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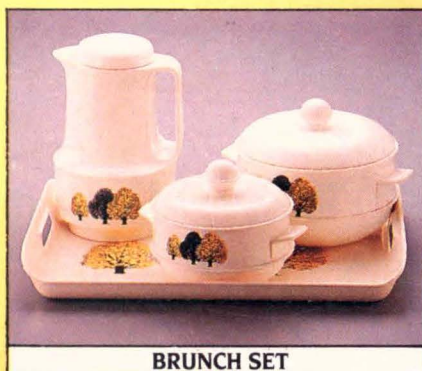
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SRI LANKA: THE NEXT TRAP

APOLOGISTS IN THE GOVERNMENT and in the national press, while beating their chests, now say that it would be fatuous for anybody to claim that the situation we find ourselves in today, in Sri Lanka, is what was to be expected. We reproduce here, in part, what this writer wrote five months ago for this page and which appeared in the October 1987 issue of **Imprint**:

"Recent developments in Sri Lanka offer the intricate Indian mind vast opportunities for justifying the unjustifiable. We can claim that death and destruction are inevitable in any peace-restoring exercise; we can claim that the Accord signed between Sri Lanka and India in July 1987 was a triumph for Indian diplomacy, and a feather in our Prime Minister's Gandhi cap. It may be so, but the grim reality that has emerged as a result of India's involvement in the internal conflicts of Sri Lanka, is that Indian troops are killing Tamil militants. And Tamil militants are killing both Indian troops and any Sinhalese that they can lay hands on; and the militant Sinhalese are yearning for a fight with the Tamils as well as with the Indians.

"These are the grim consequences of the immoral stance that we have adopted in Sri Lanka in recent years. The provision of training facilities for Tamil militants on Indian soil in the South, the emotive support they were given by Tamil Nadu, and the connivance of New Delhi in all this, rendered the Sri Lankan army action of five months ago, inevitable. Our response to that action — the air-drop of supplies for the largely Tamil area of Jaffna province — was the harbinger of the tragedy that followed. If India is to play a constructive role in Sri Lanka, it must realise that size and might must go hand-in-hand with generosity, with responsibility.

"In Sri Lanka, we have evidently failed in our responsibility. We should have strengthened the hands of President Jayewardene by offering our utmost support to his Government, to tackle the Tamil militants. We should never have permitted ourselves to fall into a situation where we now have to virtually do the Sri Lankan Government's job for them. A military intervention in Sri Lanka, no matter what the compulsion and the temptation, is totally at variance with the principles of *Panchsheel* and any number of moralistic statements about the non-involvement of one state in the affairs of the other — declarations that we have been propounding for four decades and more. . .

"All our efforts and energies in Sri Lanka should be directed at getting our troops out of that country. Fast. Such efforts must be accompanied by providing even more materials and resources to the Sri Lankan Government than what we are currently expending in Jaffna. Simultaneously, we need to educate the Indian public, particularly the people of the southern state of Tamil Nadu, that in the long run, it is in the best interests of the Tamils in Sri Lanka to deal directly with Colombo. It is for them and them alone, to learn to live with the reality that Sri Lanka is a Sinhala nation, and the Sinhalese are as entitled to nationhood, as you and I are, to India."

The title of that piece was **Get Out! Soonest!!** We did not. And the inevitable has happened, just as the inevitable happened in Vietnam, and just as it has happened in Afghanistan: the number of "invited" troops in Sri Lanka has increased; the area of their operations has expanded. Worse still, another inevitability: the regime that "invites", in due course, totters; the euphoria in the home country which marks the sending of such troops turns into divisive questioning, and worse. This too is happening.

With the departure of Ronnie de Mel from Jayewardene's cabinet, and his and Mrs S Bandaranaike's open pleas for talks with the Janatha Vimukti Peremuna (JVP) to bring them into the national mainstream, little is left to the imagination. The JVP cannot be ignored; the LTTE has not been vanquished. And now the Jayewardene government cannot last long. In the event, in the wake of Jayewardene's departure, following this inevitable script, lies the next trap for India: Nobody would want us there and we would want to retreat, in haste, leaving behind a legacy of confusion and bitterness that history will not forgive us for, nor let us forget.

There is still, perhaps, a way out. We should convene a round table conference of all major political parties in Sri Lanka and include the JVP, the LTTE and the TULF and also all major political parties in India including half a dozen representatives from Tamil Nadu, from both the Tamil Nadu government and the opposition (and, for good measure, a representative from the social and cultural fields). We should then earnestly recite the lessons learnt from the recent history witnessed in Vietnam and Afghanistan. This will be the time to shed all inhibiting factors — rank, prestige, pride — and choose a course of action for the people of Sri Lanka to follow (and for us to support but not with arms or men) which, in any event, history has already charted and made inevitable given Sri Lankan and Indian inputs so far. Acting in that direction now — of peaceful cohabitation — can still save many lives and protect the scarce resources of that country. ♦

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LETTERS



Speedy Justice Demanded

The cover story on Bhopal's gas victims, 'The Fire Within' (Imprint, January), is thorough and enlightening. It is right to say that the story has become a non-event with the passing of time, and people in other parts of the country now hardly recall the great human tragedy as vividly as they used to three years ago.

But the point now is that of quick justice. Whatever the amount of money demanded by us and offered by Union Carbide, some sort of understanding should be arrived at, so as to enable the suffering men, women and children to get their legitimate dues quickly; children and women especially, should be provided with immediate help of all kinds both by the local government and Union Carbide.

Further, Bhopal should be virtually rebuilt. At least in that area where the poisonous gas has taken a heavy toll of human and animal life, tree plantations must be launched on a very large scale, urgently. Nature, perhaps, will put up a better and more profitable fight against the pollution of the ghost city than man-made attempts, although man-made attempts,

too, are necessary.

Naresh Umrigar
Bardoli

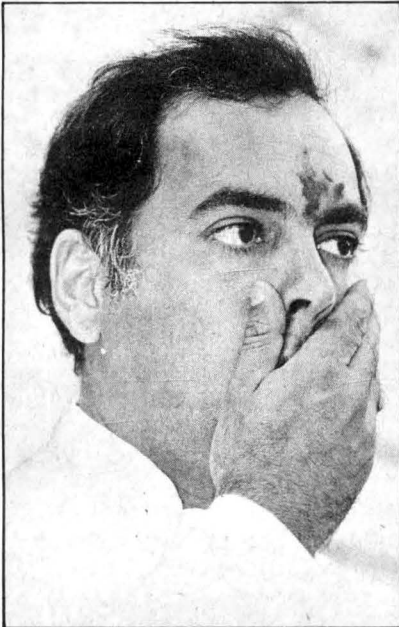
Turmoil in Fiji

The interesting article, 'Turmoil in Paradise' by Achin Vanaik (Imprint, January), on the coups in Fiji led by Lt Col (now Brig) Sitiveni Rabuka shows how a handful of armed persons can subvert the democratic process and deprive the majority of citizens of their rights. It is obvious that both the Governor General, Sir Panaia Ganilau, and the defeated Prime Minister Sir Kamisese Mara, both of whom have been restored to the positions of head of state and head of government respectively, abetted, if not openly supported, the coup.

The role of the British government and the Queen of England, has been dubious, to say the least. The futility of the British argument that they could do little in Fiji once the country declared itself a republic, can be judged from the fact that in 1953, when Chhedi Jagan was elected the Prime Minister of Guyana, the British government, following a plea that his government was pro-communist, sent forces to oust him. In Fiji, the British government was more interested in protecting the interests of the two per cent of Europeans who controlled the entire export and import trade of the country.

The role of the Government of India has also been unhelpful and has smacked of *ad hocism*. It did not rise to the occasion to protect the interests of Fijian Indians, whose forefathers had been taken to Fiji more than 60 years ago on the basis of false promises. They had to work under inhuman conditions. These persons can only look towards India for support and inspiration. While India is overactive in protecting the interests of black South Africans and Palestinians, it develops cold feet whenever the interests of its own people are involved.

V Sagar
New Delhi



Grim Reading

Your January issue made interesting but grim reading — what a way to herald the New Year! But then it is time we abandoned our ostrich-like positions and responded to reality. The government's performance has been abysmal and indeed it seems to have done little to redeem itself or justify its existence. Almost every article spoke volumes about the government's consistent inability to manage or respond to the country's needs whether it is the Punjab imbroglio, Sri Lanka, Bhopal's victims, drought relief, communal outbursts, or police atrocities. The government is clearly unable to take charge or maintain even a semblance of democracy. We need to look elsewhere for answers.

*V Bhattacharya
Bijapur*

Congratulations!

Your special feature, '1987 — Through a Kaleidoscope' (*Imprint*, January), which provided the highlights of the year and covered various issues and activities that concerned the country, was an excellent idea. I am certain that you will receive great applause from many *Imprint* readers.

Not only the idea but also the details of the various subjects covered are equally praiseworthy, and the regional round-up, novel.

I do not think that any periodical has covered national news in such an in-depth fashion, especially with such fine details and photographs. Please keep it up every year. The feature was not only interesting but very absorbing.

*Bharat Trivedi
Bombay*

Callous Treatment

Our attitude towards victims of road accidents is, to say the least, callous. There is much hesitancy in going to their aid. This is primarily due to the fear among the general public of getting caught up in the legalities and formalities involved.

The accident has to be registered with the police before the victim is admitted to any private hospital or clinic. The doctors in these hospitals are also wary about treating these victims as they do not want to be drawn into medico-legal issues. Often they refuse to treat the victims and instead ask them to knock on the doors of a government hospital. The net result is that the victim's chance of survival, if he is badly injured, is slim.

It is essential to arouse public consciousness on this issue. Forums should be formed in all states encouraging people to come to the aid of road accident victims.

*P C Jayachandran
Baroda*

Strict Measures Needed

Darryl D'Monte's article, 'Operation Western Ghats' (*Imprint*, November '87), was highly informative and interesting.

The eagerness of our government to lead us into the 21st century should not be at the cost of our forest cover and environment. Most of the urban areas have been reduced to gas chambers. Domestic fires and automobiles

constantly throw up tonnes of noxious smoke. The indiscriminate use of pesticides and fertilisers have poisoned the food we eat; industrial pollution, too, has been on the rise.

Meanwhile, the Pollution Control Boards continue to issue licences allowing for the setting up of industries in populated areas. It is evident that these Boards do not play the role they ought to.

It is high time the Government introduces stricter measures of pollution control, implements measures drawn up so far, and introduces more stringent punishment for those flouting the rules.

*Panna Lal Mundhra
Calcutta*

Educating the Masses

The article on public service advertising (*Imprint*, November '87) was thought-provoking and relevant to our times.

The media can play an important role in inculcating moral values, especially when the majority are illiterate and do not have access to information. Rich companies and individuals must come forward, along with advertising agencies, to educate the masses.

*Rajeeva Ranjan
Madras*

Will They be Punished?

The Sreedevi Commission has undoubtedly come up with very damning evidence against the policemen who ran riot in Thankamani and caused much wilful damage and committed terrible atrocities (*Imprint*, January). But will the Kerala government now act? Or will the report gather dust as so many others have done? The so-called law enforcers who unleashed the terror campaign on innocent villagers deserve to be strongly punished, not just suspended from the force.

*Anita Kumar
Delhi*

THE WORLD IS



The mighty Hinduja clan.

Their names have been linked with renowned international political leaders. And with those in the top echelons of the corporate world. Their tentacles have spread across three continents and their marketplace is vast. Their dealings are diverse and include investment banking, international trading and marketing, international finance, various commercial undertakings, hi-tech ventures, oil companies, and, allegedly, arms.

They are the Hindujas.

Their wealth, the particulars of which remain shrouded in mystery, is legendary and has ensured them the position of being the richest NRIs. Their clout and prestige are also tremendous. Abroad and at home. Their economic forays into India, with the acquisition of a 39.9 per cent overseas shareholding in Ashok Leyland in late 1987, earned them a foothold in the Indian marketplace. And the recent wedding ceremony in December 1987 of Srichand Hinduja's daughter – celebrated with unbridled pomp and splendour at their Bombay residence – earned them international media attention.

But it was with their largesse to their motherland, in the form of a modern and well-equipped hospital, educational institutions, and scholarship schemes – all 'born of the philosophy of the Hinduja Foundation' – that they introduced their presence. Not as slick businessmen, but as philanthropists, eager to serve their country.

THEIR BAZAAR

However, their name has also been linked with illegal dealings. Although exonerated by Bofors in Sweden from loud and persistent allegations of being middlemen in the Rs 1,500 crore Bofors gun deal, a question mark looms large over their possible intervention in the Rs 425 crore HDW West German submarine deal. The name of the recipient of the Rs 30 crore kickbacks has been made known – is it that of the Hinduja?

Questions have dogged the Hinduja – both their dealings and the source of their wealth – consistently. Where does their money come from? What makes them the richest NRIs? What financial and political clout do they really wield? Who are the mysterious Hinduja?

In this penetrating article, PRANAY GUPTA, contributing editor of the prestigious American monthly, *Forbes*, invades their shadowy world – a world replete with deals in high places, meetings with international luminaries, and lavish lifestyles. And despite the considerable efforts to impede publication of this article in *Forbes*, Gupta succeeds in lifting the mantle of secrecy that has been thrown over the corporate giants.

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IN THE SEEDY BAZAARS of Tehran, there is an old Persian saying that translates something like this: "Create an aura of mystery around you, and you will forever enjoy power and prosperity."

Leaning forward in his chair over a vegetarian lunch at his Trump Tower apartment, a sound-deadening 53 storeys above the noisy Manhattan streets, Srichand Hinduja is practising what the adage preaches. He is lecturing a reporter about his and his family's high ethical standards while carefully avoiding specific answers to specific questions. Behind him, through the floor-to-ceiling windows, Fifth Avenue is visible. The apartment, which cost (US) \$3.3 million (Rs 4.455 crore) when the Hinduja brothers bought it four years ago, is furnished garishly and expensively. On a living-room shelf sits an elaborately framed photo of the late Shah of Iran. Other photos surround it – George Bush, Margaret Thatcher, Edward Heath, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, Mother Teresa. Hinduja is in each picture. Everything is calcula-

ted to impress, to overwhelm. What a great man this must be. What wealth and power he must possess. Srichand Hinduja, 52, is one of four brothers, the others being Gopichand, Prakash and Ashok. While nobody knows much about all their businesses, an aura of mystery, power and money has followed them from Bombay to

Tehran to London to Geneva and now to New York and Washington.

The brothers emerge from a dim background. They made a fortune in Iran under the Shah, and although devout Hindus – and thus "infidels" – they are still doing business in Iran with the Ayatollah's thugs. The family supposedly sells Iran harmless com-



Hinduja House, Bombay.

COVER STORY

modities such as fertilisers and edible oils. But court records in New York reveal that the Hinduja have acted as middlemen for supplying US spare parts for the Ayatollah's languishing air force from US-based suppliers, in apparent defiance of an American embargo.

The fact is that much of the Hinduja empire is invisible. A company that they own in partnership with Arab money, Gulf Oil Trading Co, (Gotco), deals in crude oil and refined petroleum products, lubricants and chemicals (it also owns the rights to use the Gulf Oil logo outside the US and UK) — but this is one of the few familiar names in their portfolio. One thing seems clear about the Hinduja: their known and admitted businesses could hardly support such a style of living and scale of influence-buying. Only the tip of the iceberg is visible; the Hinduja show only what they want to show. They do not admit to things like Iranian arms deals.

LIKE THE ROTHSCHILDS of old, the Hinduja have sent different brothers to different financial centres, where each works and entertains in breathtaking luxury. Unlike the Rothschilds, however the Hinduja shroud their centre of operations in extreme secrecy. They have numerous residences, and have registered their companies in many countries, including such tax havens as the Bahamas, Panama, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Singapore and Luxembourg.

Srichand Hinduja is the power of the family. Gopichand Hinduja, 47, runs Gotco, has the main Tehran contacts and still travels there frequently. Prakash, 42, lives in Geneva and looks after the Hinduja's investment firm, Amas, S A. Ashok, 38, lives at Juhu Beach, Bombay, and deals with the film world there from his palatial estate.

Now the Trump Tower is filled with high-living foreigners, and international deal-makers are no longer a novelty. But the Hinduja are notable on two scores: the scale of their spending and the miasma surrounding how



The Hinduja wedding: celebrated with unbridled pomp and splendour.

they make their money.

If the family is today well-connected, the brothers were scarcely born well-connected: Srichand's birthplace was the dusty town of Shikarpur, in what is today Pakistan's Sind province; Gopichand was born in Calcutta; and Prakash and Ashok in Bombay. None of them reportedly made it past high school. They speak English poorly and read it painfully. Fifteen years ago they were modestly wealthy but almost unknown even in their native India. Today all four move about in chauffeur-driven Rolls-Royce sedans and fly in private jets. Hinduja wives and daughters, dripping diamonds, move about in smart society and ski in Switzerland's more expensive resorts. When in public view, they make a show of spending money as if it meant nothing to them. This month, thousands of people were invited for the wedding of Srichand's daughter, Shanu, in Bombay; hundreds were brought in at the Hinduja's cost from many corners of India and the world for the week-long celebrations.

But this is not *Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous*, and the Hinduja are not all play. Far from it. They are all business. Their lavishness has a purpose — to create and nurture a

mystique, to expand their contacts, prestige and influence.

THEIR CHOICE OF BUSINESS associates is similarly motivated. Their attorney and a principal advisor on the US is Theodore Sorensen. This old-time Kennedy Liberal makes no secret of his expectations of high office in any future Democratic administration. Among other things, he eases the way into Liberal and Democratic circles for the Hinduja. Sorensen has confided to at least one acquaintance that he is a bit uncomfortable representing the brothers. He has also said that he would like to know more about them. But money is money. Sorensen is a partner in the New York law firm Paul Weiss Rifkind Wharton & Garrison, which reportedly earned (US)\$700,000 (Rs 94.5 lakh) in fees last year from the Hinduja. He declined to talk about his fees and services.

John Lawrence is one of the highest priests of the Boston Brahmin establishment. He has become deeply involved with the Hinduja. Self-assured, silver-haired, the 78-year old Lawrence was a leading Boston businessman, whose family put Massachusetts on the world textile map. He has been president of the Hinduja Foundation,



S P Hinduja with S P Jain, Edward Heath and Rafiq Zakaria.

USA, since early 1985 and, until this past May, was also president of the Harvard-affiliated Massachusetts General Hospital. As head of the Hinduja Foundation, which shares a plush suite of Manhattan offices with two Hinduja companies, Amas Securities and Hinduja Brothers Inc, Lawrence handled the brothers' donation of a (US)\$2 million (Rs 2.7 crore) endowment (domiciled in Switzerland and managed out of London) to encourage medical and public-health research at Harvard and Massachusetts General, with the intent of developing public-health programmes in India. Lawrence introduced the Hinduja family to Harvard President Derek Bok. Lawrence insists he does not get involved in the Hinduja's business dealings or in making connections for them: "I've stayed out of that," he says. "Ted Sorensen does that kind of thing for them."

THE FAMILY LIKES TO MIX with prominent personalities: Edward Heath, member of the British Parliament and ex-Prime Minister, is involved in helping the family set up a charitable foundation; Richard Helms, former Director of the CIA, and reportedly a consultant to the Hinduja family, will not say how he helped them; William P Clark, a close friend

of President Reagan's and former head of the National Security Council, acknowledges that he was compensated by the Hinduja family for performing unspecified services; Charles A Percy, ex-senator from Illinois and former chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, visited the brothers in India; Hugh Carless, a former British ambassador to Venezuela, with reported close links to UK intelligence officials, does work for the brothers in London; A P Venkateswaran, a former Indian foreign secretary, is President of the Hinduja's foundation in India; Air Marshal O P Mehra, former Chief of Staff of the Indian Air Force, heads the brothers' Sportsmen's Welfare Fund in India; Khodadad Farmanfarmaian, former Governor of the Central Bank of Iran, now serves as the

ON THE DEFENSIVE

Profiling The Hinduja's Irate Reactions.

PRANAY GUPTA'S EXPOSE of the shadowy world of the Hinduja family, and which was preceded by months of intensive research and investigations in the US, Western Europe and India, was confronted with obstacles even before it was published. The Hinduja family reportedly took unprecedented measures to prevent the author from publishing the article. An editor of *Forbes* told a *Sunday Observer* correspondent, "We have never before received such pressures over an article." And added that prominent Indian politicians and businessmen, amongst them Rajya Sabha member Satish Sharma, Bombay Lok Sabha MP and BRCC President Murli Deora, and Air India's Managing Director, Rajan Jetley, had also made representations on behalf of the Hinduja family to talk Gupta out of proceeding. So had Edward Heath, ex-Tory Prime Minister of Great Britain.

The brief report in the *Sunday Observer* in late December elicited an instant rejoinder from S P Hinduja in which he categorically rejected allega-

tions made in Gupta's article and reproduced his rejoinder to *Forbes*, in which he said: "It is most unfortunate that our family's traditional preference for privacy concerning our business and personal affairs apparently incurred your reporter's suspicion and that he has seen fit to suggest that we may have betrayed our cultural heritage by engaging in illegal activities. We firmly reject all such suggestions, and we deeply resent their publication. . ."

For *Sunday Observer* readers he reiterated this and put forward a defence of company policy and strategy: "Dealing in the highly competitive environment of international trade, we have chosen, both as a business strategy and as our family style, to adopt a somewhat low profile. This is not unusual, and many business families all over the world and even in India practise this. To interpret this as an attempt to cover up anything or to define us, therefore, as a mysterious family is hardly in the high tradition of journalism."

COVER STORY

Hindujas' chief financial advisor in London.

Associate with the powerful and people will think you are powerful. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher of Britain was a prominent guest last year at the Hindujas' annual bash in London. Reputedly, the brothers gave £25,000 (Rs 5.75 lakh) to the Tories. In Washington, Representative Jim Wright (D-Tex), the ambitious Speaker of the House, was a guest at a Hinduja party.

The Hindujas' philanthropic interests are, to say the least, catholic. In addition to the Harvard medical foundation, the family has given money to the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, the ubiquitous Hare Krishna people. A nice balance, that.

WHO PAYS FOR THE PARTIES, the socialising, the lavish living? Beyond the sanctimony, the brothers are stubbornly reticent when it comes to talking about their business interests. In Sweden and India, however, where the brothers are better known than



S P Hinduja with Jim Wright.

in the US, newspaper and magazine articles have speculated that the Hindujas deal in arms as shadowy middlemen — something that the Hindujas have vehemently denied. Indian journals have suggested that the Hindujas were middlemen in a (US) \$400 million (Rs 540 crore) deal in which India bought submarines from West Germany. And in April, Sweden's largest-circulation newspaper, *Dagens Nyheter*, reported that the Hindujas were paid commissions by Nobel Industries. Executives of a

Nobel subsidiary, A B Bofors, have been indicted in Sweden on charges of making illegal weapons sales to the Middle East (*Forbes*, Oct 19). The Hindujas apparently represented Bofors and Nobel in Iran during the 1970s, when the Shah embarked on his great development and arms acquisition programme. Lately Bofors has admitted that it paid (US)\$45 million (Rs 60.75 crore) to three companies in connection with India's recent (US)\$1.3 billion (Rs 1,755 crore) order for 155mm Howitzers. It has not named the Hindujas or anyone else publicly. In India, as well as in the Middle East, commissions are often another name for *baksheesh* — bribes.

