The Baily Star Founder-Editor: Late S. M. Ali

Dhaka, Saturday, November 14, 1998

Attracting FDI

There is some sort of comfort for Bangladesh in an otherwise gloomy scenario. According to the 1998 World Investment Report published by the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), inflow of foreign direct investment (FDI) into Bangladesh reached 145 million dollars in 1997, up 10 times over 1996. While the percentage rise is impressive, the actual amount is meagre. The unfolding FDI scenario looks somewhat better when one considers the two billion dollars worth of proposals registered with the Board of Investment over the past two fiscal years. This is good news indeed, but there is no reason to get complacent as there is still a long way to go before Bangladesh becomes a favourite FDI destination.

The report, released in Dhaka on Wednesday, shows Bangladesh has the potential to emerge as a serious player in the global energy market. However, the total volume of FDI inflow is still minuscule compared to the rest of Asia and totally inadequate compared to the need of the country. Business logic dictates that FDI will flow into areas where there are possibilities of longer-term profits, but the investment base in the country remains too narrow for comfort. Low growth in rural purchasing power means the market for consumer durables remains limited, thus deterring investment in manufacturing capacity. Furthermore, bureaucratic tangles, poor infrastructure, unpredictable political environment and absence of rule-based decision-making all combine to make foreign investors hesitant.

There is no doubt that the government has attached top priority to attracting FDI into the economy, particularly critical infrastructure and labour-intensive industries. However, such policy priority is unlikely to translate into real inflow of FDI, unless inherent distortions in the economy are removed and transparency of the decisionmaking process ensured. Creation of a mass market would certainly be a time-consuming affair, but this process would be triggered by substantial investment in other areas, such as garments, textiles, telecom, construction materials, agriculture processing and packaging etc. These are areas into which FDI flow needs to be channeled through innovative policy packages and marketing. But the government needs to simplify bureaucratic procedures, play strictly by the rules and ensure a congenial political environment, if its rhetoric about FDI is to acquire substance.

ME Peace in Peril

The recently-signed peace deal between Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had raised a great deal of hope, but it appears forces are still active in the region which would leave no stone unturned to derail the peace process. First a bomb attack in the Jewish quarter of Jerusalem triggered demands in Israel that the latest troop withdrawal agreement be scrapped. Now, the Israeli cabinet has attached a string of conditions on the implementation of the deal, which threatens to make it an extremely difficult, if not impossible, process.

On the face of it, the conditions do not appear too damaging by themselves. What the Israelis want to see is that the Palestinian side is also keeping to its commitment to ensure Israel's security. But the underlying message of the conditions suggests that Israel reserves the right to halt troop withdrawal at any time, on the basis of its own judgement. Worse, Israel has also granted itself the "right" to annex large chunks of the West Bank. Amid all this, Jewish settlers are threatening to grab more land in Palestinian territory. In other words, Israel plans to turn the agreement into an instrument with which to blunt Palestinian autonomy, while pushing ahead with its colonisation of the West Bank.

Such turn of events has left the Palestinians questioning Israel's sincerity in wanting a peaceful settlement of the issue. Since the Palestinians have already given up the armed struggle, negotiations and diplomacy are the only means left with which to bring Israel back on course. This path can only be successful if the Americans bring their considerable weight to bear. In fact, President Clinton bears a moral responsibility to do so. Arafat had entered into the peace process on the understanding that Washington would ensure Israeli compliance. Now, Clinton's role as the honest broker becomes even more critical in view of Israel's obstructive tactics.

Save Chapai, Save Mango

Chapai Nawabganj is in the heat of one of the biggest campaign of vandalism in all history. Seven hundred thousand mango trees, representing the wealth of the district and the delight of the nation are going to be felled in a massive action. But the wielders of the axe and the saw are no villains. They are only clearing the land of trees, killed by the recent overstaying floods. The setting of thousands cutting down lakhs of these giant trees is poignantly surrealistic. When the job is done the 1425 square kilometres of green expanse will present the picture of a daunting desert.

