By e-mail)