Martin Ardbo, a former Managing Director of Bofors, confirmed to *Forbes* that he had dealings with the Hindujas in Iran during the Shah's time. Other businessmen spoke to *Forbes* about the Hindujas' interest in weapons transactions in Nigeria and elsewhere. With so much smoke, can there not be fire?

THE HINDUJAS DENY the commission charges and have threatened to sue *Dagens Nyheter*. But the joint authors of the article, Bo G Andersson and Bjarne Stenquist, told *Forbes* that they stood by their story and that there would be no retraction. Despite the Hindujas' threat, there has been no lawsuit so far. It is possible, of course, that the Hindujas may have nothing to sue about.

Forbes has learned that a Hinduja associate approached at least one private individual in the US for high-level introductions in a turbulent Asian country, where an unnamed client wanted to peddle arms.

Their approach to deal-making is not always indirect. The Hindujas continue to operate openly in Iran: Alcari, S A, Panama-registered Metalco and Ashok Trading, situated in Tehran, are among the companies the brothers use to sell fertilisers, lead, zinc, sugar and other commodities to the Ayatollah. While tens of thousands of the Shah's supporters have



The glitterati throngs the Hinduja wedding at their Bombay residence.

been murdered by Khomeini's people, and many times that number have fled, the Hinduja's apparently were not punished for dealing with the Shah.

Despite occasional media criticism of them abroad, little bad publicity has so far followed the Hinduja's to the US. Brother Gopichand granted an interview to the *New York Times* in October 1986. He must have found the resulting article most pleasing. It ignored the whiff of scandal that has followed the Hinduja's from India and thence to Europe. The article stated that the Hinduja's had given away (US)\$100 million (Rs 135 crore) to charities. Where did the money come from for this largesse? A Hinduja family representative was cited by the *Times* as claiming that companies owned by the brothers had annual revenues of (US)\$11 billion (Rs 14,850 crore).

WHAT ARE THE FACTS? A few things are known about the family. Their father, Parmanand Hinduja, now deceased, left his native Sind in

what later became Pakistan, in 1915 to become a money-lender in Bombay and subsequently an importer of dried fruits from Iran and an exporter of jute, textiles, sugar and tea to Iran. Thus began the family's Iranian connection, which flourished first under the Shah and now flourishes under the fundamentalist dictatorship there.

The brothers have told friends that when their father died, in 1971, he left his four sons a total of (US)\$1 million (Rs 1.35 crore) plus land in Ahwaz, Iran, valued subsequently at (US)\$3 million (Rs 4.05 crore). That does not add up to big money by international standards. Yet *Forbes'* research suggests that the family is worth perhaps half-a-billion dollars and possibly more. That is pretty good appreciation on a base of (US)\$4 million (Rs 5.4 crore) just 15 years ago.

Following up on father Parmanand's dealings in Iran, the brothers dubbed Hindi movies into Persian and exported them to Iran. Indian movies are big in the Middle East

and just a single hit, *Sangam* ran in 100 theatres in 27 Iranian cities. The Hinduja's subsequently named their most visible company after that movie. The brothers reportedly paid the equivalent of (US)\$6,000 (Rs 81,000) for the Iranian rights and netted perhaps millions from them.

Owning overseas rights of movies and videos, of course, is a well-known way of getting around exchange controls. What are the foreign rights to a given film worth? Not necessarily what they bring in at the box-office, but any amount the seller sells the rights for. For example, if a film is produced in Italy, the box-office proceeds from, say, Japan need not end up in Italy. If an Indian film grosses well in Egypt, all the Indian government need know is how much the producer says he got from the Egyptian showings or rights. A good part of the money could, in fact, end up in Switzerland or New York.

HOW DID THE HINDUJA FAMILY get involved with movies? As money-

THE HINDUJAS' CONCERNS

Profiling The Patriotic Philanthropists.

THEY MADE THEIR FIRST appearance in India as the philanthropic donors of charity, eager to be seen not as tycoons but as ready and willing "to serve the people of India". The Hinduja Foundation was registered in 1969 and its President, ex-Foreign Secretary A P Venkateswaran, boasts that its activities "have left few areas untouched".

It was with great fanfare that the P D Hinduja National Hospital and Medical Research Centre — the newest and largest hospital run by the Hinduja Foundation — was inaugurated. With the opening of this hospital, the Hinduja Foundation reported that it had "reached the pinnacle of its philanthropic activities". It is undoubtedly the most modern medical centre in Bombay and boasts not just the very latest in medical equipment



but also a pioneering new approach to health care. The catalogue of technological infrastructure and the various other available facilities does not fail to impress.

Since its inception in 1944, the Hinduja Trust has also concerned itself with education. The Hinduja College of Commerce was established in 1974; in the following year, the P D Hinduja Modern Senior Secondary School opened in Madras. In addition, the Hinduja Pratap Rudra Planetarium at Warangal, Andhra Pradesh, and the Hinduja Auditorium at Bombay, have been established to encourage the growth of scientific and cultural activities. The Foundation also offers different scholarship schemes in India and abroad. And contributes to relief funds, encourages sports, presents awards. . . the list goes on.

COVER STORY

lenders. The going rate for lending money to Indian movie-makers is close to 50 per cent a year — 4 per cent a month. Sometimes foreign and subsidiary rights are thrown in as a sweetener. At any rate, the Hinduja exported lots of Indian films to Iran and the Middle East. They continue prominently as money-lenders to Bombay movie-makers.

Beyond movies and small-scale trading, Parmanand Hinduja's four sons broke into the international big time about 15 years ago. The late Indira Gandhi, then India's Prime Minister, complained to the Shah of Iran that India could not afford to pay for Iranian oil after the steep price rises following the Yom Kippur War of 1973. "Madam, then sell us more of India's goods and services," the Shah told her at a private meeting, according to a participant. According to Iranian and Indian sources, India's annual exports to Iran rose from roughly (US) \$50 million (Rs 67.5 crore) in 1974 to several times more by 1978. The Hinduja, as Indian nationals with extensive contacts in Iran, were in the middle of it all.

Doing what? In the biggest single deal, they pushed through a (US) \$630 million (Rs 850.5 crore) iron-ore project, called Kudremukh, receiving perhaps as much as (US) \$10.5 million (Rs 14.175 crore) in "commissions". Although the brothers have denied getting anything out of this deal, there is evidence that the Indian government paid the money into a Swiss bank account for commissions. While no evidence has surfaced linking the Hinduja to payments, speculation persists.

The brothers, operating under the shingles of two main companies — Sangam and Ashok Trading — also represented a variety of Western and other firms eager to cash in on the Shah's development boom. Among the Hinduja's clients were said to be Daimler-Benz and Magierus of West Germany, Nitro-Nobel of Sweden (now of Norway), Lockheed Corp, Tata Computers of India, Mitsui,



The Shah: a lucrative connection.

Japan Air Lines and Pan American Airways.

AFTER THE SHAH FELL and after his moderate successors lost office, Khomeini's ayatollahs were only too glad to use a wide-ranging network like that of the Hinduja. The ayatollahs, as much as Pahlavi royal relatives, were greedy for greenbacks. And Iran, whose name stinks of blood, lawlessness and fanaticism in the international community, needed arms.

That the Hinduja influence had not faded with the Shah's overthrow was clear in 1980-81, when Pan Am had problems repatriating its Iranian funds. The airline's executives contacted the Hinduja. An approach was reportedly made to Hojatollah Rafsanjani, the powerful Speaker of the Majlis, the Iranian Parliament — the same Rafsanjani who was later to play a key role in sabotaging, as well as possibly in setting up, the Reagan Administration's Iran-arms-for-contra-money deal. Pan Am got its funds, and the Hinduja can have free seats in first class.

Thus, step by step, the family fortune grew as the brothers deftly crossed and re-crossed the fine line that

divides business and politics. In a world where national boundaries are increasingly porous and where money is no longer something physical but mere blips on a computer screen, where a can or cassette of movie film may be more valuable than a tanker of oil, in such a world people like the Hinduja know how to operate. They deal, not only in metals or money, not only in commodities or credit, but also in influence and in the ability to shelter money from national taxations.

As a result of its investigations in the US, Britain, Sweden, Switzerland, India and France, *Forbes* was able to identify 24 companies owned by or associated with the Hinduja. But the real number may be as high as 100 — mostly companies registered in such tax havens as Panama, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Antilles, the Bahamas, Bermuda and Singapore. Perhaps the only man besides the brothers who knows just how many companies the Hinduja own is a Zurich lawyer named Reiner Rippmann. He has been a member of the boards of a couple of their companies (Amas, S A, for example), and reputedly buys dummy firms at their behest. Rippmann did not return calls from *Forbes*.

ARMS, AYATOLLAHS, a shadowy global network of companies. Suspicions of arms dealing. Foreign movie rights. Buying and entertaining their way into influential circles. The Hinduja flaunt their wealth but conceal its flow. *Forbes* found that the brothers' flagship company, Sangam Ltd, reported to the UK Registrar of Companies in its last available report — dated 1983 — that annual sales for that year were £304,589 (Rs 70.06 lakh) and that the company's net assets were barely £57,200 (Rs 7.72 lakh). Does one hire Ted Sorensen with that kind of money or buy multimillion-dollar apartments in Manhattan and London, seaside villas in Cannes and Bombay?

In the sketchy way they are willing to discuss their businesses publi-

cly, the Hinduja say they make money selling metals and fertilisers to the Ayatollah's regime through their Geneva-based company Alcari, S A, and through their Panama-registered outfit Metalco. But a knowledgeable metals dealer told *Forbes* that, even taking into account the fact that Iran is forced to pay up to 15 per cent premiums on its purchases, the Hinduja's metals sales could hardly exceed (US) \$2 million (Rs 2.7 crore) annually. Fertilisers? A high official of Nobel Chemicals Ltd in London (associated with Sweden's Nobel Industries), who once dealt with the Hinduja in Iran, says that any claim by the brothers to be big in selling fertilisers would be "ridiculous". Much of the global fertiliser market is dominated by five or six major Western manufacturers (such as West Germany's BASF), he pointed out.

By all accounts Indira Gandhi, a cultivated but calculating woman, disliked the brothers for their style



Mrs Gandhi: suspicious of their motives.

and was suspicious of their motives but nevertheless found them useful in dealing with Iran. She used them to

help keep Islamic Iran neutral in 1971 when India went to war with Islamic Pakistan. Rajiv Gandhi, her successor, shared his mother's reservations about the Hinduja. Now he reportedly finds them equally useful and somewhat more acceptable. Perhaps emboldened by such political blessings, the Hinduja have made a sharp departure from their traditional trading and finance activities into manufacturing. In late October, in partnership with a Fiat subsidiary, Iveco, they bought into the highly-prized Indian truck manufacturing subsidiary of British Leyland. The Hinduja acquired 39.9 per cent of Ashok Leyland, which gives them control of the company (see box).

This is age-old bazaar economics adapted to the jet-and-computer age.

TRYING TO TRACE THEIR deals is frustrating and usually in vain. The deals are designed to be untraceable. The Hinduja also have their way of

AN ECONOMIC FOOTHOLD

Imprint Profiles The Ashok Leyland Deal.

IT WAS WITH THE ACQUISITION of a 39.9 per cent overseas shareholding of Ashok Leyland that the Hinduja announced their corporate presence in India. The coup that they effected, despite stiff competition, came after months of seeking an economic foothold on Indian terrain.

When the Rover group, a public limited company in Britain, confirmed that it was keen to sell its subsidiary, Land Rover-Leyland International Holdings Ltd (LRLI), there were strong contenders including Bajaj Auto Ltd, the Chhabrias, and the Hinduja. Bids were invited in the summer of 1987, and Hill Samuel plc, merchant bankers to the Rover conglomerate, were engaged to assess and process the bids.

When the first round of the bidding began, the Hinduja reportedly offered £30 million; Bajaj Auto Ltd

bid £25 million and Manu Chhabria £20 million. In the second round of the bidding, the Chhabrias upped their figure by £5 million, and were thus on par with Bajaj Auto, who were conducting their bid through the US-based investment company, Merrill Lynch. This alliance was designed to perform a service of mutual benefit — the US company would put up the foreign exchange, and the reputed Bajaj company would manage the company and gradually acquire an equity stake.

The competition was stiff and each contender had strong points in his favour. But the Hinduja won. Gopichand Hinduja told *Business India*, "Our offer was the most practical one. The price was not very important as is evident from the fact that our final bid was £1.5 million lower than the bid made by Merrill

Lynch and Bajaj. To start with, we did not impose any stiff conditions on the Rover group while making the bid, which I understand was the case with our nearest competitor. Moreover, our collaboration with IVECO (a 100-per cent subsidiary of Fiat, Italy, and a manufacturer of heavy trucks and buses) ensured a technological back-up."

The final purchase price paid to the Rover group remains unknown. In any case, the Hinduja had proved their supremacy. And with it, had got themselves a bargain and a substantial share in one of India's two major heavy vehicles manufacturers (the other being Telco). Ashok Leyland reported a recent upturn in profits, and under the proprietorship of the mighty Hinduja, who command vast resources, there is bound to be an upward swing.



S P Hinduja and G P Hinduja with the Duke of Edinburgh.

soliciting silence: virtually everyone associated with them seems to be inexplicably dumbstruck. For example, *Forbes* contacted a Plainview, N Y, businessman named Parviz Lavi, who is being sued by Alcari, S A, in a US Federal Court in Brooklyn, N Y. The suit alleges that Lavi was to have supplied 20,000 fuses — worth (US)\$11.2 million (Rs 15.12 crore) — for jets to the Ayatollah's air force in 1981 but did not deliver as agreed on the deal, causing the Iranian air force to confiscate a Hinduja deposit. Lavi is countersuing the Hindujas.

On first contact, Lavi spoke excitedly of having got hold of documents linking the Hindujas to arms deals in Iran. "I have enough evidence to blow them away," said Lavi, an Iranian émigré, adding that he wanted to consult with associates before showing the "evidence" to *Forbes*. But he never got back to us and has not returned repeated calls. Court documents associate the Hindujas with General Hassan Toufanian, the Shah's top weapons buyer. Say this for the Hindujas: they are relentlessly apolitical.

Various reports have linked the family with Princess Ashraf, the Shah's notorious twin sister. It has been widely reported that she and the Hindujas were partners in many deals, including arms buying. Ashraf,

whose commercial adventures were well-known in the Shah's time, has complained privately that the Hindujas owe her money — possibly as much as (US) \$5 million (Rs 6.5 crore). Princess Ashraf agreed to meet with *Forbes* to talk about her dealings with the Hindujas. The meeting was to have taken place at one of the Pahlevi family's homes, at 32, rue Paul Valéry in Paris. However, it was her daughter, Princess Azadeh Chefik, who turned up for the meeting. She denied that her mother ever had anything to do with the Hindujas. She further denied that Princess Ashraf had gone to India with the brothers in 1977-78 (although that visit received considerable media attention).

Later an associate of Ashraf told *Forbes* that the 69-year old princess felt the Hindujas were not "beyond blackmail". At any rate, the princess had somehow changed her mind about talking with this magazine and denied through her daughter that she knew the family.

THUS, BEHIND THE GLITTER and the hobnobbing with famous people lies a tale of sharp dealing. Here is one example: India's prestigious Tata Group invited Hinduja investment in its London, New York and Washington hotels. The Hindujas came in with (US) \$17.5 million (Rs 23.625

crore). Then they demanded a seat not only on the board of the Tata subsidiary that ran the hotels but also on the board of the parent company in India. The Hindujas also began accusing Tata executives of incompetence. Participants at board meetings say that Srichand Hinduja frequently spiced his accusations with four-letter words. Finally, the Tatas had had enough. They bought out the Hindujas for a reported (US) \$25 million (Rs 33.75 crore). From the Hindujas' point of view, the termination arrangement was just great: they made perhaps (US) \$7.5 million (Rs 10.10 crore) in less than two years, plus such goodies as free rooms in Tata hotels.

There is also a tale of meanness — the bazaar mentality breaking through the jet-set aura. A couple of years ago the Hindujas threw a large dinner-party at their Trump Tower apartment, catered by the Raga Restaurant, owned by India's Tata Group. The bill came to (US) \$4,782 (Rs 64,557) but the Hindujas refused to pay it. Why? Well, they said, the Raga serving staff damaged an expensive dinner-table in the apartment. The management immediately paid (US) \$1,200 (Rs 16,200) to the Hindujas to cover the cost of repairs. To this day the final settlement of the Raga bill is pending. Another example: a London tailor has complained that Srichand Hinduja ordered suits with only the jackets to be made in London. No pants? Srichand Hinduja wanted the material and pattern for the trousers sent to Bombay, where they could be stitched at less-expensive Indian labour rates.

PEOPLE LIKE THE HINDUJAS go on the assumption that everyone is for sale. But they are learning that there are limits. Says one former Hinduja executive: "Everyone comes to a certain point when you ask questions for which there are no answers. I left the Hindujas because the cover-ups were obvious." Another executive left the Hindujas after learning that they were being investigated by

PENNY-PINCHERS!

STORIES OF THE ABSURD lengths that the Hinduja — whose corporate value is reputedly US \$1 billion — go to in order to conserve a few pennies, abound. But a recent and hitherto unpublicised incident reveals not just their surprising niggardliness but also their ungentelemanly behaviour when it comes to honouring agreements. The fact that the incident in question involved the prestigious and internationally known house of Christies, renders it even more surprising, and shameful.

The story runs thus. Geneva-based Prakash Hinduja, informed Christies that he would be bidding on an open-line telephone for a certain piece of jewellery. Mr Hinduja made a successful bid, and the piece of jewellery that had caught the tycoon's eye was thus 'sold' to him. But the magnate refused to pay up. The same piece of jewellery was later sold by the auctioneers for almost the same price — US\$500,000 — to another buyer.

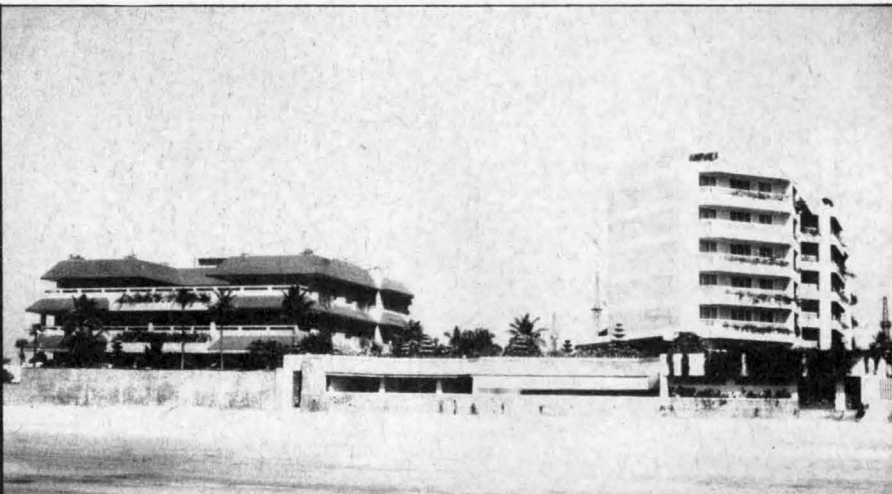
This incident has set a dubious precedent — it is apparently the first time in Christie's history that such an event has occurred. Needless to add, the auctioneers have blacklisted the Hinduja.

—Imprint

French, Swedish and West German intelligence agencies.

Some U S banks have evidently caught a whiff. Bank of America in 1984 asked the Hinduja to withdraw a (US) \$40 million (Rs 54 crore) deposit. Citibank, to this day, holds them at arm's length. Small wonder, then, that the Hinduja bank with minor institutions, like the Luxembourg-based Bank of Credit & Commerce International. The shadowy outfit formed with Middle East money was used by Alcar in connection with the Iran military spare parts deal.

Yes, the family did talk briefly with *Forbes*. But requests for a follow-up interview met obstacles. Pressed for information, Srichand Hinduja said he objected to the kinds of



The sprawling Hinduja residence in Bombay.

queries *Forbes* had been making and brought up the question of legal action if we pursued the story. Why should such self-styled ethical people object if a reporter asks tough questions?

Shortly after Hinduja spoke with *Forbes*, the family's spokesman, Ted Sorensen, telephoned and said that his client was "highly agitated". He then offered his assistance in clearing up "any misunderstanding". But no interview ensued. Clearly, the brothers did not want anyone writing about anything but their philanthropy and high moral standards.

The fact is that the brothers have made smoke-screening into a science — even while mixing ostentatiously in social and political circles. They belong to the traditionally secretive Sindhi community, where the byword is: trust only fellow Sindhis, and then sparingly. The brothers communicate with one another in coded telexes, or they discuss their business during walks in London parks. In his letters to associates or friends, Srichand Hinduja's stationery for a long time would not even bear a permanent address: he would simply write, "Camp London". That is very Hinduja: no place is home; every place is a stop *en route* to somewhere else.

WITH THE MEDIA their first step is

to co-opt the threat. Vir Sanghvi is editor of the prestigious Calcutta-based weekly *Sunday*. Earlier this year, when Gopichand Hinduja suspected that an article Sanghvi was writing would be critical, Hinduja said: "Our families have known each other for so many years. Why spoil this relationship with one article?" Sanghvi published his article anyway last May, and since then the Hinduja brothers have bad-mouthed him. Not so long ago another journalist came to an interview and was reportedly handed an envelope full of British currency. He refused the money and stalked out.

What are the brothers up to in the US? Why are they spending so heavily to get Ted Sorensen, lavishing gifts on Harvard, spreading largesse among Washington influentials? They would, of course, like Americans to think they are about to make major investments here. But the open American business scene, with its prying journalists and easy access to information, would probably not be congenial to them. A more logical explanation is that they want to build prestige here and in the UK in order to enhance their ability to move money in Asia.

At any rate, those who sup with the Hinduja — whether in New York, London, Geneva, Paris or Bombay — might well be advised to use a long spoon. ♦

The Inheritors

Marudur Gopalan Ramachandran, Tamil Nadu's charismatic Chief Minister for the past decade and a legend in his lifetime, has today left his state both orphaned and rudderless. As the war of succession continues, with wife Janaki holding a temporary edge over MGR's heroine and the AIADMK's Propaganda Secretary Jayalalitha, others in the state gear up for battle. Notable among those eager to don the MGR mantle is the DMK's M Karunanidhi, who has so far, maintained a low profile. INDRANI SRIKRISHNA profiles the MGR phenomenon and possible inheritors of the 'puratchi thalaivar's' legacy.

AN ERA RULED BY incredible charisma ended on December 24, 1987, when the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Marudur Gopalan Ramachandran, died in his sleep after putting up a brave fight against age and an illness that had plagued him for three years. Only the frail, diseased remains of the 70-year old former film star, preserved with great respect by his faithful followers inside a beautiful sandalwood casket, were lowered into the Marina Beach Memorial on December 25. It mattered little that sandalwood degenerates much faster than either teak or rosewood — clearly, the memory of the man who was an incomparable phenomenon during his lifetime would linger on for generations to come in Tamil homes the world over.