The only thing to do in the situation is to occupy all in the job of massive replantation. But that is not easy either. The saplings in the government and private nurseries — lakhs of them — are all dead too. Dead are the rare varieties brought from around the globe. Gone the same way are those hybrid saplings developed by the government horti-

cultural laboratory.

The message should be clear to all, specially the government: Chapai must be saved. To save it is to give it back its mango orchards. Can't it be done? Let us turn this catastrophe into a blessing. New plants can be made to go into fruition sooner than three years. And with all new trees, carefully culled from the mango centres of other nations, Chapai will be poised to take a new and special place

among mango producers. For this to happen government must prove a mango faddist and not leave any stone unturned in the quest to green Chapai again and with better trees. But the first need is local drive. The government can do only as much as is demanded of it by local interests.

Mango is the ultimate in the subcontinent gastronomy. It is not for nothing that a stoic of the order of Aurangzeb named two varieties sent by Mohammad, his son and governor of Deccan, as Rasanavilas and Sudharas.

Justice Delayed but Not Denied

Let us deliver justice, not deny it. A delay could only linger the pains but justice cannot be postponed for ever... Only sensible politics and rule of law in the country can save us from the rots heaped on us by unscrupulous hands.

ance should have come much earlier from those who occupied the pinnacle of power before she did. Unfortunately, that was the most neglected element of all the commitments made by the previous rulers.

ND at long last, the much

A awaited verdict in the Long-drawn trial of the

brutal killing of Bangabandhu

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and

others has been announced. The

wheels of history, as it is, set in

the proper perspective: the

verdict awards death penalty to

the killers. Admittedly, the bar-

baric murder of the father of the

nation along with his kith and

kin went to tarnish our image

abroad and, devastatingly, the

Indemnity Ordinance that fol-

lowed the suit paved way for es-

tablishment of what can be

called a "killing culture". The

nation witnessed few more of

such causalities: Col (Rtd)

Taher, President Gen (Rtd) Ziaur

Rahman, Gen Manjur and a

host of military and civil offi-

cers were killed. Coup de etat

and killing almost constituted

an important plank of our

power politics. And all these

happened in a country that has

freed itself from Pakistan occu-

pation through a bloody libera-

tion war and immense sacri-

fice. And also in a country that

has committed to nourish and

nature democratic disciplines,

uphold rule of law and emanci-

pate its people from socio-eco-

We welcome the judgement.

At the same breath, we welcome

the commitment made by

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina

to put all killers and criminals

under trial. In fact, this utter-

THE 19-month old impasse

▲ between Israel and Pales-

tinians was broken by the sign-

ing of an interim accord, a sig-

nificant forward step in the so-

called land-for-peace deal over

the West Bank. The agreement

was signed after nine days of

marathon negotiations con-

fined in the Wye River resort in

Maryland between Benjamin

Netanyahu and Yasser Arafat,

with President Bill Clinton of

the United States and King Hus-

sein of Jordan, at a White House

portant stage in the Israeli-

Palestinian relations. It seems

that the leaders of the region

have, through the bitter experi-

ence of the past five decades, fi-

nally came to grips with reality

On the one hand, the Israeli

leaders were slowly but inex-

orably coming to the realisa-

tion that peace for the Jewish

people could not be ensured

without justice for the Pales-

tinians. And, on the other

hand, Palestinian leaders

that if they want the Statehood

sire, then they have to show

consideration for Israel's need

for security. These considera-

tions mainly governed the out-

come of the long-drawn negoti-

River accord.

ations — the signing of the Wye

tinian Authority have now

made a new commitment that

they will implement the stalled

parts of the accord: Israel will

Both Israel and the Pales-

that their people so keenly de-

The accord has been an im-

in the Middle East peace

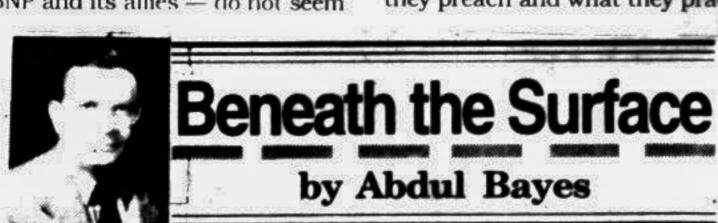
nomic backwardness.

