

building so former military machines are the only answer. However, there are a few successful homebrew transceivers on air and five home built Oscar stations, so the problem is not technical know-how but obtaining the latest components at moderate cost. Particularly difficult to obtain are variable capacitors for VFOs, toroids, transmitting capacitors, power transistors, crystal filters and slow motion drives.

The scarcity of gear is heightened by the fact that what little surplus equipment does come on the market from military disposals is grabbed by scrap dealers. Thus, much needed equipment never reaches an amateur who might use it to interest another person or even to some day save a life.

Homebrew and military surplus equipment constitutes about 90 to 95 per cent of all amateur stations in the country. The remaining 5 to 10 per cent are commercially equipped stations with gear ranging from Heathkit, Swan and Drake to Hallicrafters, SBE and Hammerlund. There are even a few atypical stations such as the Collins equipped shack of VU2BBJ, one of the most active hams in South India.

The commercial gear in most shacks was either brought in by reciprocally licensed amateurs and later sold or donated, brought in by Indian amateurs coming back home from overseas visits, or directly imported, a practice which at one time entailed major import licence and customs duty problems.

The difficulties of importing have been dramatically eased since August 1980. As a result of prolonged efforts the import policy now allows a licensed amateur to import Rs10,000 worth of equipment per year under the Open General Licence. All radio equipment is covered, as are kits, accessories, SWR bridges, antennas, rotators, feedlines, spares and components. Indian amateurs no longer need a complicated import licence but they are liable for 63 per cent duty!

Only a very few amateurs have been able to purchase the latest equipment from Kenwood, Yaesu, Ten Tec, Icom plus the odd SSTV unit or two. Getting equipment is still the main problem for the vast majority of Indian amateurs and SWLs. While they have the time and zeal (two elements stressed in radio training classes along with morse and theory)

to be involved in amateur radio, the latest in solid state equipment is definitely too expensive.

Large sums of money for gear are impossible, but this does not mean a complete lack of money, as individuals interested in getting into amateur radio in India are generally better educated and on a much higher (but still low by Western standards) income level. Consequently most amateurs or would-be amateurs have a bit of money available to spend on the hobby. But this often doesn't help because there simply isn't enough good used gear available and even old commercial valve gear is highly desired.

Used equipment

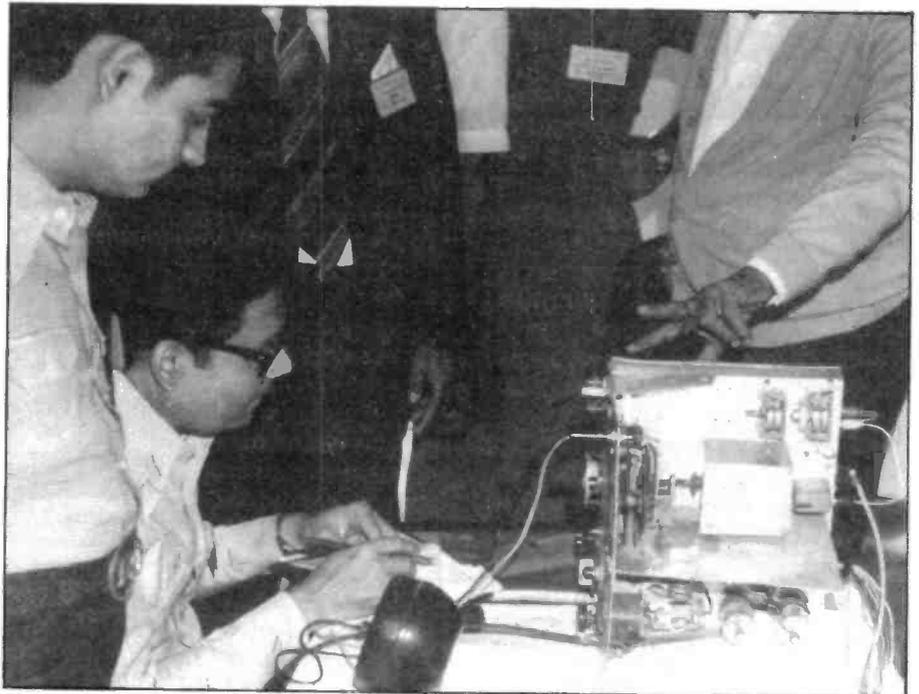
European amateurs may have good used equipment which they might like to make available to fellow hams in India at reasonable prices. The Federation of Amateur Radio Societies of India has agreed to act as a clearing house for equipment destined for this recycling. Amateurs should send a description and condition report of gear for sale plus the price and freight charges to: Saad Ali VU2ST, Former President, Federation of Amateur Societies of India, 4, Kurla Industrial Estate, Chatkopar, LBS Marg, Bombay,

India. 400086.

FARSI has been an active voice in the development of amateur radio in India. Since its formation nearly 15 years ago it has continuously negotiated with Government authorities for better conditions.

Government liaison is only one of FARSI's roles as the organisation is also involved in promoting local clubs (of which 50 are affiliated to the Federation), arranging radio classes and technical talks, designing and making suitable equipment available including an Indian designed three-band transceiver kit (still in the design stage) and publishing the monthly magazine *Radio*.

A major activity of FARSI is organising the *All India Amateur Radio Convention* every two or three years. The last convention, the 5th, was held in Bombay, India's leading port and most 'Westernised' metropolis. For three days delegates from many parts of India assembled at the Nehru Science Centre to hear discussions ranging from *Communication Satellites* and *Economical Transceiver Design to Amateur Radio in the Public Services and Amateur Radio, Keeping Abreast with the Latest Technology*. They also come to see homebrew and commercial displays; and to meet with other hams.



Toroids, power transistors, crystal filters, slow motion drives and VFO-type variable capacitors are difficult to come by but VU2CC showed what can be built at a homebrew corner at the All India Amateur Radio Convention.