Those trying to claim succession to his All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) have already fallen on hard times. However, the battle for power could not dampen the shared enthusiasm to preserve the founder's image for the millions of admirers who either thronged the arterial Anna Road or the Marina Beach to catch a last glimpse of their departed hero, or just stayed glued to their TV sets. R M Veerappan, old-

time cinema associate and a prominent minister in the AIADMK government, ensured that the famous fur cap was set on the bald head just like his leader had always done when alive and addressing his public; the corpse was even wearing the dark glasses which, for several years, had become synonymous with the man's image and identity.

MGR, as he was popularly known, had several titles conferred upon him by passionate fans — most of whom were sycophants rather than genuine adorers of the histrionic or other abilities of the hero-turned-politician. But when someone declared that here was a *Charitra Nayakan* (an eternal hero in the history of mankind), he had indeed used a fitting epithet, for who else in modern Tamil history commanded the degree of attention and adulation that MGR consistently received over so many years.

DURING THE STAR-POLITICIAN'S decade-long rule, nothing in his kingdom moved without his assent; so powerful was his grip over the electorate that even the massive, committed, cadre-based parent party, the DMK, could not provide the wily Muthuvel Karunanidhi with a return



to the *gaddi* at Fort St George. The Congress (I) central government, too, took care not to tread on MGR's toes, and treated him with extreme caution, even bending foreign exchange regulations when his lengthy American trips became necessary for medical purposes. "People simply adored him and that, in turn, gave him the awesome power to dominate his political rivals with such ease that at times we used to wonder what would befall us after his death, and how we would manage after MGR," recalled the AIADMK Rajya Sabha member, Valampuri John.

It was thus a curious paradox that the AIADMK (which MGR had founded way back in 1972 when he was expelled from the DMK by the then Chief Minister, M Karunanidhi), which he had nurtured and developed to its present massive proportions, split within a week of his death. The many mini-power blocs which MGR had controlled during his lifetime, suddenly sprang into action after MGR's death and quickly sought to conquer the kingdom he had ruled. There was no one to keep them in check any more; the race for succes-



By Indrani Srikrishna

ing the AIADMK government, and his former film heroine, Jayalalitha Jayaram, holding on to the party leadership as its general secretary. In the battle between the two heroines — Janaki, too, had co-starred with MGR in some old films before she deserted her husband, Ganpathy Bhat, to live with him (MGR) — the lieutenants of the late leader assumed battle positions against each other and prepared for the long war of succession to the throne.

THERE WAS A TIME, not so long ago, when Janaki merely cooked MGR's meals and administered his medicines. Janaki could not have dreamt that she would someday become the state's chief minister and a claimant to her husband's domain. But that was how fate had propelled the 64-year old housewife to lead a bunch of ambitious and scheming politicians through the most crucial phase of the AIADMK government. In due course, she will have to find ways and means of countering the fierce campaign which Karunanidhi is bound to launch to embarrass her on account of her being a Malayali, and a Brahmin.

When she was keeping house for MGR during their 35-year long association, Janaki's prime concern appeared to be aimed at keeping the hero's attention focussed on her, despite the frequent aberrations in which a galaxy of stars took his fancy. Janaki and MGR had paired in three films before they decided to live together. Political gossip has it that MGR never really married Janaki, although some insist that their wedding took place secretly some ten years ago.

One of the major factors which contributed to the phenomenal success of MGR's films was the fact that all his heroines were very beautiful. His fans always took pride in claiming that their *vadhiar* (boss) always snapped up the best heroines while his rival, Sivaji Ganesan, only picked up what MGR cast away! Saroja Devi, Manjula, and Latha were amongst

those that MGR's name was romantically linked with, but none of these women posed any real threat to Janaki.

IT WAS WHEN A PETITE, convent-educated young woman called Jayalalitha arrived, that MGR's head turned, and Janaki was abandoned. The distraught Janaki sought refuge in the household of MGR's elder brother, M G Chakrapani, who played a significant role in persuading MGR that Janaki not be left in the lurch.

That bitter experience in her vulnerable association with a handsome hero known for his wayward passions, almost shattered the little dreamhouse that Janaki had built around her. Childless during her life with MGR (MGR later adopted as his own, the one son she had with Ganapathy Bhat) she found that there was little to emotionally bind them together. She found Jayalalitha impossible to counter and hated 'the other woman' bitterly, a fact which has been amply manifested in the current political crisis.

But the subservient housewife retaliated. When MGR was afflicted with a host of complicated health problems in late 1984, Janaki took firm control of the household and even prevented Jayalalitha from visiting the sick man's bedside. Spewing fire at the manner in which she had been treated, Jayalalitha threw caution to the winds and declared war on the small coterie surrounding Janaki, which, she claimed, was plotting to destroy her credibility within the party — her mentor had promoted her to assume responsibilities as Propaganda Secretary within a year of joining it. She even went to the extent of publicly questioning the legality of the Janaki-MGR alliance.

ALTHOUGH HE RESTORED to her her former post as Propaganda Secretary, which the Janaki coterie had taken away from her during MGR's illness, the chief minister ensured that she no longer received the kind of pampering that she had in her initial months in the AIADMK. In those

sion was on.

Said Nanchil K Manoharan, a senior DMK leader and former minister in MGR's cabinet: "It is clear that MGR did not want his AIADMK party to survive him. He could not conceive of a situation in which someone else, even from among his own lieutenants, would sit on the seat of power that he had occupied. That was why he did not name his successor within the party although he nominated Bhagyaraj (a popular Tamil film hero) his *varisu* (successor) in the film world. MGR liked to think that after him there would be chaos. And that is why the AIADMK split so soon after his death — I think MGR wanted it that way."

Most political analysts share Manoharan's opinion but there are a few like Valampuri John who believe that MGR was such a democrat that he did not want to impose a successor on his partymen: "He wanted us to select a new leader from amongst ourselves after his death."

Whatever the real reasons behind MGR's actions, the fact remains that his party has split vertically, with his wife, Vaikkom Narayani Janaki, head-



V N Janaki flanked by R M Veerappan (left) and K A Krishnaswami (right).

days, the entire state machinery had been at her beck and call; senior police officers willingly took orders from her to please MGR. She was termed an extra-constitutional authority in Tamil Nadu, a kind of *de facto* chief of MGR's party and government. If, in the process, she incurred the wrath of senior party colleagues, Jayalalitha did not seem to mind; the boss was on her side and others did not matter. A strong faction of AIADMK functionaries quietly ganged up against her and waited for their turn to get even. Fully aware of MGR's propensities to impulsively dispense favours, they knew a time would come when Jayalalitha would be abandoned.

During her heyday, Jayalalitha would address public meetings from beautifully decorated platforms and occupy the only available chair — senior party officials were made to stand behind her. MGR even ordered senior party functionaries who accompanied Jayalalitha on campaign tours not to sit on the dais — but not without protest. R M Veerappan and K Kalimuthu threatened revolt if they were not exempted from such treatment, and MGR condescended to let them off from accompanying his heroine on her tours.

The ease with which Jayalalitha made enemies proved to be her undoing because after MGR fell terminally ill in 1984, Jayalalitha found herself vulnerable to criticism within the party, and the power she had once wielded in the State Secretariat diminished rapidly.

R M Veerappan, meanwhile, assumed the role of Janaki's eyes and ears in the corridors of power and the clever Chettiar nursed visions of succession to the MGR throne with the help of Janaki *Ammaiyar* (mother Janaki). He was to be proved wrong. Within days of his leader's death, the widow check-mated his designs, moving swiftly from the shadows of her mourner's veil to take the oath of office as the new chief minister.

FAMILY SOURCES CLAIM THAT Janaki began her meticulous campaign to take charge even before her husband's cortège moved out of the historic Rajaji Hall on December 25. Close MGR aides, such as his security officer, his chauffeur, and a few others impressed upon the lady that unless she moved fast and staked her claim to succession, she might get hounded out of her cosy, comfortable lifestyle and have to leave the luxurious estate of her late husband. Astro-

logers summoned over police wireless encouraged her, saying that the celestial powers favoured her in the power struggle. Shanker Iyer returned to Salem after pronouncing his holy verdict on the most auspicious day and hour that she should take the oath of office.

Rather than challenge this unpredictable turn of events against him, Veerappan chose to play safe and declared support for Janaki. The two factions then began a war in earnest to entice members of the 130-strong AIADMK legislature to their fold; at the time of going to press, the Janaki-Veerappan combine commands the support of 97 MLAs as against Jayalalitha's 33. From MGR's last cabinet, only seven ministers sided with his widow while the rest were in the rival camp.

While Governor S L Khurana cut short the tenure of acting Chief Minister V R Nedunchezhiyan (a Jayalalitha supporter) and invited Janaki to form a government, Jayalalitha got herself elected as the party's General Secretary by a majority of the District Secretaries and even had her appointment ratified at a meeting of the AIADMK General Council. Thus it came to be that while Janaki captured power at Fort St George, her arch-rival and 'the other woman', claimed the leadership of the party.

AN INTENSE HORSE-TRADING took place during the period before January 22, when the Assembly session was summoned to test Janaki's strength on the floor. While Jayalalitha's lieutenant, K K S S R Ramachandran, embarked on a *Bharat darshan* along with the 26 MLAs in his camp, in order to scuttle Veerappan's attempts to wean them over, the Assembly Speaker, P H Pandiyan, made matters hotter for the new party General Secretary by issuing notices under the Anti-Defection Act to seven ex-ministers who supported her. Pandiyan had acted on the basis of a complaint from a pro-Veerappan MLA.

Having proclaimed not so long ago

The Fan Club

WHEN MGR ANNOUNCED the mid-day meal scheme for school children, he recalled how, as a child, he had suffered extreme hunger and had had to quit school because the rumblings of an empty stomach had interfered with his concentration, making him fail his lessons repeatedly. "I saw hunger in all its cruel manifestations. I saw my brother and sister die of poverty and disease. I cannot let that happen to the children of this state anymore," he said emotionally. But then, MGR was a very emotional person, often letting his heart rule his head. There were a number of cases where he went out of his way to alleviate somebody's suffering, providing him or her with not just an immediate hand-out but a regular monthly allowance. Interestingly too, despite his exclusiveness, MGR never ate alone; his lunch boxes were so sumptuous that wife Janaki ensured that at least a dozen people were also fed along with him.

MGR's hold over the Tamil masses was phenomenal — oblivious to his shortcomings, they (his admirers) continually sang his praises. Many believed that he was a messenger of God and would bring happiness to their lives. MGR's long-time associate, journalist Idhayam Manian, recalled an incident while accompanying MGR on a tour of several districts: "The people of a certain village wanted to stop the chief minister's car but the pilot jeep kept trying to scatter them

away. MGR noticed this and stopped the car. Even as the police officers glared at them angrily, the villagers rushed forward to meet MGR. A wrinkled, elderly man among them stepped towards MGR and bowing, begged him to walk a few steps along their parched paddy fields. If he did so, the old man explained, the village would soon be blessed by rains and green crops. Smilingly, MGR obliged. Months later, I happened to pass that village and what I saw shocked me — the entire village was covered under a blanket of green, with fully ripe paddy corn waving in the breeze!"

No MGR meeting was complete without a stream of mothers making it to the fortified dais, somehow, to ask the leader to whisper a name for their children — a name bestowed by MGR was supposed to bring the child similar success or fame.

Ailing for quite some time, MGR, nevertheless, insisted on labouring through a long speech, barely two days before his death. At the unveiling of a bronze statue of Pandit Nehru in Madras, MGR struggled to say a few words. He was, at that time, transparently ill — only a couple of words in his speech could be understood by the audience who had waited patiently for just that faint signal; they cheered him wildly.

This hold over the masses also made it possible for MGR to get away with impulsive behaviour from time to time. For example, there was that

controversial speech at the AIADMK rally at Madurai on July 13, 1986, in which MGR told his followers to carry knives on their persons for self-defence. Obviously the chief minister was reacting to the on-going agitation campaigns of the DMK's leader, Karunanidhi. Two days later, stunned reporters asked him if he really meant what he had said at that meeting. MGR reiterated his stand, saying that there was always the possibility that the police might arrive too late!

Another strange facet of MGR's dominance over his people was the hold he had over the womenfolk, whom he called the *thaikulam* (mothers). While the older ones considered him their son, others wove romantic dreams around their heart-throb hero. Reports abound of women decorating the walls of their bedrooms with lifesize cutouts of their leader. MGR's *thaikulam* knew, of course, that he was far from virtuous in real life — that he womanised and did not hesitate to sabotage the careers of those of his heroines who failed to succumb to his considerable charms. But these unendearing traits were completely forgiven — in fact, he was merely seen as a domineering male who guarded his flock of women zealously. In a state where politicians and film stars openly paraded their concubines, these romantic interludes did little damage to MGR's reputation — if anything, they enhanced it. His image as demi-god continued.

(when he threw ten DMK members out of the Assembly because they burnt the Indian Constitution as part of their party's anti-Hindi agitation) that his actions could not be questioned in any court of law, Pandiyan shrugged off the criticism that ensued from the Jayalalitha camp. Sources close to him even speculated that the mercurial Pandiyan would disqualify not only the seven ex-ministers but

also the rest of the Jayalalitha group from the Assembly.

"We do not want to cling to our positions of power. We are ready to return to our constituencies and work with the people for the next elections," said Panrutti S Ramachandran, a prominent advisor to Jayalalitha and a senior MGR minister.

In her pursuit for control of the party, Jayalalitha also faced a police

lathi-charge outside the party headquarters on January 13 when she insisted on entering the building, along with her supporters, to hold an executive committee meeting. "The people of Tamil Nadu will not tolerate this minority government for much longer," she thundered, even as she was being led to the police van after being arrested. "This government is indulging in repressive methods by

The Legacy

MGR's lieutenants on the aftermath.

V N Janaki: He was very concerned about the people, especially the poor and downtrodden. And they all reciprocated his affection. People have always been very fond of him.

I had never wanted to assume power after him. But when those people who had been close to my husband and who have been well-wishers of the party insisted that I assume office so as to save the party from splitting and the government from falling, I had no other option. I want all those who have been in my husband's party to forget past differences, treat them as if they were bad dreams, and help me in this mission. I do not want anybody to think that I am a leader; I want to be considered the elder sister in the family.

Ms Jayalalitha: MGR was a true nationalist, a complete patriot who placed national interests above everything else. We all know his contribution to the peace agreement in Sri Lanka. His government always co-operated with the Centre in order to avoid a confrontationist course that might damage development in Tamil Nadu. However, within a few days of his death, a small minority group is trying to grab power and the title of succession in the party. We will not permit that. They (the Janaki - Veerappan group) may claim support of the majority MLAs but the party's rank and file are behind me. I am not interested in power and I do not want to seize the reins of government now. If I have the party solidly with me, I can capture the leadership of the government at any time. I will follow the principles and ideals propounded by MGR, in my public life. I have sworn to MGR, on his mother, Sathya's portrait, that I will not leave politics.

R M Veerappan: *Puratchi Thalaivar* (revolutionary leader) MGR has become a significant part of an indelible history. We are confident of con-

tinuing his good work for the people of Tamil Nadu. We will pursue the same ideals and politics as MGR.

Yuva Raj, MGR Fan Association functionary: MGR was a legendary figure in the history of the Tamils and it is just impossible that another person of his ilk will appear for quite some time. The future belongs to Jayalalitha because a majority of the members of the AIADMK youth wing and MGR Fan Association are solidly behind her. She has the requisite talents, intelligence and personality.

Tindivanam K Ramamurthy, Congress (I) Rajya Sabha member: MGR practised double standards right from the beginning. When he left the DMK he made out as if he was thrown out of the party because he questioned Karunanidhi's corruption, but in reality, MGR only wanted to destroy Karunanidhi and to do this, he cleverly camouflaged his own designs behind the charges of corruption. But the very same persons who had at that time been with Karunanidhi and were therefore also implicated by MGR's accusations, managed to find themselves in MGR's camp once they decided to abandon Karunanidhi. His personal charisma helped him to a great extent because the people were prepared to overlook his faults, so pleased were they that their matinee idol was addressing public meetings and campaigning in the countryside.

As for the future of Tamil Nadu politics, I think it will be pure politics from now on and there will not be the same former blend of cinema and politics. Jayalalitha cannot be considered a film-star politician in the same way as MGR was - the latter had left a lucrative profession to enter politics while Jayalalitha had almost retired from the film industry before she made it big in the AIADMK.

Muthuvel Karunanidhi, DMK President: MGR and I were such thick

friends; our friendship dates back to the '40s when together we fought hunger and poverty before making it big in the celluloid world. In 1971, MGR and I split the state into two portions for our party, the DMK's election campaign. We scored a massive victory, capturing 155 out of 234 seats - the leaders in Delhi did not relish this!

M K Eelavendan, General Secretary, Tamil Eelam Liberation Front (TELF): MGR was a very humane person and he displayed a lot of concern for the people of Eelam; he was a source of strength to us. Now we are worried and anxious about what the future holds for us both here in Tamil Nadu and generally in India.

Selvaraasa, a Lankan Tamil refugee: We knew that MGR wielded a lot of influence with the LTTE leader, Pirabhakaran, and so we were hoping that he would be able to convince the militants into stopping the fighting soon. We were also sure that he would talk to Rajiv Gandhi to ensure our protection and our rights. Now we are totally at the mercy of your central government.

Mrs K Bhagvathy, housemaid: MGR has fed my grandchildren; they have also got free books and clothes. I have also applied for the ownership of the piece of government land on which my husband's shed has been sited for the last ten years. I was hoping I would get it soon, but then MGR died. Do you think I will get the land now that the *Dharma Dhata* (compassionate ruler) is no longer alive?

I don't much care for Janaki coming to power; it is not nice to see her wearing a *bindi* and appearing on TV. She does not appear to be in mourning. Why should she pursue power so soon after her husband's death? Whoever assumes power - be it Janaki or Jayalalitha - will they continue to feed my grandchildren?



Jayalalitha being whisked off to jail on January 13, 1988.

having us beaten up. They are using the Assembly Speaker and the police to gather support for their confidence vote in the House," she charged.

VIOLENCE ERUPTED in some places in Tamil Nadu when Jayalalitha supporters took to the streets and disrupted normal life to express protest against the lathi-charge on their leader. Undaunted by all that was happening in the enemy camp, the wily Veerappan was already making skilful moves in preparation for the big kill on the floor of the Assembly. "We will have enough support to push through the confidence vote," claimed his aide, Valampuri John, as D-day drew closer.

Meanwhile, doubts were being freely aired about Governor Khurana's very integrity in having invited Janaki to form the government. At the time of writing, the media in Madras is agog with speculation that Khurana has been told to pack his bags and that the famous Jagmohan is likely to take over at the Raj Bhavan very shortly. Said a top AIADMK functionary from the Janaki group: "It would be childish to even imagine that Khurana would have done anything to hurt Delhi's interests. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi flew in on the

day of MGR's death to condole and he spent five minutes at the Rajaji Hall (where the body was kept in state) and 20 (minutes) at the Raj Bhavan. Do you think Khurana was not adequately briefed on what he should do?" He added, "Khurana was told to break the AIADMK — has he not achieved just that?"

It is now a moot point whether the party would have split in this manner if Khurana had abided by the spirit of the Constitution and given Nedunchezhiyan, as chief minister in office, his chance to prove his strength on the floor of the House.

WHAT, NOW, IS THE FUTURE for the AIADMK? And who is finally going to emerge holding MGR's flag? What are the chances of the DMK returning to power, and can the Congress (I) cash in on the AIADMK squabbles? It will be left to the people of Tamil Nadu to answer these questions in due course. Already there are strong rumours that elections are round the corner and in the event, Karunanidhi is sure to start off as the hot favourite. His DMK party cadres are considered a fiercely loyal lot, committed to well-defined ideologies unlike the personality-based opposition within the AIADMK. Many of

MGR's followers had, like himself, drifted out of the DMK; to them it might not be such a repulsive idea to return to the parent body, especially if the murky infighting in the ruling party gets too long and bloody. True, MGR had nursed his men on the elixir of hatred towards his arch-enemy, Karunanidhi; but then, that was during the Leader's lifetime. Today there is no one on the Tamil Nadu political canvas to match Karunanidhi's stature.

Among the Congressmen, there is no figure who is capable of uniting them under a single umbrella. The AICC General Secretary, G K Mooppanar, admittedly has a clear edge over the others. However, although the wealthy Thanjavur landlord can score victory within the Congress (I), in a race with the tough Dravidian stalwart, Karunanidhi, and the debutante contender, Jayalalitha — not to mention the shrewd poll campaigner, Veerappan, in the Janaki camp — it would be suicidal to place bets on the Congress (I). The latest move in the High Command appears to be to send in Mooppanar as the State Party President in order to build up the Congress (I), especially at the grass-roots level. That is going to be a tough proposition because the party is virtually non-existent down in the villages where the masses still remain responsive to cinema slogans.

That again brings into focus Karunanidhi's chances because he is the one now calling the shots both in the film industry and in the state. Having realised the medium's enormous power over the illiterate dreamers in the countryside, the DMK President decided, some months ago, to return to script-writing in a big way. Besides, the most popular (among the front-benchers) Tamil hero, Vijayakanth, is a staunch DMK supporter; so also is another powerful film personality, Radha Ravi. And the biggest grosser, T Rajendar, swears that he would die for Karunanidhi.

Several of the AIADMK ministers and functionaries invested their ill-gotten wealth in cinema but they con-

centrated only on box-office returns rather than creating any political gains for their party. MGR had declared, a few years ago, that film star Bhagyaraj would be his successor in the film industry but since then, the popularity ratings of this actor-director began showing a steady decline.

APART FROM THE STRONG cinema links with the Tamil masses, Karunanidhi hopes to capitalise on the situation in Sri Lanka. Already the pro-MGR Tamil Tigers have shifted loyalties to some extent and provided Karunanidhi with the Eelam platform to wage his local battles with the Centre and the Congress (I). In the absence of the sobering effect of MGR's presence, Karunanidhi is capable of stirring up strong emotions among the Tamil population.

Shrewd as he has always been, Karunanidhi has not yet reacted to the internecine quarrels within the AIADMK and appears to be following a wait-and-watch strategy. Unconfirmed reports claim that Veerappan sought his support for ensconcing Janaki into office, but then, Karunanidhi pointed out that his party had only 12 MLAs. Thanks to MGR's initiative in getting Speaker Pandiyan to throw out ten MLAs on charges of insulting the Constitution, Karunanidhi would not be averse to the idea of receiving an offer of friendship from the Janaki-Veerappan camp because that would add further strength to his election slogans, made during the December 1984 campaign, that he, alone, is MGR's true ally, having shared 40 years of close friendship with him from the days of near starvation in a village near Coimbatore, through the period of writing film scripts for the acclaimed hero, and finally being elected leader of the Party and the Government when founder C N Annadurai died in 1969.

But it would be suicidal for the Janaki faction to stray towards the DMK leader, even if only to counter a possible Congress (I) link with Jayalalitha. For those who know the man well, Karunanidhi presents the

picture of least reliability as a political ally, having sweated it out in the wilderness and reached the evening of his life.

Credit must surely be given to this man for the manner in which he has kept his followers closely bound together through the travails of countering the MGR Government. Last year, the DMK had grabbed 64 of the 97 municipal seats in Tamil Nadu and captured almost 50 per cent of the *panchayat* unions, leading to speculation that despite the sympathy wave in his favour, MGR was now becoming a fading star on the state's political horizon.