While the nation was on its feet to celebrate the judgement and waited, with keen interest, to see its implementation, the stances taken by BNP and its allies come to dishearten us. We expected that those parties would welcome the judgement and congratulate the PM for having dared to dig out the truth of all killings, including that of late Ziaur Rahman, the founder father of BNP. Instead, just the reverse seems to have occurred: BNP called for a 48-hour hartal and to make things worse, extended it for another 24 hours. One could be sympathetic to BNP by arguing that there was an unhappy coincidence between two events: Protest against government and the judgment on 15 Aug Killing. Whatever was there to justify hartals, allegedly, the attempt appeared as a slap on the sanctity of the judgement in Bangabandhu murder case and a stab on the back of those millions who liked to celebrate.

Hartals should never be sup-

ported simply on the ground that it infringes the rights of others. Even then, as some would argue, hartals emerged as one of the important weapons of protest by politicians. It is considered by certain quarters as a constitutional right. However, the reasons behind this prolonged hartal — as shown by BNP and its allies — do not seem

bounds. The killings of Col Taher and President General Ziaur Rahman are still shrouded in mystery but none came out to unfold the true story. Therefore, the mere demand for the trial of all killers as made by BNP do not hold much water in the absence of a happy marriage between what they preach and what they prac-



to be justifiable even on that line of argument. First, as far as the trial of killers was concerned, they appear to brush it aside with the naive notion that "we want trial of all killings" One may then ask: "Why did you not do that while you were in power?" For the last two decades, anti-Awami League lobbies captured power in Bangladesh but none including BNP attempted to go — for example — even for the trial of killing of Siraj Sikder hovering whom crocodile tears know no

the rampages on the spot and

Second, the prolonged hartal is said to have been forced upon to protest against the alleged attack on BNP followers who wanted to make their ways into Paltan Maidan meeting. It was also, allegedly, forced upon to protest the lobbing of tear gas shell on the dais Begum Khaleda Zia was speaking from. Definitely, such activities are to be condemned and we firmly stand by that. The basic questions is : does that alone justify

the ruins in the aftermath? There were many such occasions when Sheikh Hasina's meeting in Chittagong met with chase by armed hoodlums. Jatiya Party could not hold any meeting any where and opposi-Mon parties had to abandon their meetings in the face of attacks from the then party in power - BNP. But never ever those parties, say, the victims, came out with such a prolonged hartal call to protest against the atrocities.

We find no justification in burning the mosquito curtain to punish the mosquito as has been done by BNP and its allies recently. There were, we firmly believe, more cost-effective ways of giving a good lesson to the party in power had BNP and its allies followed a cool-headed and calculative path.

Third, the hartal call came at a time when the nation likes to see the post-flood rehabilitation work at its full swing. To the utter dismay of the critics who foresaw a famine and vultures flying overhead, the management on the score seems to be sound. Barring occasional complaints here and there, the overall post-flood rehabilitation work ran well. At this hour of juncture — when food and

fodder, diesel and fertiliser need speedy movement - came the hartal call to set a sturnbling block in the mobility of output and in factors of production throughout nooks and corners of the country. What we expected from BNP is that it would take the floor in the parliament and unleash an attack on the party in power in regard to the mismanagement, if there is

On more than one occasion, it was mentioned in this column that people's perceptions about politicians and politics have been undergoing tremendous changes over the years. Politicians need to take into due cognizance such changes and to that effect, revise their strategies. The resilience of the people - especially of the rural mass after having successfully fought the most devastating flood ever - should be duly counted. And that resilience should be furthered by pure politics - not by Pyrrhonistic poli-

Let us deliver justice, not deny it. A delay could only linger the pains but justice cannot be postponed for ever. Let us sow the seeds of justice for the bereaved families and brave farmers. Only sensible politics and rule of law in the country can save us from the rots heaped on us by unscrupulous

ME Peace Accord Proceeds on a Stormy Course

by ASM Nurunnabi

Observers feel it is a long stride towards crowning of a patient process of mutual accommodation, confidence-building and peace-making, which may help in realistic realisation of long-term interests and requirements of co-existence on both sides and in correcting a historical wrong of pathetic humanitarian consequences under the post-World War II prescriptions.

Palestinians have given a fairly water tight assurance that they would prevent terrorist activities of extreme elements. Their fulfilment of these commitments will be a crucial prerequisite if their hope for a full fledged state is to be realised. Palestinian Authority has also agreed to give up those clauses in their National Charter that called for destruction of Israel, which commitment needs to be ratified by their parliament.

A discordant note was struck in respect of the achieved peace accord when Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, founder of the militant Palestinian group Hamas. called the agreement a sale-out and declared the CIA involvement in looking after Israeli security within the Palestinian seemed to have accepted the fact territory cannot erase Hamas. Some Jewish leaders, particularly the settlers also termed the accord an Israeli "agreement of surrender.

> The impact of the Wye River summit on Israel's domestic politics might seem interesting. It appears that Netanyahu is now moving towards a middle of the road position from the conservative stance of his early

days as Prime Minister. It was also quite significant politically that in signing the proceed with phased with- deal at Wye River, Netanyahu drawal from West Bank and had in his team a prominent

hardliner like Ariel Sharon. the Foreign Minister who said that a Palestinian state is in-

Soon after the signing of the Wye peace accord, a bus-load of 40 children of Jewish settlers in the Gaza Strip narrowly escaped attack from Palestinian extremists through the timely intervention of an Israeli army jeep. The attack gave Israeli hard-liners exactly what they had been looking for — evidence that the Wye peace accord would not stop Palestinian terrorism But with the disaster averted in Gaza, the peace processes limped on.

Israel and the Palestinians were supposed to begin implementing the terms of the Why accord last week. For the Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, the way ahead seemed full of perils.

On the face of it, Netanyahu made little headway last week. He opted to postpone a vote both in his cabinet and his party, the Likud, to formally endorse the agreement. Arafat seemed weaker than he was before Wye. He responded to the bombing attack in Gaza with an unprecedented crackdown on Hamas the militant Islamic movement. More than 100 Hamas figures were rounded up. Arafat's crackdown on Hamas still didn't go far enough to sat-

isty hardline Israelis. Netanyahu attributed the postponement of the cabinet vote on Wye to the Palestinians' supposed "failure" to produce the plan for combating terrorism. On the other side, the Israelis have yet to present any maps showing exactly what areas will be handed over to the Palestinians during the 12-week implementation period. With Israel retaining sovereignty over security zones, highways and Jewish settlements, the land under full Palestinian control is likely to look as a dismembered entity. It is feared that in the long run a deal that turns out to be good for only one side is unlikely to be good for any-

The peace process suffered yet another setback when the Israelis decided after a second bomb attack at a market in East Jerusalem late last week not to ratify the new interim peace deal until the Palestinian Authority took steps to clamp down on anti-Israel militants. particularly jailing 30 alleged Palestinian killers Israelis. The peace accord has proved to be very difficult to implement and to hold on the ground. According to the Oslo timetable. the issue of a permanent solution of all Israeli-Palestinian questions is to be resolved by

May, 1999. Given that the peace process has got stuck in stalemate for a long time, that target date may not appear feasible