ANOTHER MAJOR ADVANTAGE for Karunanidhi if elections are called in the near future, is the very poor image of the MGR administration. Corruption and nepotism had reigned supreme during the best part of the AIADMK rule. The situation had deteriorated to such an extent that he was all set to lose the 1984 general elections, it was only the sympathy wave resulting from Mrs Indira Gandhi's assassination and his own serious ailment that could frustrate Karunanidhi's chances once again. Even then, despite obtaining only 22 seats as against the AIADMK's 132, Karunanidhi matched the vote-inflow, and fell short of his rival only by less than three per cent.

Karunanidhi's party is yet to shake off the stigma smeared upon it by the Sarkaria Commission which inquired into specific charges of corruption. Despite all these factors, if the Congress (I) were to return to power—they were dethroned way back in 1967 on the anti-Hindi, anti-Centre platform—the people of Tamil Nadu must be willing to give up their personality-based political preferences and look for programmes signifying real growth.

Of course, MGR *did* introduce some massive welfare schemes, such as the midday meal scheme for school children, and pensions for the elderly and destitute widows, but by and large, the MGR administration

recorded a dismal growth in the economy. Industry and power sectors suffered heavily and top industrialists complained bitterly that the chief minister had no time to spare to listen to their woes while he spent hours at cinema functions.

In fact, the first two years after MGR came to power in June 1977 were considered a golden era in recent state administration. That was the time when he vowed to root out corruption, the plank on which he broke away from Karunanidhi's DMK. But then the MGR government, too, was soon branded as more corrupt than ever.

DESPITE ALL THIS, if the people still voted for MGR, it was only because they did not want to bring back Karunanidhi; besides, the favourite refrain among the poor was that MGR accepted bribes only to feed them (through schemes such as the free midday meals), to provide free electricity for harijan huts, and pensions for the old. "Why should he take bribes when he is already so rich and he has no children of his own?" they asked.

But now the veil of protection that MGR had provided his men in the AIADMK government has been torn asunder, and already most of the ministers and party functionaries stand exposed in public view.

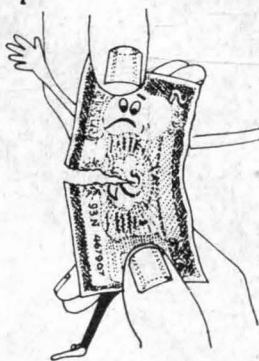
Between the split empire of MGR, branded with corruption and maladministration, the wily Karunanidhi and his cadre-based DMK, and the smoothly sophisticated Congress (I) lacking in grass-root support, it is going to be tough choosing for the Tamil Nadu public. Whatever the immediate escape-routes for those on the centrestage, an encounter on the streets cannot be postponed for much longer. Who will win the voter's heart is anybody's guess. For the first time in three decades, there will be no MGR in flesh and blood on the election scene; only his marooned minions will carry the fur cap and dark glasses around to perpetuate the legacy and win votes over it. ♦



**I'm worth good money...
So don't treat me badly**

Being a Currency Note, I'm valuable to whoever possesses me... and to the nation as well. Do you know, over 660 crore pieces of notes like me are printed every year. And the total cost of printing is really enormous.

Yet, alas, we don't live as long as we should. Improper handling shortens our existence. In fact, the life of notes like me is the lowest in India, than anywhere in the world. On an average, over 300 crore pieces of notes are destroyed annually — what a waste.



So I beseech you, do treat me right. If I were to be damaged or spoilt, it would tear me apart... a loss to you, a loss to the nation.

It's all so easy to avoid mishandling. Here are a few pointers:

- * Do not handle me with oily or wet hands.
- * Do not write on me — no personal messages not even telephone numbers, please.
- * Do not roll or crumple me up — I may rip.
- * Do not make multiple folds.



And see — by mutilating me you run the risk of not having me accepted by anybody. Even the Banks may refuse to replace me if I am torn too badly, or if part of me is missing, or if my number is beyond recognition.

So please — handle me nicely.

Public Sector Banks

—touching your life everyday everywhere.



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| • Bank of Baroda | • Indian Bank | • State Bank of Bikaner & Jaipur | • Syndicate Bank |
| • Bank of India | • Indian Overseas Bank | • State Bank of Hyderabad | • UCO Bank |
| • Bank of Maharashtra | • New Bank of India | • State Bank of Indore | • Union Bank of India |
| • Canara Bank | • Oriental Bank of Commerce | • State Bank of Mysore | • United Bank of India |
| • Central Bank of India | • Punjab National Bank | • State Bank of Patiala | • Vijaya Bank |

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INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

EARLY IN DECEMBER the leaders of the two superpowers met in Washington and signed a treaty which abolished, in one stroke, all shorter-range and intermediate nuclear missiles. The meeting has been described as historic, and so it was, because this is the first treaty to *abolish* rather than *reduce* warhead-carrying missiles. It is the first step towards 'disinventing' nuclear arms and the second step will occur, it is hoped, in Moscow later this year, when a further category of missiles will be reduced and eventually abolished. Some believe the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty to be a move in the direction of a safer world, but others believe the contrary. Abolish the deterrent, they say, and war becomes all the more likely.

The missiles to go are all those designed to fly between 300-3,600 miles. They include Pershing IAs and Pershing 2s, Cruise, SS20s, SS4s, and SSCX4s — USSR's ground-launched cruise missile. These are some of the most sophisticated weapons ever devised by man; they are more computers than missiles. They are jam-packed with electronic equipment to ensure that the warhead lands exactly where it is intended to go: they have sensors to allow them to fly below radar and follow the contours of the ground beneath them; they have electronic eyes which can follow rivers and railway lines, comparing them to maps in their memories; they are programmed to take evasive action if pursued by enemy aircraft and to dodge heat-seeking missiles; even their launching is controlled by immensely sophisticated computer programming and coding. And of course they are designed to cause the maximum amount of damage when they explode. Man's ingenuity, when it comes to destruction, knows no bounds.

There are 2,800 of these missiles. The Soviets have so many of them that they have expressed doubt that they can destroy all theirs in the three years stipulated by the treaty. It is not enough merely to scrap them. Neither side trusts the other, and elaborate ground rules have been written into the treaty. The rules are so detailed that they are longer than the treaty itself; the treaty is 31 pages long, the rules 39.

AMERICAN MISSILES IN EUROPE must first be transported to specially constructed sites in America; Soviet missiles must be withdrawn to Soviet territory. Once there, nuclear warheads and guidance systems must be removed from the missile casings and must be destroyed by explosive demolition or burning. This applies also to solid fuel, rocket nozzles and motor-cases; and what is left after exploding and burning them must be crushed and flattened.

The nuclear material inside the warheads presents a problem: it can only be destroyed by using up the energy it contains — there have been wild suggestions of using it to fuel nuclear power plants to pump water into drought-stricken areas and to convert sea-water for the same purpose by massive desalination, but I gather that the material must be registered and disposed of in a manner satisfactory



DISARMING MANOEUVRES

to all. But the rules are quite clear on the fact that each step in the proceedings must be confirmed in writing by both sides.

The INF treaty is just as specific about the rest of the apparatus that surrounds the missiles. Transporter-erector-launchers must be cut into two pieces, and in case anyone is thinking of sawing a bit off one end and having a smaller transporter-erector-launcher, the treaty stresses that the two pieces must be of "approximately equal size". It further insists that the airframe of the missile, the outer casing, must also be cut into two pieces "longitudinally"; wings and tails must be severed from the frame and, as before, at



How will the stipulations of the historic INF treaty, which calls for the abolition of 2,800 missiles, be executed? In this fascinating report, GRAHAM HALL provides insights into the beginnings of the 'disinvention' of nuclear arms, and their implications.

the end of it all, what is left must be crushed and flattened.

SUPERSTRUCTURES AND PERMANENT SHELTERS for the missiles must be dismantled and demolished, and the sites left open for six months, visible to "national technical means of verification" — a rather clumsy euphemism for spy satellites. Amidst all this destruction, buildings must be erected at each missile site for the specific purpose of housing the inspectors who must give a minimum of nine hours notice before their arrival to inspect.

The Soviets, concerned at the amount of time all this would take, asked if they could not simply launch them

into space. The authors of the treaty returned to their typewriters and inserted clauses to the effect that they could be launched, without warheads, but only one at a time with at least six hours between each launch. Further, those launched missiles were not to be used as targets for a ballistic missile interceptor.

When I was a boy I was very amused by a cartoon strip in the American magazine *Mad* called "Spy Versus Spy". It showed a black-clothed spy dreaming up absurd ways of tricking a white-clothed spy while the white-clothed spy dreamt up equally absurd ways of cheating the black-clothed spy; neither ever achieved anything in spite of the ingenuity of their schemes. I cannot help thinking of "Spy Versus Spy" as I study the details of the INF treaty. I should not, because the subject is too serious. But the simile is there. The Americans do not trust the Russians because the Russians are so secretive, and the Russians do not trust the Americans because they believe them to be devious.

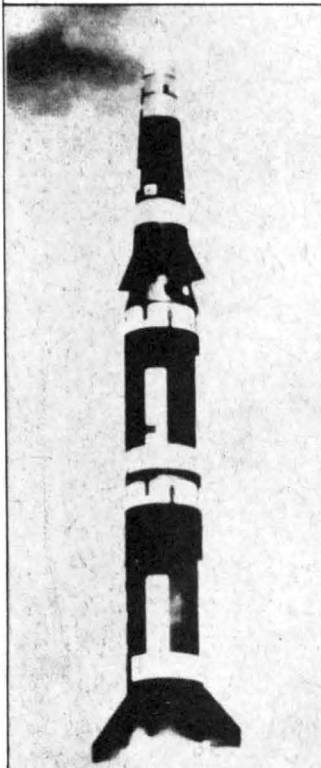
WHETHER THE AMERICANS and the Russians trust each other or not, it is the Europeans who are most involved. All the American missiles will be taken back to the United States for their destruction, but each European country that has its own nuclear defence will keep it. Verification inspections will occur in Britain, Belgium, the Netherlands, West Germany and Italy, but only at NATO sites. Britain, for instance, loses her American Cruise missiles, but retains her own Polaris, and will retain Polaris's replacement, the Trident, provided America can be persuaded to continue their manufacture in such small numbers.

These European missiles will probably be bargained away in future treaties. The British Prime Minister, Mrs Thatcher, a shrewd politician, is holding on to her nuclear missiles with the hope that the American withdrawal will give her more power to force the Soviets to reduce their conventional forces.

One of the drawbacks of this treaty is that it is so dependent on personalities. Reagan is tough: he was elected in 1980 to offset American shame over the Iranian hostage crisis. He believes his belligerence has forced the Soviets to the conference table, and he may be right. The Soviets came to the conference table and a treaty has been signed.

But his belligerence frightens people too. His uncompromising stand on Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) is seen as stubborn; his raid on Libya and the US presence in the Gulf is seen as provocative. In twelve months' time there will be another President, and it is thought that Reagan is pushing through the treaties to get them signed before he retires in case his successor is not as tough as him.

Opposite him is Mikhail Gorbachev, a younger man, a man with a global view, quite unlike his predecessors. He is genial, open, friendly; he is more of a European than a Russian, and more of a statesman than a Communist. Above all, he has won the trust of his European neighbours. On the other hand, a Soviet leader is never secure until all those around him support him, and how better to win sup-



Since World War II, the two superpowers have been arming themselves excessively, each in the hope of gaining a significant superiority over the other. Public opinion has changed from belligerence against a possible dangerous aggressor, to appeasement and summit talks of today.

port than by the signing of such a treaty with such glamorous publicity? After all, the Soviet Union has not yet kept one single treaty it has signed with America, so they are not bound by much.

THE TWO SUPERPOWERS ARE HOPING to put their distrust of each other aside again next year, and sign a treaty reducing by 50 per cent all longer-range missiles. It is a curious fact of this present agreement that although the Americans have conceded much, they have gained nothing. None of the shorter-range or intermediate missiles which are to be destroyed were aimed at the United States. American missiles were all aimed at the Soviet Union, but Russia's missiles were aimed at America's allies in Europe and the East (and, incidentally, at China). Only when the next treaty is signed will the threat to America be lessened. Even then, a 50 per cent reduction will mean little to the superpowers who could still destroy each other quite efficiently even after a 95 per cent cut.

The major obstacle in the way of the second treaty is President Reagan's determination to go ahead with the SDI programme. Reagan's opponents, especially those in Europe, have nicknamed this development the Star Wars Programme, a complete misnomer since it is neither aggressive nor stellar. In fact, it is a system of satellites covering the USA, each armed with laser guns whose object is to seek out and destroy any invading missiles before they reach their targets. Fully operational, they should provide an effective shield over Northern America and would be

the ultimate defence system — *if* it works. American scientists are still battling against the problem of laser beams fraying out in space, so the shield is still a long way off yet. Meanwhile, the Russians, who are working on a similar system but less openly than the Americans, have dropped their objections to it — at least for the time being.

OPTIMISTS ARE HOPING THAT, if the second treaty is signed, the 50 per cent reduction in longer-range, intercontinental missiles will eventually lead towards the Zero Option — the total abolition of all nuclear weapons. This may sound like the final 'disinvention' of a monster we can no longer control, but Pentagon strategists suspect that Russia already has about 400 intermediate-range missiles in storage and not accounted for in the Washington treaty; in such a nuclear-free world, those weapons would have enormous power. Further, in such circumstances, were the Soviets to comply fully, the world would be at the complete mercy of any secondary or fanatical country which might develop a bomb of its own.

At first glance the problems involved seem simple. Since World War II, the two superpowers have been arming themselves excessively, each in the hope of gaining a significant superiority over the other. Weapons have become more sophisticated and the defences against them even more so. Public opinion has changed from belligerence against a possible dangerous aggressor, as it was immediately after the war, to appeasement and summit talks of today. The weapons themselves have become so expensive that they are ruining the economies of both the countries, and once you can destroy the earth one hundred times over, there seems little point in carrying on to a position from which you can destroy it one thousand times over. 'Disinvention' seems like the logical aim.

The Americans, though, have made a mistake in their strategy, a mistake that may cost the world that Utopia it seeks. America, and NATO, have trusted entire defence policies on nuclear arms; conventional forces have been maintained but not increased. While NATO has 22,200 tanks, the Soviet Bloc has 52,200; and while NATO has 3,292 combat aircraft, the Soviet Bloc has 7,524. And in addition to these conventional forces, it is estimated that the Soviet Union has up to 17 times more chemical weapons than the United States — and what the United States possesses is largely useless, having deteriorated with age.

CHEMICAL WEAPONS WERE BANNED completely at the UN Bacteriological and Toxin Convention of 1972. Before that, in 1925, a treaty was signed in Geneva forbidding the first use, but not possession or production. Twenty years ago, in 1969, President Nixon declared a unilateral moratorium on chemical weapons, thinking that Moscow would slow down their manufacture. However, Moscow not only did not cease production, but continued production even after the 1972 agreement.

There are two advantages of chemical weapons, which

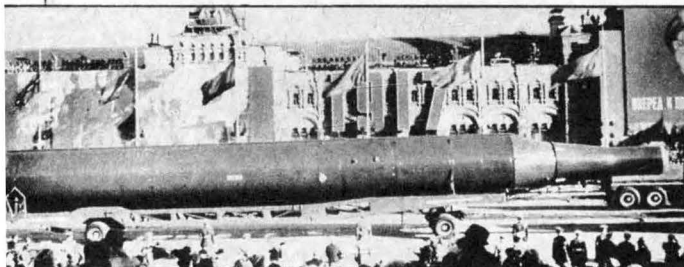
are not without strategic importance. First, they would leave industrial plants in conquered lands undamaged, and secondly, NATO forces are poorly trained against a chemical attack. There are many different sorts of chemical warhead carriers, but the Soviet favourite is the BM-21 MRL, affectionately, if crudely, known as "Stalin's Organ".

Genetic engineering is said to have entered the arms race too: defecting Soviet scientists claim that experiments are under way to graft toxic venom from South Asian cobras into the genome of a highly infectious 'flu virus. However this, like "Spy Versus Spy", should possibly be taken with a pinch of salt.

What should not be disregarded is the fact that without nuclear arms, chemical weapons would assume an even greater bargaining power than they do already. For this reason, exactly one week after the signing of the INF treaty,

Already, in recent years, trade has developed between Russia and Pakistan, and here was a chance to strengthen those ties. The Soviet Union offered Pakistan the US\$4 billion in aid. All would have been well had not the Soviet Union stipulated that in exchange for the aid, Pakistan must undertake not to support the Afghan guerrillas who are giving the Soviets so much trouble.

MATTERS CAME TO A HEAD in December 1987. A Pakistan-born Canadian attempted to smuggle nuclear weapon material to Pakistan and the US Congress became convinced that, as India feared, Pakistan did indeed have a nuclear weapon programme. Nevertheless, they still did not want to encourage Moscow to increase its influence in Pakistan. It compromised. Regular economic and military aid to Islamabad was cut by US\$60 million and the US\$4



Washington announced that it was resuming the production of chemical weapons.

THE DELICATE BALANCE OF POWER between the two superpowers affects every country on the globe. However much a nation might strive to be independent or 'non-aligned', its economic or geographic position will make it attractive or necessary for one or the other of the superpowers to aid it, whether to strengthen that country or to prevent the other superpower from gaining influence. Political events and changing situations determine the course of shifting alliances. Take as an example Pakistan.

Pakistan has long been supported by the United States. Pentagon strategists recognised the danger of Russia invading India (to get at warm water seas) through Afghanistan and Pakistan, and knowing the difficulties of aiding a country with a common border with the Soviet Union, poured aid into Pakistan. President Ronald Reagan, who also wants to prevent Islamic anti-Americanism spreading from Iran to Pakistan, authorised a further US\$4 billion; this also tied in with his general policy of surrounding the Soviet Union with countries dependent on, or at least loyal to, the United States.

But everything the President does has to be ratified by the US Congress. The US Congress, concerned about improving relations with neighbouring India, raised the question of India's fears that Pakistan was manufacturing a nuclear bomb. Pakistan refused to allow inspection; the US Congress refused to ratify the increase in aid.

The Soviet Union, seeing its opportunity, stepped in.

The expensive weapons are ruining the economies of both the countries, and once you can destroy the earth one hundred times over, there seems little point in carrying on to a position from which you can destroy it one thousand times over. 'Disinvention' seems like the logical aim.

billion promised by President Reagan would be paid, but with a waiver designed more to show disapproval than to hinder Pakistan's nuclear programme.

In the event, Pakistan was affected by both the cut in regular aid and the waiver, and India was appalled by US Congress' decision to pay. America acted for herself. The waiver was imposed merely to appease American public opinion; America needs a strong Pakistan as a balance to the Russians in Afghanistan.

The Americans had always suspected that the Russians would move southwards in accordance with their expansionist aims, and as soon as they did (in Afghanistan) the Americans built up their presence in South Asia to a staggering force. The Seventh Fleet now patrols the Indian Ocean; the bases in the Philippines, Diego Garcia and the Gulf have been strengthened; and all, it is claimed, in order to discourage the Soviets from descending through India to the sea.

Of course the real deterrent to the Soviets is the threat of a direct nuclear strike. When Reagan was running for President in 1980, he was asked if he would ever order a strike. He replied that whether he would or not would be known at the time — what was important was that the Soviets should believe that he might.

However, should the Russians know that the US President would not order a nuclear strike because nuclear arms had been 'disinvented', there would be nothing to prevent them invading the Indian Ocean — except the US Seventh Fleet, and that would make war not less likely after the Summit, but *more* likely. ♦

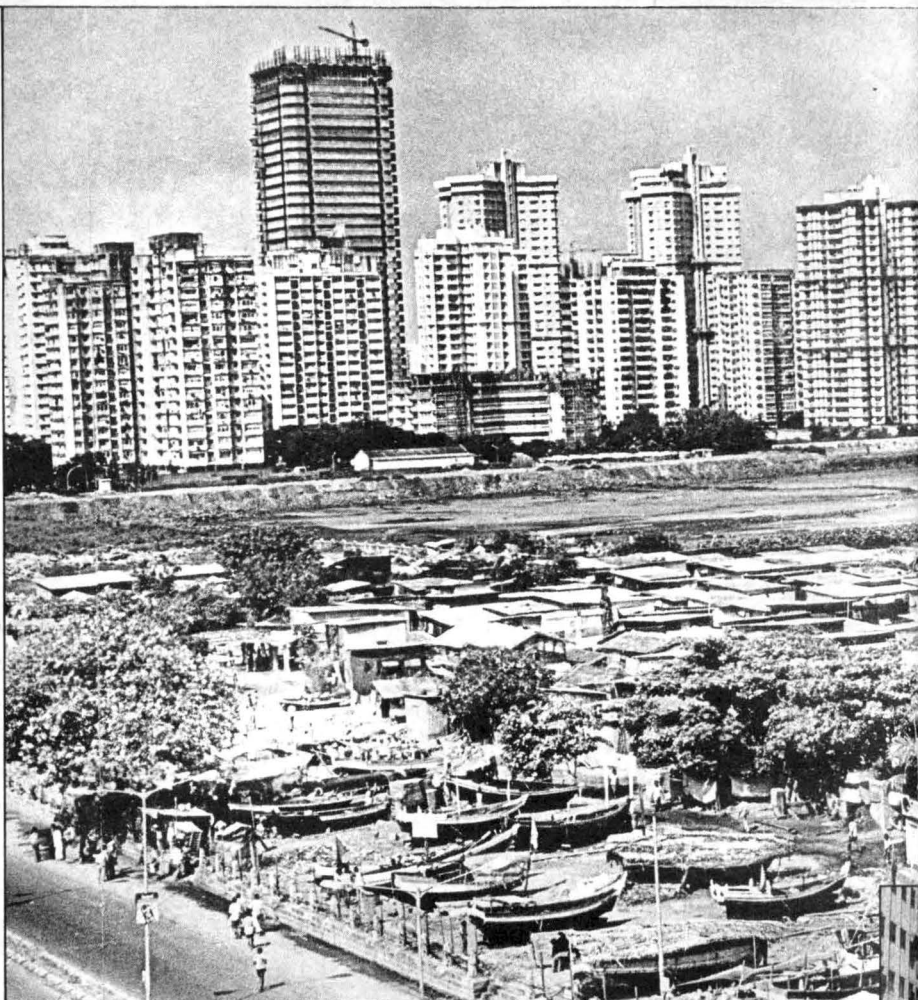
A DECADE AGO Lester Brown, head of World Watch, USA, foresaw the urbanisation prospect, when he declared there were three reasons why urbanisation trends could not continue as projected until the end of the century.¹ They were:

- “the inability of the countryside to produce sufficiently large food surpluses;
- the impossibility of creating enough jobs for the rural poor in the cities;
- the disappearance of cheap energy to underwrite the urbanisation process.”

He was right. Ten of the 23 years have gone by, and in that period, we have witnessed a major failure of the development process, both at national and international levels. At about the same time, Michael Lipton in his book, ‘Urban Bias’,² spoke about gross distortions in development being brought about on a universal scale by the misallocation of resources and the misdirection of policies as a result of urban bias among development planners and governments. His statements are well-founded; it is not uncommon for governments of developing countries with 70 per cent or more of their people in rural areas, to spend only 20 per cent of their budgets there.