The greatest hurdle in the peace process now appears to be the Israelis uncompromising insistence on the security issue, in spite of the Palestinian guarantee as far as possible with the resources of their security apparatus. But it appears the whole security issue is very complicated and ticklish one. given the present state of deep distrust between the two communities. The Jewish persistence in continuing construction of new settlements in East Jerusalem is another thorny issue bedevilling the peace process. The Clinton administration is hoping to get the Israelis to call a "time out" on building new Jewish settlements. Netanyahu, however, said Israel would keep building to accommodate the natural population. growth in the settlements but would not establish new com-

munities. US officials said that despite some Israeli delay in ratifying the Wye accord, the timetable would not be disrupted. Under the plan. Israel is to withdraw from 13 per cent of the West Bank over 12 weeks, with each phase accompanied by Pales-

tinian security measures. In the first week, no major Israeli steps are required. The Palestinians are to outline their plan for fighting Islamic militants to the United States, and several Israeli-Palestinian committees are to begin meeting.

According to Oslo agreement. May 4, 1999 should remain as the deadline for resolving all major issues including Palestinian statehood so that Arafat would not have to resort to unilateral declaration of Palestinian state. The Palestinian Authority has committed itself to stamp out anti-Israeli terrorism in its area. Israel is also pledge-bound to accelerate the process of land transfer to Palestinians. Arafat has gone a long way to accept Israel's right to exist within secure borders, and now it is Israel's turn to accept Palestinian people's right to statehood. Observers, however, feel it is a long stride towards crowning of a patient process of mutual accommodation, confidencebuilding and peace-making, which may help in realistic realisation of long-term interests and requirements of co-existence on both sides and in correcting a historical wrong of pathetic humanitarian cousequences under the post World' War II prescriptions

In the latest development the Israeli government ratified the · Wye River Peace Accord with the Palestinians, after attaching several riders. The Israeli cabinet also approved maps of the West Bank zones to be turned over to Palestinian control under the accord.

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.

A Wasted Opportunity: Whose Fault Is It?

Sir, Ever since I enrolled into the CIS program of the Central Missouri State University. I've been hearing a lot about the Y2K Bug (or the Year 2000 problem). The Americans feel very insecured be 'cause nobody knows for sure what kind of disaster this bug could cause. They're desperately looking for something that would enable them to avert this catastrophe and so far, COBOL seems to be the best answer. So, they're seeking for COBOL programmers. But the problem is, America doesn't have enough COBOL programmers. That's why the Government of the United States is recruiting COBOL programmers from other places of

the world. Now Y2K Bug could be a nightmare to the Americans and Europeans (since they're highly computerized societies). but it wouldn't affect us, Bangladeshis, that much (well, needless to say, if the global economy suffers because of the Y2K Bug then we'd suffer too.) Although we don't have any immediate concerns regarding Y2K Bug, we could grasp at the opportunity that the westerners' plight provided we could supply skilled COBOL programmers to the European and American job-market !! This could have been possible if only the Governments of Bangladesh possessed enough far sight to

seek out opportunities. But alas, our previous and present governments were too busy with other "Important (?) Matters" to avail of this great opportunity !! Well, some authority on Government policies might claim that Bangladesh didn't have the resources to train the young people in COBOL programming. I won't buy that !! How come India was able to supply computer special-

ists to the western societies?? If one goes to the Silicon Valley (the heart of the computer industry of the United States), one would find Indians galore !! As a matter of fact, India DOES have a high potential of becoming a major power with the turn of the century !!! Okay, I accept that Bangladesh has some limi-

tations; even then, couldn't she have produced at least 1000 skilled COBOL programmers ?? I'm not counting the Bangladeshi ladies and gentlemen who are pursuing Computer Science or Information Technologies in foreign universities because these young people are pursuing computer and information technologies on their own (with their parents' money), not on government initiative.