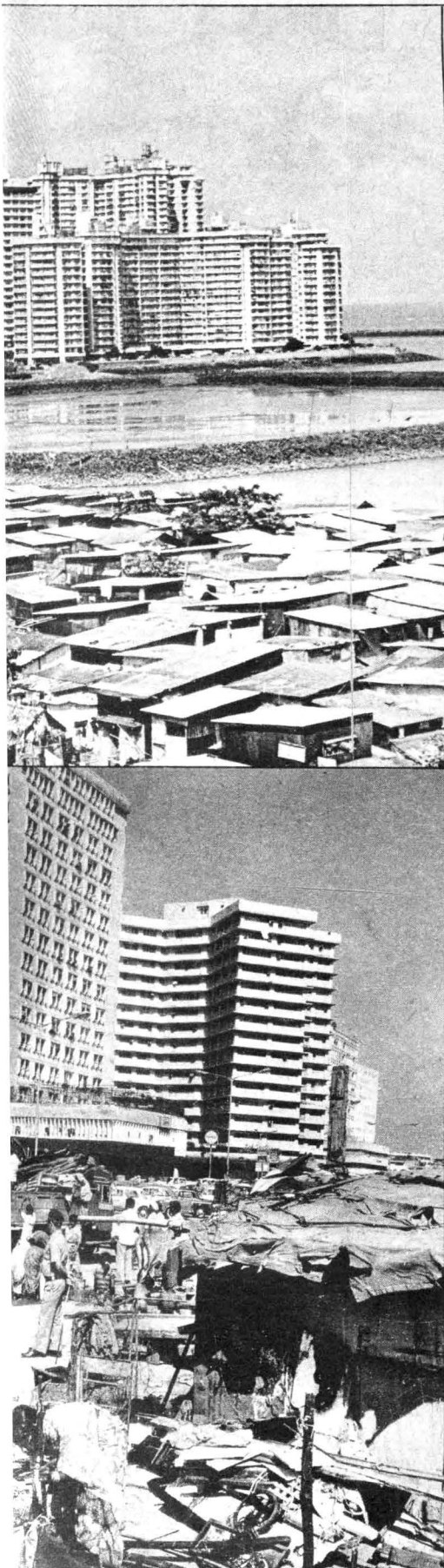
The governments of the Third World do not realise that the cities they are allowing to grow with less than benign neglect, will probably be their graveyards by the early twenty-first century. In addition to present insecurity, they fail to see the growing destabilisation process in the irresistible flood of landless and jobless people from among the poorest in the hinterland of such cities. It is the movement of this human flood from unsustainable rural eco-systems to unsustainable urban eco-systems, that results in the depletion of nutrients, water, and energy, with about half the population living in the squalor of slums well below acceptable stan-

¹ “Slowing Urban Growth” (*American Review*, Autumn, 1977); ² “Urban Bias” (*Institute of Development Studies*, University of Sussex).



THE URBAN APOCALYPSE

In the past decade, “we have witnessed a major failure of the development process,” writes A D MODDIE who analyses the factors that have contributed to the unwieldy and dangerous expansion of Third World cities. This rapid urbanisation has resulted in the depletion of vital nutrients, energy sources and water, argues the writer, who offers a grim prognosis for the urban graveyards of the future.



dards of sanitation and health. In such circumstances, they will inevitably breed an ungovernable amoeba of crime, lawlessness, and disease.

If, post 2030 AD, we hopefully move into an age of solar energy and call for smaller human settlements, these gargantuan cities with over 20 million people in each, will be like obsolete, sick dinosaurs.

The logistics of the problem are appalling. By the end of the century, the population in urban India alone is expected to be about the same size as that of India's total population at the time of Independence in 1947 — 350 million. By then, 75 per cent of Latin America's population — 466 million people — will be living in its cities, and Africa will see over 40 per cent of its total population — 368 million — in its urban areas, a ten-fold increase since 1950.

WESTERN URBANISATION grew out of commercial and industrial growth in the last four hundred years. The more rapid urbanisation of the Third World is largely the produce of failed rural development policies (including population policies) in the last 50 years. The eco-systems of cities as well as the external eco-systems of their hinterlands are dying. It is an alarming fact that in countries where 80 per cent of the people, or more, are dependent on non-commercial fuels, the forest cover is fast vanishing. Between 1972-1975 and 1980-1982, nine large Indian cities lost between 15 per cent to 60 per cent of their forest cover. In Africa, no forests remain within 70 km of Niamey, Niger, Ouagadougou, or Bukina Faso; there has been a massive devastation of tropical forests in the interiors of Asia, Africa, and South America. As a result, micro-climates are changing, soil nutrients and water are becoming depleted.

The lessons of Chinese cities like Shanghai and Hong Kong seem lost on the rest of the Third World. Shanghai, a city of 11 million, enlarged its boundaries to 6,000 sq km to facilitate recycling of nutrient wastes.

Shanghai is now self-sufficient in vegetables, and produces most of its grain, pork, and poultry. Hong Kong today produces 45 per cent of its fresh vegetables, 15 per cent of its pork feed, 130,000 tonnes of vegetables each year for its restaurants and food processing plants, and 60 per cent of its poultry supply. Thirty per cent of Hong Kong's agricultural land produces vegetables and 15 per cent of the territory comprises fish ponds, yielding 25 to 74 tonnes of fish per hectare.

A most useful response to the problem can be found in the World Watch Institute's 'State of the World, 1987': "The most effective urban food self-sufficiency efforts are those where city governments orchestrate land use, nutrient cycling, and marketing. Another bonus is that shorter lines reduce dependency on energy-intensive transportation."

Meanwhile, in the non-Chinese Third World, population planning is weak and neglected, and rural development wholly inadequate to make life tolerable. There is then the fatal fascination with which the hungry, jobless millions seek their dream worlds in the tinsel of decaying cities. The distortions caused by unequal rural development, without building the base of rural eco-systems, coupled with the politics of plunder of its natural resources, are only matched by the distortions in urban development which have given rise to "unintended" cities with a dangerous future. And these distortions arise from the social distortions of grossly unequal societies, in which the ruling and middle classes cannot think beyond their relatively affluent ghettos. The inequalities begin with land use, and end with municipal incompetence and corruption. The politics of the city then is the politics of money; it embraces politicians, bureaucrats, businessmen, and crime barons. Their big hands grasp so much of a limited kitty, as to leave nothing for good sanitation, potable water, and moderate supplies of energy, food, and shelter for the rest. And of course, the demographic dynamics of the multi-

ENVIRONMENT

plying millions makes the task perhaps the biggest, single challenge in the Third World.

JAPAN CAN SUPPORT over 95 per cent of its population on only 20 per cent of its flat lands, because of its high agricultural and industrial productivity. No other society has been able to do that. Third World countries are light years away from such high productivity. And yet, that is what is basically needed to provide these gargantuan settlements — cities — with the enormous concentrations of food, water, energy, and housing that they really need. In Madras, it is easier to find a cinema house than a flowing tap. In Jakarta, less than 25 per cent of the urban population's needs can be met. In Manila, a city of 9 million, only 11 per cent of the population is served by sewers. In the 1990s, Mexico City will be trying to draw water from 200 km away and 2,000 m from below ground; the construction cost of which is estimated at US\$6 billion, about half the annual interest paid by Mexico on its debts!

If agriculture in the tropics is a gamble in the rains, housing in the cities is a losing gamble with land and property rates escalating even beyond the reach of the upper-middle classes. The most scandalous aspect of the politics of plunder lies here. Land and property are grabbed and speculated on by a few. The rest sleep on the streets or in slums. Urban space is the privilege of a small minority who alone can play the property escalation game. The future urban houses are for the super-rich. While the UN and its member governments talk about other matters, their own estimates of squatter settlements represent 60 per cent of so-called 'housing' in cities like Ankara, Bogota, Calcutta, and Kinshasa. The real housing problem of the Third World is the price and quality of the housing of this 60 per cent. The engineering and architectural problems lie in the transition from traditional materials of mud, bamboo, and wood, to brick and cement. The market potential of

Environmental Benefits Derived from Substituting Secondary Materials for Virgin Resources

Environmental Benefit	Aluminium	Steel	Paper	Glass
(Figures represent percentages)				
Reduction of:				
Energy Use	90-97	47-74	23-74	4-32
Air Pollution	95	85	74	20
Water Pollution	97	76	35	—
Mining Wastes	—	97	—	80
Water Use	—	40	58	50

Source: Robert Cowles Letcher and Mary T Shell, "Source Separation and Citizen Recycling" in *The Solid Waste Handbook*: ed Will D Robinson; publ John Wiley & Sons, New York, 1986.

'asfado' bricks (made with straw, mud, a little cement and asphalt), used earlier in Latin America and later in Africa, needs to be exploited. These 'asfado' bricks are approximately half the cost of commonly used bricks and a sixth of the cost of cement blocks. Such an 'adobe' house also requires less energy to build. Somehow, the resources for low-cost, appropriate housing need to be accumulated by the pooling together of international, national, and beneficiary resources, based on long-term savings and repayment terms, and subsidised as much as possible. Perhaps in no single field are political will, resource mobilisation, architectural ingenuity and imagination, so vital as in urban housing.

IF, AFTER LAND USE, nutrient recycling is the most important urban problem, it is another area which has been the subject of major neglect. Most cities in the tropics are content to dump their human and industrial wastes in river systems, seas, and landfills. The powerful, privileged minority among the urban dwellers, along with their governments, seek to imitate the pattern of Western cities, opting for high-rise buildings, elite housing and shopping centres, and sophisticated transport systems. What they ignore is the ecological life-support aspects of clean water, enough energy, and nutrient recycling — the less visi-

ble, less dramatic facets of life-styles. The fall-out of such planning is a city like Calcutta where, on the one hand, transport investments have amounted to US\$50 million a year — with subsidies of at least US\$1 million each year to operate the system — a total of 48 per cent of the city's planned investments, and on the other, 60 per cent of its inhabitants suffer from respiratory diseases due to air pollution, and probably as many suffer from abdominal diseases due to water pollution. Despite the low capital costs involved, there is no system whereby organic waste is collected and treated in Third World cities. This has meant a loss of precious nutrients, and a hazard to human health. Environmental benefits from recycling secondary materials are revealed tellingly in the table. It points to enormous reduction in water and energy use, air and water pollution, and mining wastes.

Fundamentally, there is a basic lack of understanding of the city as an eco-system — largely a man-made one but one which requires nature's ecological balances for life-support systems to sustain life-styles. If city planning is undertaken without keeping this in mind, far from promoting better life-styles, present processes will lead to social cancers in the future. Will 2000 AD, that dramatic year in the calendar and time's ecological clock, be the point of no return? ♦

VINTAGE VIEWS

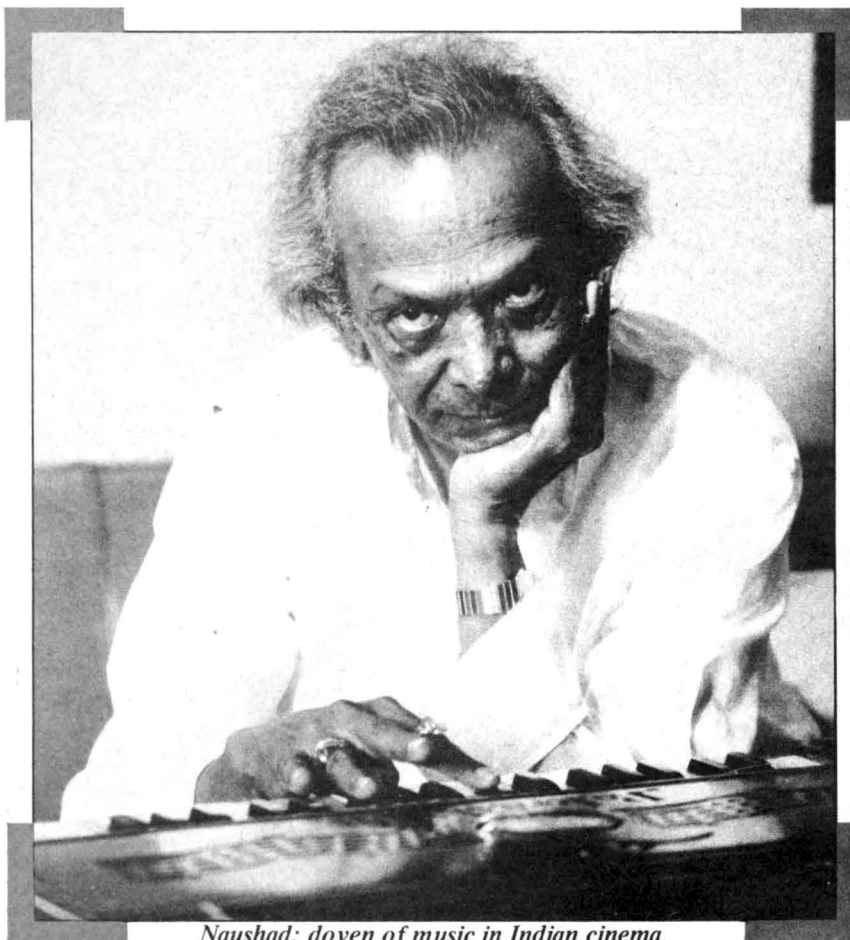
MOVIE MAHAL is a fascinating 24-programme television series on Indian cinema, produced by Hyphen Films, currently being telecast on Channel 4 to appreciative audiences in Britain. An innovative blend of interviews and film extracts, MOVIE MAHAL focuses on the haunting film music of the fifties and the sixties and analyses its underlying themes and trends. MINNIE VAID-FERA talks to director Nasreen Munni Kabir and profiles the engrossing series.



Thespian Dilip Kumar talks to director Nasreen Munni Kabir.

INDIA'S SELF-STYLED Spielberg, the supersuccessful Manmohan Desai, uncharacteristically breaks into song. As he sings — fairly melodiously — the actual soundtrack of the song, the legendary *Yeh mera diwanapan hai* from *Yahudi*, is dexterously juxtaposed over Desai's voice and his tight close-up is replaced by a youthful Dilip Kumar walking among some ruins, mouthing the words of the same song. Two minutes later, as the song draws to an end, a much older Dilip Kumar enthusiastically analyses the 'better quality' of the music in Indian films in the fifties and early sixties. He speaks in remarkably

chaste Urdu that has a soft cadence of its own. As he mentions Sahir Ludhianvi's lyrical prowess, the scene changes once again and Guru Dutt's mesmeric presence in *Yeh duniya agar mil bhi jaye to kya hai* from *Pyaasa* fills the screen. Cut to a flawless profile of the Bachchan explaining his risky switch-over from *Deewar*'s anti-hero to *Kabhie Kabhie*'s softie poet in the luscious vales of Kashmir. A quick snippet from the film with Bachchan and Raakhee gazing soulfully into each other's eyes and singing the title song, and Bachchan resumes talking about the poetic element in Indian cinema. . .



Naushad: doyen of music in Indian cinema.

That was merely a tantalising trailer, the first 15 minutes of the first episode of *Between The Lines*, a 9-part section of an ambitious television series currently being telecast in England — *Movie Mahal*. Produced by Hyphen Films for Britain's Channel 4, *Movie Mahal*, a 24-programme serial, focusing on the music and personalities of Indian cinema, is the brainchild of director Nasreen Munni Kabir.

Young, attractive and vivacious, Munni Kabir's credentials are impressive — a masters in Film from a French university, followed by assisting the internationally-acclaimed French film director Robert Bresson, subtitling a number of films in London, Paris and India, and finally joining Channel 4 in 1982 as Indian film consultant, a post she continues to hold today. Her experience is not limited to film production and direction alone — she has

also edited a book on Indian cinema, *Les stars du Cinéma Indien*, for the Pompidou Centre in Paris and helped co-ordinate the Festival of India in France in 1985. Her interest in Indian cinema dates back several years — "I grew up on all this (Indian films) in London. It was my only connection with India," she says nostalgically.

Nostalgia is, probably, the most distinctive, contributory factor to *Movie Mahal*'s overwhelming popularity, since the programme's inception in September last year. The series is neatly divided into three sections — *Portraits* (of leading film personalities like Manmohan Desai, Bimal Roy, Ramesh Sippy, Dev Anand, Shammai Kapoor and Naushad); *Specials* (programmes on dance and qawali in Indian cinema and on Pakistani cinema); and *Between The Lines* (exploring the underlying themes of hit

film songs in the last 35 years, interspersed with comments and reflections from personalities like Amitabh Bachchan, Dilip Kumar, Rajendra Kumar, Amjad Khan, Asha Parekh, Shabana Azmi, Shashi Kapoor, etc.)

"*Movie Mahal* is a nostalgic, impressionistic journey into Indian cinema, more specifically, into music in Indian films — a music that developed its own forms. In many cases one discovered that films were sustained by their spectacular songs. So I focused on the golden era of Indian film music — the songs of the fifties and the sixties," explains Kabir earnestly. The selection of musical clips from popular and classic films in *Between The Lines*, is exceptionally good — songs from *Mahal*, *Pyaasa*, *Munimji*, *Yahudi*, *Albela*, *Madhumati*, *Chori Chori*, *C.I.D.*, *Ganga Jamuna*, *Kagaz ke Phool*, *Mughal-e-Azam*, *Sangam*, *Jewel Thief*, *Awara*, *Mera Naam Joker*, *Aradhana*, *Bobby*, *Saagar*, *Kabhie Kabhie*, etc — it is indeed an incredible compilation, both representative and complete, of the industry's best musical oeuvre.

But if the haunting and legendary songs provide the nostalgia, the crisply edited interviews of film celebrities, holding forth on musical or dancing trends in Indian cinema, proffer what Kabir calls "the much-needed perspective". "I feel awkward when people compare the series to *Chitrahaar*," says Kabir frankly, "because it's so totally different. The comments and analyses were very necessary — even if there were varied points of view — for a wider perspective. Besides, the way we've structured it, getting people to talk about other people or aspects — Govinda on Shammai Kapoor or Bachchan on poetry, Dilip Kumar on 'fast' films today — it's quite novel and entertaining, isn't it?" she queries.

Quite apart from the welcome respite from the stars' customary self-promotional hype, most of the interviews — featured in *Between The Lines* and *Portraits* — have been conducted (and edited) with skilful precision. Since the tedium of the ques-

tion-answer format has been done away with, the interviews are, in fact, transformed into relevant, pithy and occasionally, thought-provoking statements from established stars of the world's largest film industry. So Shabana Azmi talks about Meena Kumari in *Sahib, Bibi aur Ghulam*, "the first time a traditional Indian woman expressed a sexual demand from her husband"; script-writer Javed Akhtar enthuses about the script of *Mughal-e-Azam* that "should be taught as literature in Urdu intermediate classes"; Amrita Singh praises Nargis' performance in Indian cinema's most successful film, *Mother India* — comments pour forth, effortlessly holding viewer interest.

The *Portraits* are more detailed, highlighting the unique characteristics or professional trademarks of each of the personalities profiled. The programme on Dev Anand for example, is a stylish capsule of an actor whose name is synonymous with style, flamboyance and energy. For the next 30 minutes, Kabir recreates the famous Dev Anand mystique — the debonair mannerisms, the familiar gestures, the springy gait, the resonant voice — through the same pattern of clips and comments. Anand analyses his consistent 'romantic' image, the 'underdog' roles that first brought him into the limelight, the tremendous thrill in doing a film like *Kala Bazaar* (which used the actual premiere of *Mother India*), the risks involved in making a bold film like *Guide* (both in Hindi and English), the superior advantages of directing films instead of merely acting in them and his decision to "carry on and give people something to remember me by". Extracts from *Baazi*, *Kala Bazaar*, *C.I.D.*, *Paying Guest*, *Hum Dono*, *Guide*, etc, follow, though his later films (as actor-director-producer) are conspicuously absent. For Dev Anand buffs however, the programme is a collector's item.

Likewise, the two-part Shammi Kapoor portrait, which, in addition to the scintillating dance sequences from *Tumsa Nahin Dekha*, *Chinatown*, *Teesri Manzil*, etc, provides

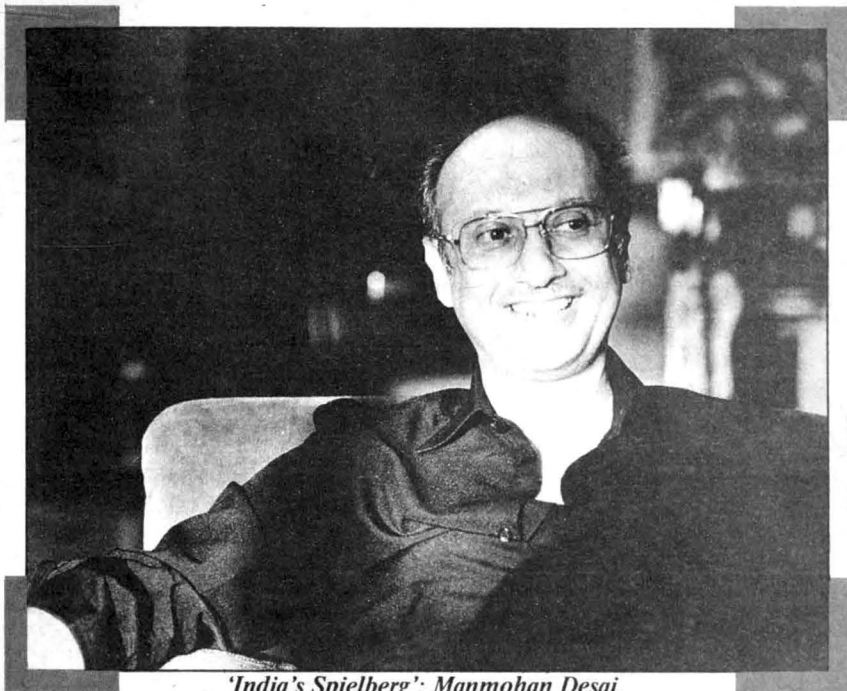
rare insights into the actor's unnerving (and perfect) sense of timing. "I kept to my own beat, I'd move out of the frame at exactly the right moment, the end of my beat, so that no one could edit, prolong or alter my shots." Kapoor's comment reveals a hitherto dormant facet of his enigmatic personality — surely an interviewer's triumph. "People just haven't asked the right questions," cries Kabir, a shade condescendingly. Kabir has been assisted by Khalid Mohammed in her task of extracting the best out of her interviewees.

IN CONFORMITY WITH the director's aim — to provide valuable insights into and information about Indian cinema, especially for the uninitiated Western audiences — relevant statistics and explanatory data are flashed periodically, the words, following the subtitling format, moving across the screen in a continuous single line. As Dev Anand sings *Jayen to jayen kahan*, sitting at the sea-shore, the words of the song are subtitled at the bottom half of the screen while simultaneously, the running line above, informs you that though Dev Anand's songs were mainly sung

by Kishore Kumar, this particular one was sung by Talat Mehmood. It seems a unique blend of information and entertainment, though the latter, confesses Kabir emphatically, was really the main focus of the programmes. "I wasn't interested in an analytical in-depth study of the history of Indian cinema or its music. There have been enough programmes concentrating on history etc, why repeat them? *Movie Mahal* is definitely not what people *ought* to see, it's basically entertainment, within a certain perspective," says the programme's diminutive director candidly.

This determination to break free from the more sedate, documentary style of presentation also explains Munni Kabir's careful avoidance of swamping viewers with opinionated viewpoints. "Let the audience decide for themselves," she protests.

It could, of course, be argued that the audiences — some of them foreign — may not have had much choice, since the selection of the period, the interviewees and the themes, have been Kabir's prerogative entirely. But, if it appears to be the (cinematic or musical) world according to Nasreen Munni Kabir, it is at least an enter-



'India's Spielberg': Manmohan Desai.



'Movie Mahal': refreshing, original, riveting.

taining, amusing and engrossing one. She fields questions about her alleged 'sins of omission' deftly. The near-total absence of art cinema? "That has to be seen differently. Mine was basically an entertainment programme." What about the music (or films) of the late forties? "The songs were too slow, as was the pace of those films. Western audiences just wouldn't have understood that period." Well, why the aversion to the fast-paced seventies and eighties? "The music of that period isn't too interesting, is it? Though I have included a few, I found it easier to concentrate on the seventies and eighties in terms of directors' works. That's why I profiled Manmohan Desai and Ramesh Sippy." Her next argument is clinching, the logic undeniable: "You have to do things you like. If someone

else wants something to be done, let them do it themselves. Film is one area where you always have a choice. I chose the fifties and sixties because that's what appealed to me. That's the only way one can deliver one's best," explains Kabir with a smile.

Telecast on Sunday mornings (9.30 am), *Movie Mahal* has proved so popular both with Indian and foreign audiences as to rate a repeat telecast in the evening prime-time slot, in March. Each programme has been conceived as and scheduled for just half-an-hour every week. "People would soon have reached a saturation point if they were to be deluged by songs, dances and interviews," clarifies Kabir. Her emphasis on snatches of film songs and brief film clips is also shrewdly realistic. "English audiences cannot take a lengthy two-and-

a-half hour Hindi film, packed with melodrama. These clips and specially the songs, are much easier for them to absorb. In fact each song is as elaborate as a Western video promo, and self-explanatory. The series has been received very enthusiastically — it's been a revelation for the younger generation," she adds warmly.

Movie Mahal — the entire package of 24 half-hour programmes, featuring several celebrity interviews and almost a hundred film extracts — has been put together in a surprisingly short period of one year. "The research lay in having seen and known about these films over the last 7-8 years; the interviews took about three-and-a-half weeks, then we had to negotiate for the film clips which was difficult but not impossible; finally after freighting them and having them cleaned to get the best possible prints, we had to subtitle and edit wherever required," says Kabir. It seems to have been a Herculean task, especially as the results more than match the voluminous effort that has obviously gone into making *Movie Mahal* what it is — refreshing, original and riveting.

In fact, a series like *Movie Mahal* is exactly the kind of transfusion that Doordarshan acutely needs today, given the lack-lustre, mundane and extremely insipid fare that is unleashed on Indian television at 9 pm day after boring day. Munni Kabir is cautious in predicting whether her *magnum opus* will be telecast for the much larger viewership here, though she *has* approached the mandarins at Mandi House. "It is a shame that *Movie Mahal* should be enjoyed abroad. It belongs right here, on the streets of India," agrees Kabir wholeheartedly. Since no one has been inspired or encouraged to make such valuable use of the wealth of material (in terms of available footage lying unused in the Archives or the hordes of film personalities living in the country), is it too much to ask that we capitalise on an outsider's laudable achievement and bask in reflected glory? ♦

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CONTROVERSY

WHATEVER THE drawbacks in the ideology of the late Dr Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, one point has to be conceded in his favour — his ideas about social injustice and social change get to the root of the matter at stake. This quality finds expression not only in his now famous 'Riddles in Hinduism', but also in his other works published earlier, including 'Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Ancient India', 'Annihilation of Caste', and 'Buddha and His Dhamma'.

The caste system — a social malaise against which Dr Ambedkar battled throughout his life — is a result of historical mutations since time immemorial. Its origins can be traced back to nearly three to four millennia ago, to the Stone Age, when tribal Aryans inhabited the plains of Central Asia before reaching India. They lived in conditions of savagery and barbarism and there was no room for caste divisions as each and every male member had to help in the tribe's only vocation of hunting and gathering the means of subsistence. But with the domestication of fire, it became necessary for some members of these Aryan tribes to tend the fire and prevent it from being extinguished. This gradually became a hereditary profession and the select group came to be called *agnihotras* (preservers of fire). As they tended the fire, they also roasted and later cooked food for their entire tribe.

Fire was then, as it still is, an object of worship, feared for its destructive powers. The *agnihotras* also began making offerings to the fire and invoking it to spell prosperity for the tribe, and victory in war. The *agnihotras* were the prototype of the present Brahmin caste.

The above theory of the origins of the Brahmin caste may seem fantastic and unbelievable but, even today, we can see that at our weddings or any other social and religious occasions, the cooks are traditionally Brahmins. In some Indian languages a cook is called *Achari* which comes quite close to *Acharya* (scholar). The word *Shas-*

tri, used to designate a scholar, originally meant a wielder of instruments and not a scholar, according to the noted Sanskritologist, P V Kane. In fact, the word Brahmin is interpreted to mean a 'begetter and increaser of food'. The latter meaning is possibly derived from the term *Brahmana* as a conjugation of the two words *Bruhada* ie to increase and improve, and *Anna* ie food; a conjugation of *Bruhada* and *Anna* would be *Bruhananna*. If this theory is correct, it would justify the origin of Brahmins as a profession of cooks. It is quite possible that this is the reason behind the Brahmin insistence on cleanliness and purification.

BUT A HEREDITARY MONOPOLY over the cooking function also bestowed upon this section the priestly function of invoking the Fire-God in favour of the tribe. Thus they came to be looked upon as representatives of God, and their word carried divine sanction. They acquired the exclusive right of learning (and writing) religious scriptures and of virtually gaining all knowledge. This was so because in ancient India almost all knowledge had scriptural overtones. Brahmins, being the clergy, could thus virtually monopolise the areas of acquiring and imparting education, to the exclusion of other castes.

There are strict Brahminical injunctions in our Dharmashastras (legal scriptures) against the education of Sudras (lower castes). According to the Dharmashastras, Sudras should remain beyond earshot when the Vedas are being preached; the Manusmriti goes a step further when it says that in the event that a Sudra accidentally hears a Vedic chant, his ears should be lopped off. The hue and cry being raised today against Ambedkar's 'Riddles in Hinduism' represents in no small measure, this jaundiced attitude.

In the 'Riddles' controversy, the opposition has become more irascible because Ambedkar has castigated the divine personae of Rama and Krishna by pointing out those of their actions that appear obviously unjust and unfair. Instances of actions such as



Rama's surreptitious killing of Bali and the subsequent justification of the act by saying that Bali was a *Vanar* (monkey); his killing of Shambuka for undertaking penance and justifying it by declaring that Shambuka had no right to do penance as he was a Sudra; and the mutilation of Shurpnaka's face, are cited as some cases in point. Talking about Krishna, Ambedkar says that in the 'Mahabharata', he advocated the use of foul-play in war strategies to the Pandavas in order



RIDDLED WITH DOGMA

The bitter controversy triggered off by Dr Ambedkar's 'Riddles in Hinduism' has already claimed one life in the hostilities it has unleashed between caste Hindus and Dalits. SUDHEER BIRODKAR traces the origins of this conflict and concludes that such agitations are mere surface manifestations of the much deeper malaise inherent in a sharply divided society.

that they achieve victory, for instance, the killing of Karna when he had got off his chariot and was unprepared to fight back; the killing of Bheeshma by using Shikhandin as a shield knowing that Bheeshma would not use his weapon against Shikhandin because of the latter's doubtful sex; the killing of Duryodhana with a foul mace blow on the thigh, and so on.

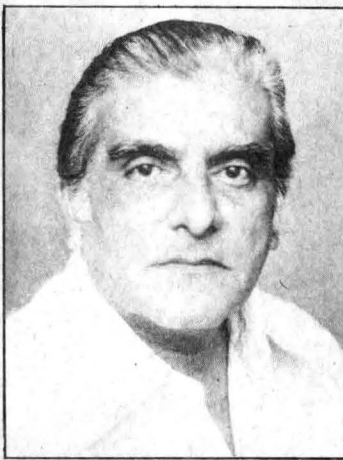
TO A RATIONAL MIND, such actions on the part of any person would

CONTROVERSY

invite censure, but Rama and Krishna being regarded as divine personages makes any criticism of their actions a sacrilege; the critic being one from the Dalit caste makes it blasphemy. In the present controversy, both the protagonists and antagonists have made a show of strength by staging massive rallies, *morchas* and *bandhs*, and public attention is being increasingly focused on the offending words of Dr Ambedkar.

Members of groups such as the Maratha Mahasangh or the Shiv Sena, apparently seem to be justifiably indignant. But this reaction is similar to the injured innocence of a child whose favourite toy has been damaged by a despised neighbour. The absence of a rationale behind it is clear. On the other hand, an Ambedkarist and a member of the scheduled castes would understandably react emotionally, on account of the loyalty that he professes for Dr Ambedkar who, for the neo-Buddhists, is the equivalent of an incarnation. But these reactions on the part of both the antagonists and protagonists in the 'Riddles' controversy does not arise only out of an emotional bias for either Rama and Krishna or for Dr Ambedkar. Neither are the scathing remarks of the latter about the former, the ultimate reason for the struggle. No doubt the immediate reason for this debate is the publicity given to the passages on Rama and Krishna in Ambedkar's volumes, but Ambedkar was not the first to write a critique either on divine personalities or on the caste system. This has been done earlier by Mahatma Jyotiba Phule and Gopal Ganesh Agarkar in Maharashtra; even Swami Vivekananda and Swami Dayananda Saraswati have severely criticised Hindu dogmas.

Then why is it that only Dr Ambedkar's work has raised a controversy nearly 40 years after it was written and more than nine months after it was published? Nearly 500 copies of the book are already in circulation since the book was released some months ago. The decision of the



Madhav Gadkari.

Maharashtra Chief Minister, Mr S B Chavan, to delete some 'offending' sections from the volumes, and his subsequent retraction, have kept the issue in suspension and has made the struggle both for and against the book, sharper and violent.

THE CONTROVERSY OVER 'Riddles' started almost nine months after the book was ceremoniously released on January 26, 1987, by none other than Mr S B Chavan himself. On October 17, 1987, Madhav Gadkari, editor of the Marathi daily, *Loksatta*, carried a provocative article criticising Ambedkar as well as the Government of Maharashtra for having published the book. Taking a cue from Gadkari, the Akhil Bharatiya Maratha Mahasangh (MMS), an organisation of upper caste Maratha Kulaks who have traditionally followed a reactionary and anti-Dalit policy, called for public censure of Ambedkar's 'Riddles' at its annual conference at Amravati in Vidarbha. The MMS decided to launch an agitation for the withdrawal of the volumes from circulation and the deletion of the chapters in question. Egged on by this, the youth members of the MMS obtained some copies of 'Riddles' and made a public bonfire of them at Amravati at the end of the conference. This was taken up as a signal by all sections of the MMS, who submitted a memorandum to the

Government of Maharashtra outlining their demands. Succumbing to the pressure, the Chief Minister, S B Chavan, promised both the withdrawal of the volumes and the deletion of the concerned passages.

This decision incensed many. The first protest was made by Prof Arun Kamble who resigned from the Editorial Committee appointed by the Government of Maharashtra to co-ordinate the editing and publication of the volumes. The resignation of Arun Kamble, himself a Dalit, did not come as a surprise. But this was followed by the resignation of another member of the Editorial Committee, Dr Bhalchandra Phadke — a non-Dalit.

AMIDST ALL THIS, it was charged that the said passages were not written by Dr Ambedkar but were forgeries which were later interpolated into the volume. It was also alleged that a manuscript of the passages was not available and this reinforced the forgery theory. Refuting these charges, Mr Prakash Ambedkar, Dr Ambedkar's grandson, said that a manuscript of all the volumes *did* exist and had been in the possession of the Supreme Court and later of the Bombay High Court; it had then been forwarded to the Editorial Committee appointed by the Government of Maharashtra — consequently, there was no chance of a forgery or interpolation. Further, Mr Prakash Ambedkar declared that the Maharashtra government had entered into a legal contract which prohibits the addition or deletion of even a single word from the manuscript.

Meanwhile, the agitation spilled over onto the streets and on November 23, 1987, a massive *marcha* led by Prakash Ambedkar marched towards the Mantralaya. Addressing a public meeting, he called for a statewide agitation to pressurise the government to reverse its decision to delete the passages. A memorandum was presented to the Chief Minister, S B Chavan, but elicited no definite reply from him. This demand was reiterated by the Dalits on Ambed-

kar's 31st death anniversary on December 6, 1987.

The occasion was significant on account of the presence of Dalit leaders and activists from all parts of the country who came to Bombay to pay respects to their departed leader on his death anniversary. It also united all the Dalit organisations under the banner of the Babasaheb Ambedkar Vichar Samvardhan Samiti (BAVSS). On the political front too, the leftist parties extended unstinted support to the BAVSS's demand; the CPM even endorsed it by passing a resolution to this effect at its national polit-bureau meeting. Even the BJP gave up its initial negative stance and supported the BAVSS's demand. Only the Congress refrained.

The main reason put forward for the ambivalence of the Congress was the forthcoming Zilla Parishad elections. With the state Congress already divided between the Vasantdada and Chavan camps, and its own Chief Minister having gone back and forth on the 'Riddles' issue, Congressmen seemed to be unsure of the stand to be taken.

Against all this, the struggle that has already claimed one life, is threatening to turn into a wider mass protest.

THIS IS REMINISCENT of a similar agitation for the renaming of the Marathwada University after Dr Ambedkar, a few years ago. On that occasion, too, the Maharashtra government had maintained a similar vacillatory attitude. The university was initially named after the Dalit leader, but later, under pressure from the Maratha lobby and in face of the widespread anti-Dalit riots, the decision was reversed and Dr Ambedkar's name dropped. This was followed up with obscure pronouncements that some other university would be named after Dr Ambedkar. On that occasion, the upper caste Marathas had their way, but the ambivalence had by then cost hundreds of innocent lives and alienated the Dalits even further. History, it seems, will be repeated

The moot point is whether the mere renaming of a university or scathing remarks on mythological personages should have triggered off an agitation. The issues involved are more fundamental than the immediate reasons which stir up such sentiments.

this time.

But the moot point is whether the mere renaming of a university or scathing remarks on mythological personages should have triggered off an agitation on such a mass scale. Why is it that thousands take to the streets when a leader of the scheduled castes makes remarks which some feel are justifiable and some others derogatory? The fact is that the issues involved in these agitations are much more fundamental than the immediate and visible reasons which stir up such sentiments.

Caste Hindus (Brahmins and Marathas) and Dalits have been at loggerheads ever since the emergence of such a division. The ballads of saints like Raidas (*chamar*), Chokha Mela (*mahar*), Savta Mali (gardener), Tukaram and Narsi Mehta, Dyaneshwar and Eknath (who were born as Brahmins but were looked upon as apostates) decry the injustices heaped upon the lower castes. All these saint-poets lived in the Middle Ages (12th to 16th centuries). Until the social awakening in the mid-19th century, the friction between caste Hindus and Dalits had been a subdued one and found expression in the Bhakti movement of the Middle Ages. But since the 19th century, this clash has become more articulate and open. The agitation

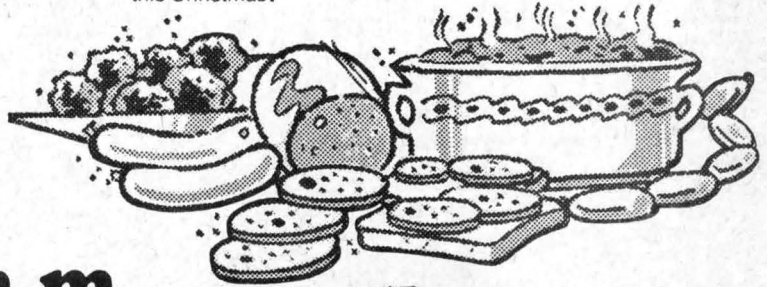
against untouchability, the agitation for universal temple entry, the agitation for 'one village, one well' (*ek gao, ek panotha*) demanding the right to draw water from the wells reserved for the upper castes, were the various manifestations of this struggle.

IN INDEPENDENT INDIA, the government policy of reservation of seats for the scheduled castes in university admissions and recruitment for jobs has further widened this fissure. Every advance of the Dalits is looked upon by upper caste Hindus as a threat to their own privileges.

It would therefore be naive to advocate that had issues like the 'Riddles Controversy' or the 'Renaming Controversy' not been there, such feelings between the caste Hindus and Dalits could have been avoided. The causes for conflict lie far beyond these surface issues; they are embedded in the centuries-old unequal distribution of wealth, of privileges for one caste and poverty and bondage for another, and the attitude of innate superiority of the caste Hindus vis-à-vis the Dalits.

It would be equally naive to suggest a solution. Issues that are born from the unequal qualifications perpetuated by a particular social structure have a solution outside that structure. In urban India, the caste-based social structure is disappearing but the consciousness associated with that redundant structure continues to linger on. In rural India, this structure is still a fact of life and this is the reason why caste contradictions emerge in sharp focus during debates like the 'Renaming Controversy' and 'Riddles Controversy'. But the bitter acrimony generated by such controversies shifts the focus away from the real issues which are the caste-based socio-economic structure, the unequal distribution of landed property, the rigid adherence to hereditary caste vocations, and the caste-based segregation in day-to-day life activities such as untouchability, endogamy and social ostracism. Herein lies the actual Riddle beyond the immediate controversy. ♦

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GUINNESS GENIUS

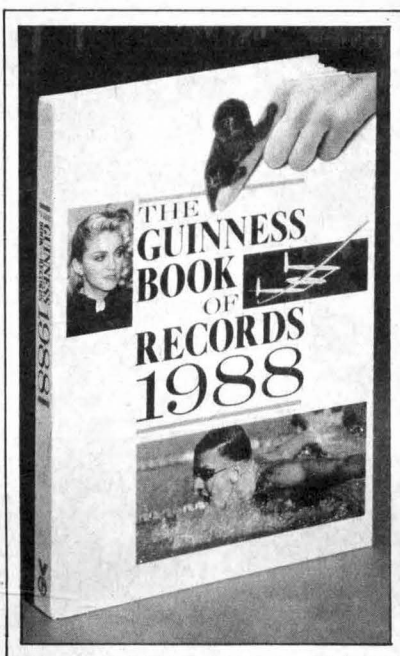
WHO BOASTS THE MOST phenomenal eidetic memory? Who sprouts the longest moustache measuring 8 ft 6 ins? Who, not trusting a barber, let his hair grow 26 ft long? Who is the fastest, most accurate human computer? Who blew the longest bubblegum bubble? Who clapped continuously for 54 hours? Who spat over a distance of 45 ft . . . ? The answers to these and thousands more are all in 'the' book of records that itself breaks all records — The Guinness Book of Records.

The founding of The Guinness Book of Records is as original in its origin and as idiosyncratic in its conception as many of the records contained in it. As the story goes, once upon a time, on November 10, 1951 — a Saturday for those who insist on Guinness precision — one of the many white knights of Great Britain, Sir Hugh Beaver, went on a hunt in Ireland to shoot golden plover. Unfortunately, some of the fowl perversely flew faster than they should have! Seeking an explanation for their inability to get the bird, the hunters furiously scanned reference tomes but failed to discover whether or not the 'goddamned' golden plover was Europe's swiftest game bird.

The argument resurfaced in August 1954, but this time the question asked was whether grouse were faster. In the course of the debate, Sir Hugh, who was to later gain another title as Managing Director of Guinness Publishing, was struck with the revelation that many similar and different questions must be debated nightly, and a little drunkenly, in the 81,400 pubs of Britain and Ireland. And probably left unanswered as there were no encyclopaedias to settle the queries and ensuing disputes.

SO, ON SEPTEMBER 12, 1954, he challenged Norris and Ross McWhirter

A delightful review of that great repository of facts, figures and much else besides — The Guinness Book of World Records.



(and the only twins ever to both belong to the same relay team and win a national 4 x 110 yard sprint relay title in 1948), to 'create' a book of superlative records. They rose to the



The longest separated twins, Lloyd and Floyd, meet after 69 years.

of a London fact and figure agency challenge, undaunted by the monumental task ahead, and a year later, on August 27, 1955, the first edition of the Guinness Book of Records — all 198 pages of it — left the press.

Come Christmas and The Guinness Book of Records was already the No 1 best-seller. Come the new year, the next year, and the next, and every successive year since, and the book has not fallen off the best-sellers list, except in 1957 and 1959, and that was only because it was not published.

Guinness Publishing, a subsidiary of Guinness Brewing, has come a long way since 1955. Today, 33 years later, the book boasts a sales record that continues to zoom upwards: in 1974, sales touched 23.9 million, by 1987 global sales rose to over 57 million — a staggering amount. In fact, the publishers boast that if stacked, the total number of copies would make up 163 stacks, each as high as Mount Everest!

It is not surprising — there are 262 editions in 35 languages. The first foreign edition — American — in 1956 was followed in quick succession by the French (1962) and German (1963) editions. In 1967, the valuable first editions in Japanese, Spanish, Danish, and Norwegian flooded their respective markets, as did those published in Swedish, Finnish, and Italian the following year. Sensitive to the international readers' world, Guinness introduced the Dutch, Portuguese, Czechoslovakian, Hebrew, Serbo-Croat, Icelandic, and Slovenian editions in the 1970s. And, still not satisfied, Guinness undertook the mammoth task of translating its annual tome into Greek, Indonesian, Chinese, Turkish, Malay, Polish, Arabic, Hungarian, Thai, Telugu, Malayalam, Tamil, Kannada, and Hindi in the 1980s — Guinness had clearly conquered the world.

BOOK REVIEW



*Madonna: the first woman to mas-
sively outsell all recording artistes.*

GUINNESS CONSIDERS a superlative achievement a 'record' only if it is "a performance or occurrence going beyond others of the same kind". It must represent the extremes of either animate or inanimate objects, and be quantitatively measurable by either the stop watch, the weighing scale, the foot rule or degrees of frequency. Some records, however, have qualified although they were not verified by Guinness, simply because they were pre-Guinness, stop watch, and digital watch. The oldest record that Guinness is aware of is that of St Simeon the Younger, a monk of the rigorous sect of Stylites or pillar squatters, who refused to get off his pedestal, and sat perched on his post near Antioch, Syria, for 45 years, only stepping down in 597 AD, perhaps because the pillar was crumbling!

Some fourteen centuries later, record breaking is still in vogue. In 1987 alone, hundreds of records were broken, new challenges issued, and impossible targets set. A pair of twins, Lloyd Ecre and Floyd Clark, separated when four months old, found each other after 69 years of

living apart; and 40 members of the Brazilian military corps balanced on top of a motorcycle for over one kilometre. A new record was also set by Japanese Hideaki Tomoyori who recited 'pi' from memory to 40,000 decimal places, beating Rajan Mahadevan of India, who held the 1981 record when he recited 'pi' to 31,811 decimal places. And S E Jayaram, also from India, was crowned the world's chatterbox — he talked non-stop for more than eight days.

HUMANS MAKE AN INTERESTING study — ask any psychologist — and their absurd achievements even more so. Among the many record breakers starring in Guinness, is Rev Ken Owen, 'the' one who lay on a bed of nails for 300 hours. And Max Beck, no doubt a fellow masochist, whose passion for bees made him don a mantle of a swarm of 1,60,000 bees weighing 50 lbs. We turn over the page to learn of 'Country' Bill White's macabre feat — he voluntarily got himself 'Buried Alive' on July 31, 1981, and surfaced only on December 19, 141 days later. . .