I'm talking about the young people who has graduated or would graduate from Bangladeshi universities/colleges. Have the governments ever taken any strong steps to make these young people skilled in COBOL programming ?? NO !! Why didn't the governments take any strong measures ?? Could it be that these young people are not smart enough to master COBOL ?? I won't buy that the students who get into the universities are able to do so after a bitter competetion; they've got to be the smartest young people Bangladesh has got to offer !! I personally believe that these young people

have very, very high potentials. If only the policy makers were sincere enough to utilize the potentials of these young people. Bangladesh would have been able to capture a sizeable portion of European and American job-market !! It frustrates me when I see that Indian and the oriental people are capturing a huge portion of the jobmarket. Couldn't the Bangladeshis be a part of this too ? Who's gonna answer that

Mushfigur Rahman 474 East Ellis Central Missouri State Uni-Warrensburg, MO 64093 U.S.A •

question?

"Spare the Farce"

Sir, Thanks for the DS editorial under the above heading. of the 29th October. It will not be an exaggeration to say that 99 per cent of the people of Bangladesh will fully agree with what have been said in the editorial and especially the remark "Please do not try to pass the buck and make pollution a

subject of other people's conscious" This is the truth. This remark is applicable in every

Let us take an example from a report appearing in DS under the caption "DCC limps as filth litters city." It is stated here that the DCC's Chief conservancy officer blamed "lack of awareness among the city dewellers for the garbage disposal problem" Isn't this another Tarce and passing the buck on to others? Let the DCC do its job efficiently and see what happens.

Here is another Farce: government has suddenly imposed surcharges on telephone bills in an effort to raise a part of the 300 crores of Taka causing hardship to the telephone users. while reportedly Taka 600 crores are outstanding from the VIPs (MPs) and the government departments. While the MPs and the Government departments do not pay their telephone bills — the buck is passed

on to those who pay. How easy it There appears to be utter lack of transparency in the telephane department. Will some one tell whether the local calls made from digital phones are metered and charged on time basis? I have a suspicion that these calls are metered and billed on basis. No printed tariff of charges are available. Will some one in the T & T give a categorical answer? Verbal enquiries could not elicit any clear information. Isn't this a

The People's Republic of Bangladesh (PRB) has a Constitution, in the Parliament, consisting of 330 MPs every year with lot of fanfare a budget is voted, authorising the government to raise taxes from the people but no sooner the budget is passed the Finance Minister or the Board of Revenue, on one pretext or other starts raising taxes and duties. Isn't this another farce!

A Citizen

"NCBs' loan ..."

Sir, I was quite surprised to read in your esteemed newspaper an item published on the 12th November, 1998 under the heading 'NCBs' loan to Shinepukur raises questions'. This loan has perhaps been given, as far as I understand, under the direction of the highest quarter of the country, and this is the current rumour. So no question can be raised. You might have noticed in different newspapers that Beximco is mentioning all the time in their bulletins and advertisements

that they are the biggest em ployer of the country - say. about 15,000 people are working in their different projects. After all they are doing a benevolent job — a job which was supposed to be done by the government is being done by them; as such, I feel the government should excuse the big defaulters in IFIC Bank Limited and Arab-Bangladesh Bank

Limited.

We understand that recently in a Plaint before the Fifth Sub-Judge, Dhaka Judge's Court, they have mentioned that the huge money has not been taken by them, but, it was devolved on them as they wanted to give financial help to more than 243 small entrepreneurs in IFIC Bank Limited and the IFIC Bank Ltd gave them loan on their verbal assurance of repayments, if they become defaulters. After all, such group of industries' assurance is much more important than collateral, whereas Islam Brothers the other defaulter — has rather seemed unsmart to repay their monthly instalments regularly. They (BEXIMCO) have tried to create jobs by giving money to these small parties. Seeing the fitness of things, the government of course EXCUSE their default in paying IFIC Bank and Arab Bangladesh Bank loans, as a gesture of appreciation to their highly commendable philanthropic action. No action should be taken against them and the present Governor of Bangladesh Bank who is very strict in enforcing rules and regulations on them, is, after all in the chair up to 20th of this month.

I was surprised to read in Thursday's (12-11-98) newspapers (namely The Daily Star and Bhorer Kagaj) that Tk 70.00 crore has been sanctioned again by Sonali Bank — out of which Sonali Bank would pay Tk 45.00 crore, Janata Bank Tk 15.00 crore and Rupali Bank Tk 10.00 crore. I have never seen that commercial banks could advance loan for purchase of land and that too without any collateral security, but only a piece of guarantee paper from the promoters. Secondly, as per Bangladesh Bank's Regulations, in case of loan for land and building purposes 50 per cent of the value could be advanced to the party. How can an experienced Chairman of the Bank who has now become Bangladesh Bank Governor passed this loan and how the present Managing Director of Sonali Bank who was the Deputy Governor of Bangladesh Bank could bring this proposal

to the Board for approval? Our government is a benign one and it seems the relation-

ship with the incumbents is good. In such circumstances would suggest that these loans may even be allowed as 'grants' as reciprocation to giving employment to people which is primarily the task of the government and setting up industries (no matter even if overvalued). I hope through your estecmed paper my voice would reach the highest quarter and they would do some more benefit to the incumbents, for, after all, what does a loan of Tk 1000 crore or Tk 1500 crore matter. which would be borne by taxpayers jovially!

Anis Ahmed Khan 105. Peelkhana, Azimpur, Dhaka

Complaint against the Dhaka GPO

Sir. I sent some articles to your esteemed Daily for publication through registered Post dt. 8.10.98 from the Jessore HPO the matter was very urgent. But the registered letter was given returned to one on 20.10.98. On the plea that the address of the payee was incomplete. I am very much astonished to observe such act of the Dhaka GPO as lots of letters we posted earlier to the similar address and those were duly delivered. Due to non-deliver of the letter concerned I have been sustained an irreparable loss.

Md Abdul Latif Khan Jessore.

Terms of reference: Separate Rajuk &

DCC Sir. Reading the DS (Oct 29) write-up on Rajuk and DCC on the mushrooming of the kitchen markets and unauthorised constructions of all sorts going on in Dhaka city today, it is high time for the Government to review the situation and take some policy decisions so that both these nefarious agencies cannot pass on the buck to the other as far as duties, responsibilities, implementation and prosecution are concerned. There cannot be two masters of one mistress-Dhaka!

The rules and regs must be clear who are responsible for any particular job and who should be held responsible. There cannot be two bosses - it does not work. In many areas of public administrations there is dual authority and sharing of assignments, causing confusion and delays; ultimately the public suffer. In the longer perspective: the Admin Reforms body

have to come up with some olanning guidelines, but we have been waiting for a quarter of a century for the administrative messiah to make its appearance! This is not a new situation.

and has been discussed many times in the past — how to run Dhaka city smoothly. If the soldiers can control the city traffic, then what to do with the Police Traffic Department? Why professions have to be

interchanged? This is a ridiculous situation. A medical doctor cannot run an electric power station, and an engineer cannot examine a patient and prescribe medicines. The government should be

aware that eroding any established and accepted public institution is a serious public offence. It is the first and basic part of governance to improve the institutions. All our regimes in this country get poor marks in this field. Public awareness has to be increased by the administration and the media. Does the government know HOW to act? Where is the proof?

A Zabr Dhaka

Whither devaluation?

Sir, Are not we striking our own legs with axe and doing harm to ourselves by devaluing our currency — taka — again and again? After independence. we have devalued our taka innumerable time. But have we ever been able to improve our economy, increase our exports and mitigate the sufferings of our people? Only a handful of people in our country have always been benefited by our non-

stop devaluation. The more we devalue our taka the more we suffer. The more the cost of various goods. commodities and services go up. The more we devalue our taka the more the amount of our foreign loans and interest thereof increase and the sufferings of our people know no bounds.

Would we never be able to get rid of the cancer of our devaluation and save ourselves from the ever increasing colossal amount of foreign loans? How and when we would be able to recover from the disease of our dévaluation, regain our economic health and pay all the outstanding foreign loans?

Would our Finance Minister. Finance Secretary and Governor of Bangladesh Bank kindly tell us a target date and our recovery from economic ills?

O. H. Kabir Wari, Dhaka-1203