It is heartening to know that Romance is still alive and marriage much practised — Jack and Edna Moran of Seattle, Washington, tied the knot 40 times after the first and only really necessary occasion; at the same time it is disturbing to find that child marriages are still practised, with the youngest ever couple to get married being an 11-month old boy and a three-month old girl, not so far from home, in Bangladesh in 1986. Those bitten by the travel bug and dreaming of jet-setting around the world, will be envious to learn that Jesse Hart Rosdall — a fifth-grade teacher — sharing similar ambitions has already beaten them and Passeport by visiting 215 countries. It was perhaps sheer *joie de vivre* that caused T R Benker to crack jokes earnestly for 48 1/2 hours in the window of a Marshall Field store in Chicago; and perhaps it was out of sheer slothfulness, that the silent Indian *fakir*, Mastram Bapu, meditated, remaining rooted to the

THE CHAMPION CRAWLER

Jagdish Chandra, 32, established a world record by crawling 14,000 km from Aligarh to Jammu over a period of 15 months.

THE LOUDEST SCREAM

Y Satyanarayan, a school teacher, and S Simhachalam, a student, screamed at 90 decibels to get themselves heard over 116 'fisherfolk' in a screaming competition, and of course, won!

THE MOST UPRIGHT

Swami Maujgiri Maharaj, a guru of considerable standing, remained upright, on two legs, for over 17 years (1955-1973) whilst performing his *tapasya* (penance). To catch forty winks, he would lean against a plank.

THE MOST MARRIED

Udhayanath Dakhinray, a 61-year old barefoot doctor, has wooed and wed 89 women in four decades, and is still going strong — the passionate polygamist intends to have a centenary celebration soon.

THE SUN-GAZER

G Krishnamurthy of Cochin, who claims to be a human solar-cooker — absorbing solar radiation and transmitting it to water tumblers — has gazed, without blinking, at the Sun,

same roadside spot in Chitra village for 22 years.

Entries have steadily increased over the years. While it is near impossible to pinpoint a specific category, the section on Human Endeavour and Achievement has grown, fascinatingly, with several Guinness-worthy attempts by a host of daredevils, amongst them Shri N Ravi of Tamil Nadu, who, in 1982, balanced on one foot for 34 hours. And 13 members of the Aldington Prison Officers Social Club, near Asherford, Kent, in 1983, who paddled a hand-propelled bath tub for 145.6 km in 24 hours.

OVER 1,35,000 NEW RECORDS

BELIEVE IT OR NOT!

Highlighting Unusual Entries in the 'Desi' Version.

during an eclipse, for nearly 100 minutes.

THE MOST SUICIDAL

Naresh Savita, a young-desperado, has the dubious distinction of having made the most suicide bids. In his latest — the 21st — on October 15, 1986, he stepped off a three-storeyed building, heart-broken. His previous attempts include munching a lizard.

THE MOST TRANSFERRED

Daya Shankar Vyas, who joined the Food & Civil Supplies Department as a food inspector in 1965, had been transferred more than 40 times in a span of six years. Tired of frequently being told to pack up and go, Daya Vyas filed a petition in the Supreme Court against his frequent transfers. And won.

THE MOST EXPENSIVE ASTRO-PALMIST

Astro-palmist R C Kalra is perhaps the most expensive astrologer in India — he demanded Rs 75,384 from the Ashoka Hotel, Delhi, in exchange for his services. The hotel granted him his astronomical figure.

A BANANA-EATING RECORD

Balakrishna Shetty, a student, probably drove Guinness record holder Dr Ronald Alkana, (USA), bananas, when he swiftly devoured 24 large plantains. However, although Shetty devoured seven more than the American had in two minutes, and probably more than any chimp, he took 13 minutes longer.

THE LONG-DISTANCE BACKWARDS RUNNER

Arvinda Pandya set a world record in 1986 by running — backwards — for 1,408 km in 29 days, 5 hours and 39 minutes.

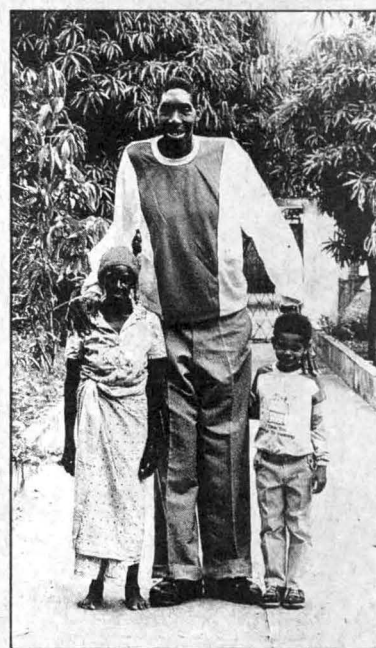
THE BLIND-FOLDED MOTORCYCLIST

Dinesh Nadiad zoomed to a world record by travelling by motorcycle, blind-folded, over 1,200 km in six days between Allahabad and Delhi.

THE LONGEST TRESSES

Head of the Thiruvada Thurai Monastery, Swami Pandarasannadhi, in an effort to beat Rapunzel, grew his tresses 26 ft long. And never went bald.

— Information courtesy 'Gandhi's Book of Indian Records'.



Standing Tall: at 96.75 ins, Gabriel Monjane is the world's tallest man.

when you next lie on a bed of nails, or grow ingrowing toenails in a heroic effort to beat Shridhar Chillal's (Pune) boast of having the longest fingernails at 158 ins for the five nails of his left hand and 37 ins for his thumb. No great feat, as Guinness reveals that fingernails grow about 0.02 ins a week — four times faster than toenails — and Chillal last cut his talons in 1952.

Score sheets, where applicable, should also be maintained to demonstrate a satisfactory rate of play. In addition, Guinness insists that the performance of the aspirant be monitored by at least two independent witnesses; and that he/she presents a signed log book on its completion — as an assuery that the attempt was subject to continuous surveillance — and states, in chronological order, the tiniest duration of all rest breaks taken, if applicable. All records must be submitted before the closing date in October.

Guinness is only likely to publish records that are significant improvements on prevailing records. An inaugural best performance, too, may

have been monitored and authenticated by Guinness since 1955, and The Guinness Book of Records now presents every single sport you can imagine. And every feat of endurance you would rather not, ranging from lying on a bed of nails, car-wrecking, barrel-rolling — the record setters having rolled a full 36-gallon metal beer barrel over a measured mile in 8 min 7.2 sec — to Reverse Pedestrianism (which, in layman's lingo, is walking backwards) whose greatest exponent, Plennie L Wingo, completed his 12,875 km trans-continental walk from Santa Monica, California, to Istanbul, Turkey, over 593 days.

A major criterion to be met if a re-

cord is to qualify is a meticulous documentation of the event. It involves independent corroboration in the form of local, national or international print media cuttings, which must be annotated with the name, place, and date of the publication, and supplemented with video clippings and recordings of television and radio coverage respectively. Another prerequisite is a signed authentication by an independent individual or organisation of repute. A reproducible colour photograph or transparency of the event, if available, is also helpful in getting your picture in the Guinness Book in addition to an honourable mention. So, remember to smile into a camera

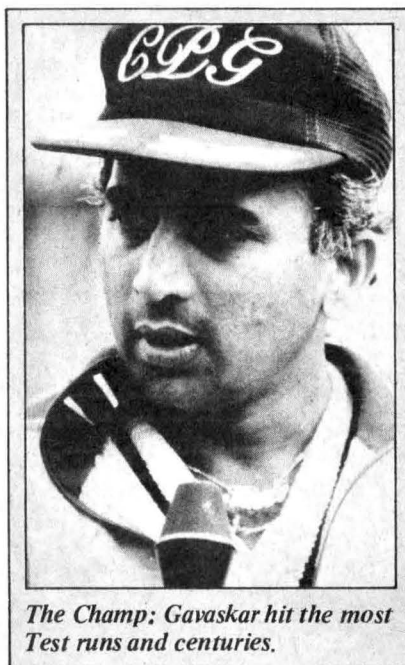
BOOK REVIEW

only get published if Guinness deems it to be significant or likely to trigger off widespread and preferably international competition.

AMONG THE MANY HONEST but unbelievable record breakers and record setters, hide eager frauds for whom Guinness has to maintain a constant vigilance. One such claimant boasted that he could balance the greatest number of golf balls vertically — 'a far-fetched claim for the balls had been joined together by bluetack or gum.

And of course some have been refused entry into the exclusive club of world record breakers. Perhaps Guinness rejected them because they performed dangerous feats, for instance, sword-swallowing and cramming the greatest number of people into a single car, or else because the aspirants did not check the latest record update or because they neglected the prescribed criteria. It is records that are meant to be broken, maintains Guinness, not rules.

However, many of the authentic boasts appear 'fake' and far-fetched only because they represent the very real and bizarre pécadilloes of man. And this is precisely where the charm of The Guinness Book of Records lies, presenting as it does, an assortment of weird and wonderful records in such a diverse range of human activity including the arts, language, architecture, transport, commerce, sport, politics, religion, and an enchanting and extraordinary collection of trivia. The Guinness reader who manages to stay firmly on *terra firma* is invariably at once dizzy and delighted, amazed and repulsed. And addicted. The touches of humour with a touch of class, the short informative histories of various records (such as the moment the first archer twanged his bow or the occasion which coined the word 'boomerang'), and the sheer and overwhelming vastness of the volume, make The Guinness Book of Records an encyclopaedia with a difference. The 1988 320-page edition is also attractively



The Champ: Gavaskar hit the most Test runs and centuries.

packaged with superb artwork and photography, and bound in a distinctive, new cover design.

THERE ARE, OF COURSE, several other books of records available for the record-crazy enthusiast, most of which, like 'Ripley's Believe it or Not', are definitely not in the Guinness league and would do well to take a leaf out of the Guinness Book. 'Gandhi's Book of Indian Records', however, whose first edition was published by Firsttime Publications, Chandigarh, in October last year, is the first, only, and wholly native counterpart to Guinness. It is a heroic effort to compensate for the Guinness Book which "features Indians and India for only 39 world records" bemoans Gandhi. Gandhi has collected data single-handedly over the last seven years, while based in Kuwait, and it is perhaps the combination of these two factors that has rendered his book little more than just a laudable attempt.

Gandhi's book contains over a thousand entries of 'many a splendid thing' in India and most of its greats — including statues, sanctuaries, rivers, reservoirs, and politicians; and also features major accidents and scandals,

and provides outstanding examples of endurance and endeavour. The book certainly offers "more firsts about India" than the Guinness, although its accuracy leaves much to be desired — for instance, it claims that the first female newsreader appeared on Doordarshan in 1951, eight years before the national TV station commenced broadcasting! Several other blunders pepper the volume and cast considerable doubt on its veracity and even its standing, as a book of records. Still, it is well worth dipping into, and even if it is perhaps not well up on fact, it contains some intriguing and unusual anecdotes (see box). Poor photography, appalling proofing, mediocre packaging, and a lack of that bit of additional information, often important information, that adds the necessary flavour to a fact, make 'Gandhi's Book of Indian Records', published at the same time as the 34th edition of Guinness, a sub-standard local imitation although commendable for its attempt.

AT THE SAME TIME as the 34th edition of The Guinness Book of Records is fast becoming a best-seller, the Guinness World of Records Exhibition is currently taking the UK, USA, Canada, and Japan by storm. The London Exhibition itself is a record-breaker as it has attracted over half a million visitors in its first year, from June 1984-June 1985. This spectacular exhibition revolves around six microcosmic worlds — human, animal, plant, earth, and structures and machines — projected through videotape, multiscreen computers and life-sized models, and brings to life superlative achievements from around the globe. Where else can one view Planet Earth dramatised and 'step into space' with Armstrong? Or meet record-breakers from different fields? Nowhere other than at "the fastest, tallest, widest, greatest, heaviest exhibition" — a dramatisation of the 'bestest', glossiest, most detailed, hottest book of records — The Guinness Book. ♦

BACK TO THE FUTURE

What do the coming months hold in store for India? Will Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi teeter along till the end of his tenure or will he declare a mid-term poll? Will the alienated masses get over their disillusionment with a controversy-ridden PM? Will Sri Lanka be India's Vietnam? Will India arm herself with a nuclear bomb? How much further will the Jan Morcha march? Will the violence in the Punjab ever stop? Will Sridevi and Amitabh Bachchan retain their No 1 positions on the silver screen?

IMPRINT asked a host of eminent personalities to predict the future, though a large majority, including our venerable prime minister, reserved comment.

S B CHAVAN

REGARDING MY TENURE as Maharashtra's Chief Minister, the high command has already made its intentions clear (Rajiv Gandhi's statement that the CM is to stay). Whether I remain the CM throughout 1988 depends on how the situation develops.

There is no possibility of mid-term polls being held this year. There is no point in it either.

On the economic front, the future of the country will depend on the rainfall. If it is normal, then the rate of growth that we visualise in the Seventh Plan should be possible. We will have to move slightly faster in order to make up for the year that we have lost. I am sure we have the potential and there should be no difficulty on that score.

As far as the Opposition in the country is concerned, so long as they carry on their kind of unprincipled politics, they do not have any chance of coming to power anywhere.

Mr V P Singh has been rather unfortunate in 1987 which culminated with the report the two Supreme Court judges have submitted on the hiring of Fairfax. Thereafter, he started attacking the judges. I find this a very unhealthy trend: if it is convenient to you, you appreciate and acclaim the judges for having done an excellent job, but if it goes against you, you turn around and try to condemn them. I do not think that any judge now would like to take on this kind



of assignment if their motives are to be questioned. I believe no sincere person who believes in a democratic set-up can possibly hold this kind of attitude. As far as the procedures regarding Section 8 (B) and 8 (C) are concerned, details will be revealed when the matter is discussed on the floor of the House, but *prima facie* I find it highly undesirable to ascribe any kind of dubious motivation to the highest members of the judiciary.

Concerning Mr Rajiv Gandhi's image, I think the worst is over for him. In 1988 he will be slowly building up his image and it will definitely improve.

Regarding my birthday, well, I will celebrate it in the usual low-key manner. A small get-together with members of my family will suffice. No birthday rallies whatsoever! ♦

GIRILAL JAIN

IBELIEVE THAT RAJIV Gandhi's image will improve this year. And although he has a big majority in Parliament I do not think he will go for a mid-term poll. But it is difficult to say to what extent this improvement in image will help him win elections next year.

I do not expect any anti-state action by the Central government, despite the Prime Minister's statement about sacking anti-national state governments. I do not see anything in his conduct which would suggest that he would take so drastic a step as the dismissal of a non-Congress



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government. Were he to indulge in any such mis-adventure, the consequences would be terrible. The country is past the stage when the Prime Minister could dismiss a duly elected state government and get away with it.

The other thrust of 1988 is going to be V P Singh. V P Singh is essentially an individual. He needs to formulate a new strategy although it is difficult to say exactly what. Ordinarily, his dilemma has been seen in terms of his alignment with the Left headed by the CPM, or with the BJP underscored by the RSS. The central conflict in this issue, as I see it, is whether he will form a party or not. I do not think he has made up his mind. I also feel that the Left consolidation will survive and the Right consolidation will not exist. I use the word Left and Right in the conventional sense.

From V P Singh's point of view, it does not make sense to make a long-term alignment with one or the other. For 20 years he has been a Congressman and he can best operate among Congressmen. Secondly, there are only two futures for V P Singh — either he emerges in the next election as the alternative PM or he goes under. There is no half-way solution. So whether Mr Singh joins the Left or the Right, he will be controlled by the people who command those battalions. Unless he has battalions of his own, he is really not in a strong position.

The situation in both Punjab and Sri Lanka will improve this year. I do not see the return of a popular (elected) government in Punjab. New Delhi will have to run the affairs in the state, at least for 1988. I also do not foresee the withdrawal of Indian troops from Sri Lanka in 1988. Things will be very difficult in Sri Lanka but our part in it will be manageable. I cannot, however, say the same of Sri Lanka.

The Indian foreign policy for the year is settled; apart from the rhetoric, nothing can change. The big problem for India is not its relations with the United States or, for that matter, even with the Soviet Union. It will arise if and when the Russians quit Afghanistan. The developments there can create serious problems for the region. However, it is idle to speculate about these problems at this stage.

It was a foregone conclusion that the US aid to Pakistan would continue. The Americans have neither the will nor the capacity to restrain Pakistan from going nuclear. This raises an issue which Mr Rajiv Gandhi and his government will have to settle within the country — whether India should go nuclear in response to Pakistan's nuclear quest or not. ♦



SUNDERLAL BAHUGUNA

WE HAVE BEEN LIVING as good neighbours for the last 31 years in Silyara village in Tehri Garhwal district. Our *ashram* is on the outskirts of the village and we share the spring-water with about half-a-dozen families. With the increase in population and the decrease in water-supply, we have been experiencing some difficulty in obtaining enough water from the spring; last year the source dried up to such an extent that there is now only one-third the amount of water in the spring as compared with last January. So the see-saw game for obtaining water has begun, and has caused strained relationships between us.

But this is not peculiar to our little village. The entire country, especially rural India, is facing this situation. Those worst-affected are the poor, who depend on wells and hand-pumps for their water-supply. In some places the ground-water level has been lowered by 10 to 15 metres. The rich farmers, who have the means to bore deeper tube-wells have been using their own resources and bank loans for obtaining more water; thus there is water famine everywhere. The traditional system of tank-irrigation has disappeared — these tanks, besides storing rain water were also used to replenish the wells.

Even if the next monsoons are favourable, there is no solution to the water famine which will become more acute in the next six months. We have been depending upon rain water stored in big reservoirs for power generation and irrigation. So far as the Bhakra and Pong dams in Himachal Pradesh are concerned, their level has been too low in recent months. These reservoirs receive water from snow-fed rivers and their tributaries which emerge from the Himalayan forests. Even if we depend on permanent glaciers for water, and these are fast receding due to the rise in temperature, there is no snow-melt during the winter. The tributaries are already dry.

The power crisis will continue till at least May 1988, when the Himalayan rivers will get more water from the snow-melt. The power-crisis, besides affecting the industries, will also affect agriculture as we have become more dependent upon power for irrigation. The struggle for more electricity between the agricultural and industrial sectors has already begun in the shape of Tikait's agitation in Western UP.

The immediate solution to the water and energy crisis is the observance of austerity in their

use. There should be a drastic cut in the wasteful use of these resources, especially in the cities. But the permanent solution is the development of alternative sources of energy, especially for agriculture and industry. Water should be declared the main product of the forests in general and of hill forests — Himalaya, Vindhyas, Aravalli and Western Ghats — in particular. Agricultural practices and industries consuming more water should be suspended at least until the water crisis is over. As far as long-term planning is concerned, rain-fed agriculture should receive top priority. The traditional system of digging tanks needs to be revived and the mass plantation of trees — good for moisture conservation — should be launched. Water-suckers like eucalyptus, pines and poplars, should not be tolerated. These steps will definitely change the atmosphere of gloom and despair into one of hope and happiness. ♦

SHASHI KAPOOR

ISEE A VERY BRIGHT FUTURE for commercial cinema and a very dim one for art films. The so-called commercial cinema will do better because good directors are back. There was a time when I felt we had lost them — Manmohan Desai had announced that he wouldn't be directing films any more and Ramesh Sippy was deeply engrossed in the world of television serials. But now they are back in business. So are others like Subhash Ghai and Yash Chopra; and Prakash Mehra is once again doing films with his favourite hero — Amitabh Bachchan. Dharmendra, too, is doing well, and Vinod Khanna, the prodigal son, has been warmly welcomed back by the film industry and is aspiring to be the No 1. There also is an onslaught of good youngsters such as Chunky Pandey; earlier we just had old pros. Sridevi has become the Amitabh Bachchan of the females although I think Rekha is the best that we have.

As for art films, I don't think there is a bright future for them, at least not for the next two or three years. Some of the art film directors (and producers) refuse to understand one basic principle — that they need an audience. Movies are made for the people, they should be seen by the people and not just live in archives or float around from festival to festival. I say this with experience and not with any bitterness — you have to have an eye on the box-office. One



should at least be able to recover the expenses through the returns. Satyajit Ray's films have done well with the exception of one or two; the same goes for directors like Raj Kapoor, Mehboob Khan, Bimal Roy and Manmohan Desai.

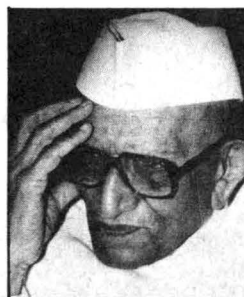
As far as the question of who is going to be No 1 in the popularity charts is concerned, I think it is still going to be Amitabh Bachchan. Not just because he is my friend, but I really think he has the charisma and potential that is required to be No 1. Perhaps there may be an Amitabh Bachchan in the grooming who might come up in the next few years, one never knows. But this year, his popularity will remain uncontested. ♦

MORARJI DESAI

THIS YEAR HOLDS MORE PROMISE than 1987 as it just cannot be any worse than last year. The worst is over. Looking at the present state of affairs, I feel that this government will not last the year. It will have to go — mainly because of internal rifts within it. There is so much corruption today, prices are escalating, the Punjab problem *has* to be resolved. But all this depends on the action that those in power will take. The government is not likely to hold mid-term polls because it knows that it will not survive if it does. As for Rajiv Gandhi, he got in by luck. I never really expected anything out of him so there is no question of disillusionment.

The kind of crisis that we are going through is not a unique situation. Every democracy has to go through such periods. I am sure that there is an alternative to the ruling party. We need a strong, united Opposition and I think that there will ultimately be only three parties. That is the only way a country and a democracy can develop. Look at England — they have just three parties. Our attempt at coalition during the Janata regime failed because we lacked real patriotism.

There are people like V P Singh. But I haven't really met him and cannot say anything about him. In any case, a country's strength doesn't depend on one person, it depends on the strength of the people, and only when the masses realise this will our democracy become strong. It may not hold for this year but there is a long-term prediction that I would like to make: the future of this country is very good. Things are moving in that direction. People should remain strong and fearless. ♦



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KAMALA DAS

IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE YEAR, the media will continue to highlight comparatively inconsequential issues like the recent cultural happenings at the Capital and Amitabh Bachchan, disregarding the more vital ones like the inadequacies of India's present foreign policy which might ultimately get the nation involved in a Third World War.

Already countless young army personnel, sent to Sri Lanka to exterminate the Tamil militants, have lost their lives or been reported 'missing' when only a few weeks ago the media had worked hard to direct India's sympathy towards the Tigers.

Will Lanka be a Vietnam for years to come where our young ones will be sent out in droves to die? Won't Lanka's economy crash due to this climate of destruction? And ours too? This is the most crucial issue, and the most overlooked.

Another is the drought and famine resulting from the rapid deforestation that has been taking place over the past ten years. The import of food grains will have to be stepped up as an anticipatory move. Pollution from disinfectants, pesticides and factory-wastes has rendered the air in cities and agricultural villages unsafe. Water, too, has become polluted. To avert Bhopal-like disasters, gas masks will have to be provided to the workers and the poor who live around factories. It will not be long before the ration shops will be asked to supply oxygen along with the stipulated quota of food grains and sugar.

Women's issues, non-issues mainly, will keep seminars alive. A lot of ambiguous chatter will take place on platforms, television, and on the air. Only the glamorous will participate as the accent will be on visual entertainment. More and more glossies will hit the news-stands, edited by high-profile socialites who dye their faded hair to raven black, and prop up their matronly bosoms in tight-laced bras.

Counterfeit currency will flood the places of commerce. The middle classes will borrow or steal to buy a VCR and a colour TV. Gold — the legitimate security — will dwindle to nothing in the Reserve Bank mint. The Communists will fade from red to pink, and from pink to the sinless white of khadi. The CPI will get disenchanted with the arrogant Marxists and join Congress (I). The Congress (S) leader, Unnikrishnan, will, like a prodigal, embrace the Congress (I) and either bargain for the chief ministership of Kerala



or go to a European country as India's only magnetic ambassador.

The Neo-nazis will be our enemies — racism being the only reason for their stance. There will be a change in the leadership of USA, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Australia and West Germany.

R K Narayan will be nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature but an obscure Polish dissident or an old Chinese poet will carry away the prize. P. P. Jayakar will retire and engage herself in the writing of yet another book. V P Singh will make an excellent film and consider bidding farewell to politics. And the Prime Minister will take off his bullet-proof vest, and decide to clothe himself in courage. ♦

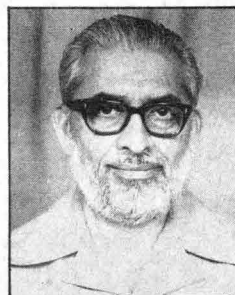
M R SRINIVASAN

INDIA'S ATOMIC ENERGY PROGRAMME has been directed to peaceful applications right from its inception and is intended to meet the developmental needs of the people of India. India hopes that there would be no need to change its policy and that Pakistan will refrain from acquiring nuclear weapons. India is playing an important rôle in the Six Nation Disarmament Initiative which is working towards nuclear disarmament in the global context.

During 1988 anticipated generation from the nuclear power stations will be about 5,144 million units. By 2000 AD, the Government has approved in principle the setting up of 10,000 MWe of nuclear power. This programme will be entirely indigenous. However, offers have been received from the Soviet Union and certain other foreign countries for the setting up of nuclear power stations. Discussions with the Soviet Union have been going on for the past several years. In looking at any foreign reactor offer as an additional source of electricity, questions relating to applicability of safeguards, assurance of supply of fuel, safety aspects and economic aspects are all taken into account.

The first issue of bonds floated by Nuclear Power Corporation in January 1988 will be to the extent of about Rs 100 crore. There would be another issue later in 1988 or early 1989 for a larger sum of money. The funds will be utilised for meeting part of the costs of projects under execution, namely, Kakrapar 1 & 2, Kaiga 1 & 2 and RAPP 3 & 4, and also for initiating work on new projects.

A number of research groups in the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, Tata Institute of Fun-



damental Research, Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research and Saha Institute of Nuclear Physics are engaged in research in superconductivity. During 1988 we expect to take up technology related to activities such as the making of wires and tapes from ceramic superconducting materials.

The signing of a treaty on Intermediate Range Nuclear Missiles between USA and USSR in 1987 has been a welcome development. It is hoped that the superpowers will also reach an agreement on a 50 per cent reduction of strategic nuclear weapons during 1988 and take further steps towards nuclear disarmament. It is also hoped that the other nuclear weapon powers and the threshold nuclear powers will join in efforts towards complete nuclear disarmament.

SHYAM BENEGAL

IN RECENT MONTHS, there has been an upward swing on the film scene and many major films are scheduled for release this year. Films have been doing well lately, but the business depends a lot on the economy of the country. The drought, the inflation, and our foreign-exchange rates are all bound to make an impact on the film industry.

Making a film has become much more expensive than it was previously. The price of the film, raw stock, and equipment is rising steadily, and this is going to result in an incredible increase in production costs. Although there has been a revival of cinema and an increase in the cinema-going public, that has not assured a higher percentage of returns as there are higher revenues to be paid.

The future of art films this year will depend on the development of an effective distribution chain by the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC). In the Hindi film industry, where alternative and mainstream cinema are two different entities, the latter is not likely to help or encourage any movement in the former. It will all depend on the efforts of the NFDC. This is not so in the case of regional films. In places like Kerala and Orissa the parallel alternative cinema, is, in fact, the mainstream cinema. Its success has been slow, but sure.

As for television, although it has found its place as the main mass medium, I do not really see any dramatic increase in its popularity. The sale of television sets is not going up. I doubt that the video industry, too, will be any better



off than what it is now. So far this industry has been functioning as an appendage to the film industry and hasn't developed independently or come into its own — its success or failure depends on that of the film industry.

There has been a surprising burst of talent on the film horizon. Although I need to brush up on my film viewing, I feel that artistes like Pallavi Joshi hold great promise for the future.♦

MULK RAJ ANAND

IN MY OPINION, history does not change from year to year. It changes in periods, eras and ages. However, in contemporary Indian history, after the big transition from slavery to freedom, changes have been quicker than in most other countries.

Yet the lack of education, the hangovers of a patriarchal, feudal society, and ritualised religions have prevented modernisation. The dowry system and the glorification of the burning of widows alive are cases in point; they are obnoxious impediments to the recognition of human rights. Religion, as a ritual, has played havoc in different parts of the country. Misuse of places of worship has plunged a progressive Punjab into backwardness, with the persistent killings of innocents in the name of faith. The quarrels among Hindus and Muslims (Ramjanmabhoomi and Babri Masjid conflicts) show the same decadent mentality. The intelligentsia has remained supine at many levels.

I think the fundamental problem has been that of the transfer of power from British hands to a pseudo-Parliamentary democracy; the elected representatives are mostly indifferently educated and have undergone no training for democracy. Gandhiji had suggested that there should be democracy from the grass-roots, the *Panchayat* level, the *Zilla Parishad*, the state legislatures and then the Parliament. The absence of representation of peasants and workers and the lower middle-class has led to the coming into Parliament of what Rajiv Gandhi calls 'the power-brokers'. The result has been that to ensure permanency, these legislators take money from big houses, promote the interest of the private sector, and assure the licence-permit Raj.

In West Bengal, the Left Front government has experimented with 'Nehruiite' social democracy. Eighty per cent of the land reforms have been implemented in the villages. In every village they have 50 looms for women, a cottage



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hospital and a good primary school. The *Zilla Parishads* offer training in paddy farming, fisheries and bee-farming, care for disabled children and sepers, and have a hospital with three doctors. Although they have not done much about Calcutta, they have surely transformed the countryside. As against that of Bihar where some landlords own over a thousand acres of land each.

I predict an intense struggle in areas where land reforms have not been carried out. The Naxalite struggle on behalf of the tribal population of the country will intensify too. I foresee disaster if religion is not separated from politics. The large-scale corruption in all political parties is indeed appalling, and it is surprising that the intelligentsia is tolerating communalists like Shahabuddin and Hindu chauvinists and chief ministers who wish to perpetuate a kind of dynastic rule.

I predict tremendous disasters if corruption is not rooted out from all levels of society. As for prices, we will face utter ruin if we go the way Mr Reagan and Mrs Thatcher have gone or adopt the Milton Friedman promise.

The human race faces nuclear death at the hands of the merchants of death who are spending US\$300 trillion on the Star Wars programme, unless the policy of non-alignment gains greater support. I prophesy that Russia will emerge as a free society and therefore save humanity from the possibility of a Third World War. ♦

DATTA SAMANT

I DO NOT SEE ANY GREAT FUTURE for the country this year. In short, I would lay the blame squarely on the attitudes that the government as well as people have towards everything, including each other. When Mr Gandhi came to power, he did so on account of a sympathy wave and the tendency we Indians have of trying out anything new, irrespective of its quality. In its two year regime, the government has lost credibility on all fronts, thanks to its lackadaisical attitudes. Mr Gandhi knows that the strength of his party has gone down. This is why I do think that, contrary to expectations, the government will not hold any mid-term polls this year.

The growing influence of the big business houses in all government policies, be it the National Housing Policy or the Sick Companies (Amendment) Bill is apparent and the outcome will be the exploitation of the poor. With all the



haphazardly-conceived modernisation trends in industry, I also foresee an unprecedented rise in unemployment figures this year. One modernised powerloom renders 22,000-25,000 workers jobless. The figures are already high. In Bombay alone, 7 lakh are unemployed, although only 4 lakh are registered as jobless. I am not against modernisation as long as its benefits accrue to the workers. Besides, in most cases, despite modernisation, industries are found incurring losses. The system has to be overhauled and corruption removed: *sab log chor hain* (all people are thieves).

The year also does not bode well for the workers. More and more industries are being declared sick: Maharashtra leads with 20 per cent of its industries declared sick or commercially non-viable. The present government's pampering of industry owners has reduced the clout of the unions. The bargaining powers of trade unions are on the wane and are likely to decline even further in 1988.

There have also been proposals to auction the textile mills of Bombay and use the land to rehabilitate the homeless. In reality, this is yet another manoeuvre by the government to oblige the big builders who are adept enough to exploit the housing legislations to their own advantage at the cost of genuine deservers. I have personally warned the government that we would take our agitation to the roads to register our protests. The clouds hovering over the country are certainly dark and foreboding. And I can see no silver lining. ♦

RUSI KARANJIA

I CAN SEE A VERY BRIGHT FUTURE for the country, provided the leadership of Rajiv Gandhi is not disturbed or sought to be scuttled by the conspiracy sparked off in 1987. His image might have been tarnished in the last year because he kept silent over provocations such as the ten absurd questions put forth by Ram Jethmalani. There seemed to be more enemies at home than abroad. This year the enemy's true colours will be revealed.

V P Singh's political reputation is dead. I am afraid it is a lost battle for the 'Very Pure Singh'. The hand behind the conspiracy which is manoeuvring this entire vendetta is that of Arun Nehru. I was the first person to point this out soon after I was informed of his secret dealings with the National Security Council (NSC) of



America. On the pretext of visiting hospitals, Mr Nehru had conferences with Admiral McFarlane, the notorious Colonel North, and Mr Kaycee of Fairfax Group Ltd.

The Fairfax Commission's report is very controversial. One important issue that the report focuses on is that of coincidence — the time-factor between the President, his letter, V P Singh's almost simultaneous rebellion, and the sudden change of policy of the *Express* newspapers from anti-President to pro-President, from pro-Rajiv to anti-Rajiv. Against such a backdrop, on probing further, the spectre of Arun Nehru can be seen rising larger than life.

There is no threat to the freedom of the press, but the press has definitely abused its freedom and needs to restrain itself. However, *Indian Express* will survive. I will myself feel diminished if anything happens to that group.

The Punjab and Sri Lankan problems will in all probability sort themselves out. By the end of 1988 the Indian troops in Sri Lanka should be withdrawn. The foreign policy of the country will also look up in 1988; the non-aligned policy of India has been appreciated a great deal. In fact, India has played a vital role in bringing the two superpowers together for the INF treaty. As far as US aid to Pakistan is concerned, after the Soviets move out of Afghanistan, Pakistan will lose its clout with the US and the aid will gradually stop.

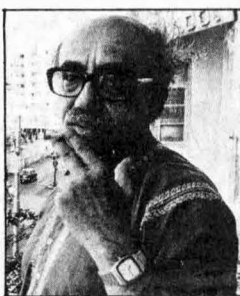
Locally, Justice Lentin has done a fine job for which I think he deserves the *Bharat Ratna*. And unless the Congress takes stock of the situation in Maharashtra tomorrow or the day after, Bal Thackeray may well become the NTR of this state. I would even welcome him as a Chief Minister. At least some kind of dynamism will be introduced, unlike the present regime where the Chief Ministers have to rush to the High Command every now and then. On the whole, the prospects for the country this year look optimistic. ♦

BEJAN DARUWALLA

GANESA SAYS, "Away, ye prophets of doom!"

1988 will go down as the Year of the Child. Adoption will be made easy, simple, common. Attitudes will change and the Law will help.

The arts and crafts of India will find a ready, open market abroad. In the field of cinema and the theatre, Indians will win awards, get warm



accolades, walk away with trophies and cash prizes. Indian authors and editors will electrify the world.

Equally important is the prediction that there will be fewer strikes, and therefore more working hours — all for the good of the country.

Alas, taxes will be with us, the axe falling on the common man, the middle class and, of course, the rich. A balancing of the budget, both for the country and individual families, is a must. Too heavy a handling, or a mere juggling and jiggling, will not do. Adulteration of food and medicine will continue to be the menace that it is.

1988-89 will go down as the year of accidents and earthquakes, but not of drought and consequent scarcity. Ganesa be praised for it!

In sports we will excel. More importantly, Indians will have an inkling of humour and laughter. The legacy will be a more relaxed attitude, a certain tranquillity, woefully lacking till now. Politics, consequently, may not hold centrestage attention all the while, as it has recently.

There will be an umbilical link between 1988 and 1989, as in both these years, Jupiter, the heavy-weight and the benign one, changes three signs, instead of the normal one sign. This is important, readers, as events which begin in 1988, will find true culmination the next year, 1989.

Politics is the unholy pastime of the nation. I have no desire or inclination to give this old football even a little kick. In India, every citizen is a political pundit. Too many pundits. . . !

NISSIM EZEKIEL

TO PUT IT VERY BLUNTLY, everything is going to get worse. The deterioration in the field of education is a reflection of the general scene, where personal interest rules rather than commitment to a cause. The schemes, commissions, and sub-committees only make matters worse than they are.

The improvement of education standards is a sound idea. The authorities are willing to pay more money to the lecturers to ensure this improvement. At the same time, they increase the duration of the lecture from 45 minutes to an hour, and also increase the number of lectures per week. A very sound goal is sought to be achieved in the wrong way. It seems that they have not grasped the point about what is really required in order to improve something. ♦



SPECIAL REPORT

THE NEWS ON New Year's Eve that the Maharashtra state government is at last going to introduce a Bill banning the use of amniocentesis and other tests for sex determination purposes has been widely welcomed. Over the past few years, the practice has reached phenomenal proportions and a proliferation of clinics offering sex-determination tests is evident in Punjab, Haryana, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and in the country's major cities. But it is in Maharashtra that the clinics have mushroomed to an unprecedented extent — even small towns boast up to five such clinics and in Bombay alone, at least 250 clinics conduct sex-determination tests as do some government hospitals.

The Bill, which in all probability will be introduced and passed in the March session, will ban all such tests in private hospitals and will permit them only in some government hospitals and research institutions like the Indian Council of Medical Research. Maharashtra is the first state in the country to ban such tests. Although the Central government has shown an interest in legislating against this practice, and has appointed a central committee to come up with its findings, no legislation as yet seems to be on the agenda. However, the ban in Maharashtra will probably set a favourable precedent. Although the ban is welcome, there are loopholes in the proposed Bill. There is also the danger of unscrupulous doctors cashing in on the desire of couples to determine the sex of the child. Also, a simple ban, although it will act as a social deterrent, is unlikely to eradicate the ideology that sustains such a practice; the campaign formed to fight the practice itself realises that "only a small battle is won", and is determined to keep the issue in public focus.

The campaign against sex-determination began two years ago when it was apparent that the amniocentesis test was being extensively used as a sex-determination technique, so as to enable parents to selectively abort foetuses. The problem raised a host of questions encompassing legal, me-



THE CHOICE THAT KILLS

dical, socio-political and economic issues. In response, the campaign became broad-based enough to address these and spotlight crucial issues of social change in a developing society. And with tremendous success. How many of us, for example, would have given a thought to what the advertisements for "cheap and easy" abortions, so well-displayed in every public place, actually imply? It was the campaign that exposed the links between the use of amniocentesis, selective female foeticide, and abortion clinics.

THAT IN AN APPARENTLY civilised and modernising society the practice of killing female foetuses is widely prevalent shocked several progressive

elements in society. This is one reason why the movement has been able to mobilise a variety of groups — doctors, teachers, and legislators. Interestingly enough though, neither is the technique nor its abuse a new phenomenon in the country.

Amniocentesis, as a medical technique, has been known for years and has been used to detect not only gross abnormalities in the foetus but the sex of the unborn as well. In India, too, the procedure has been utilised for over a decade. As happens with new technological innovations in medical practice, the test was hailed enthusiastically, and extensively used for several years without any attempt to evaluate its safety or its repercus-



In the face of the proliferation of clinics offering sex-determination tests, the Maharashtra government's proposed legislation banning such tests, is a welcome one. PADMA PRAKASH discusses the intensive campaign which struggled to bring about the ban, and the alarming incidence of female foeticide.

sions on those who used it. Since the late 1970s, with the rapid infusion of high-tech developments in obstetrics and paediatrics, a range of sophisticated procedures have been evolved to determine the status of the foetus, including its sex. While many countries have attempted to systematically monitor and evaluate the safety aspects of new medical technologies, the rapid turnout of these innovations and the highly competitive nature of the commerce in medicine preclude stringent norms being observed. This is of special consequence in countries like India, where there is hardly any regulation of practise, so that new techniques, irrespective of their relevance or safety, are used with impunity.

In fact, the misuse of the amniocentesis test first came to public notice as early as 1982 when women's groups in New Delhi drew attention to the blatant advertisements selling the service. Concerned activists and women's groups in other cities responded by conducting surveys to establish if the practice was prevalent. In Bombay, the Women's Centre discovered that not only was the practice prevalent in small private nursing homes and abortion clinics, but also in large, well-known private hospitals run by philanthropic trusts. Further, a closer medical look at these techniques revealed that foetuses which were subjected to them ran a high risk of injury: in Harkisondas Hospital in Bombay, at least one per cent of unborn children had been injured during the procedure. According to a conservative estimate, in Bombay alone, ten women underwent an amniocentesis test every day. The government, however, even in July 1982 maintained that these tests were not being performed on a wide scale and that it had warned state governments "as far back as 1977" to be vigilant about them. Another authoritative report computed that between 1978 and 1983, 78,000 female foetuses had been aborted in the country, following sex-determination procedures.

ALL THIS ALSO GENERATED a debate in academic journals such as the *Economic and Political Weekly*. One minority point of view suggested that the problem of female foeticide, which inevitably affected the sex ratio even more adversely for women, was, sociologically speaking, something of a bogey, and that such a hue and cry was wholly unwarranted. The argument ran thus that even if the sex ratio was adversely affected this would only increase the value of women in society, causing a proponent of this argument to remark: "Is not female foeticide better than female infanticide, or even than severe ill-treatment of little girls?"

Another group pointed out that modern-day techniques such as amnio-

centesis would only lend strength to practices which, at this point of time, were subterranean, but culturally and socially accepted. Some also argued that with the availability of medical procedures to determine foetal sex, the killing of female foetuses would become more common. They put forward three reasons to support their contentions: first, that the practice is culturally acceptable; second, that "female children become vulnerable as soon as families have 'enough' daughters especially if they do not have 'enough' sons"; and third, that the family planning programme, with its prescribed limit of two children, would only encourage the trend of female foeticide.

The debate brought out into the open the wider ramifications of the issue but, in the absence of a sustained and co-ordinated movement to halt the proliferation of these tests, petered out. It was in April 1986 that, under the banner of the 'Forum Against Sex-Determination and Sex Pre-selection Techniques', women's groups and science groups organised a one-day intensive workshop on the issue and charted out a programme for action. This was followed by a *dharna* outside Harkisondas Hospital in Bombay.

SEVERAL FACTORS HAVE contributed to the success of the movement. For one thing, in the three intervening years, the women's movement has gained tremendous strength and established a wide network in many parts of the country, making national campaigns a possibility. The health movement has increasingly made people aware of the misuse and overuse of technology. And certainly, amniocentesis and other such techniques were exactly that.

Since its inception, the Forum campaigned actively at two distinct levels — creating awareness on the one hand, and lobbying for legislative action on the other. Innovative means have been used to capture media and public attention, amongst them a mothers-and-daughters rally. In the words of one activist: "We have to

SPECIAL REPORT

create and emphasise positive images about daughters. This will take a long time because opinions about women's subordinate role in society are so firmly entrenched."

Simultaneously, the Forum put forward a categorical demand for the banning of sex-determination techniques. An understanding of the close link between the use of these procedures and female foeticide led to a two-pronged demand: first, that these techniques should be available only in government institutions and exclusively for the purposes of detection of foetal abnormalities, and even then the sex of the foetus, which becomes known in the course of performing the test, should not be revealed; second, that the selective abortion of female foetuses should be made illegal through suitable amendments in the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act (MTP).

THIS OPENED UP a new debate. Is it ethical for a doctor to suppress information from a patient, as he/she would be doing if they did not reveal the sex of the child? Can the necessary amendments be made in the MTP Act without curtailing a woman's right to abort? "Why would it be unethical for a doctor to refuse to reveal the sex of the child?" asks Dr Amar Jesani, a health activist. "The test in this case is not performed for the purpose of determining the sex of the foetus — this is only incidental information." Moreover, the sex of the foetus is not material to the decision which a woman has to make with reference to her unborn child. Most doctors in the movement see no ethical conflicts.

The recently introduced Bill in the Lok Sabha proposes amendments to the MTP Act. However, the amendments, moved by Sharad Dighe, Congress (I) MP from Maharashtra, have come in for critical comments from Gayatri Singh, an activist lawyer: "The Bill is extremely vague, and if passed, can severely restrict the existing grounds for abortion under the present Act." A medical practitioner can refuse abortion "if he or they



An advertisement for abortion or female foeticide?

have reasons to believe that such termination is sought with the intention to commit female foeticide." Points out Singh, "A woman seeking abortion for genuine reasons could thus be unduly harassed."

A more comprehensive Private Members' Bill seeking to ban amniocentesis was sought to be tabled in the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly some months ago, but did not succeed. The Bill made the use of amniocentesis for *any* purpose illegal and prescribed punishment to the offending doctors. The Forum studied the Bill at length and highlighted several loopholes: for instance, the definitions were not very clear — amniocentesis was confused with sex pre-selection techniques. Also, the group does not support a blanket ban on amniocentesis, and believes that the tests should be permitted in specific cases, for instance, if the mother is above the age of 35 years, if there is a family history of genetic defects, or if the mother has been exposed to fetotoxins.

There is, however, a case for demanding a complete ban on amniocentesis. Recent findings have shown that children whose mothers had undergone the amniocentesis test run a higher than normal risk of impairment in later life. Moreover, amniocentesis itself can cause spontaneous abortions or injury to the foetus. Other more

sophisticated techniques are comparatively safer.

THE FORUM HAS ALSO campaigned against sex pre-selection techniques. It believes that these techniques, which may still be at the research stage, should be strongly condemned. The prevailing preference for males will ensure that these techniques will only be used to beget sons and this will inevitably have disastrous effects on the demographic front, and perpetuate anti-woman social values.

Meanwhile, the Maharashtra government has set up a committee to look into the issue of a ban on sex-determination and sex pre-selection, chaired by the Health Minister. The committee has a representation from Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), the campaign group, and activist doctors, amongst others, and is expected to submit its report later this month.

In order to determine the current extent of the spread of sex-determination facilities and female foeticide in Bombay, the committee commissioned Dr Sanjeev Kulkarni, a gynaecologist from the Foundation for Research in Community Health, to undertake a study. It was found that 84 per cent of the 50 gynaecologists in the various wards of the city perform amniocentesis for sex determination, and that

approximately 50,000 fetuses are aborted each year in Bombay alone.

Dr Kulkarni's study gave the committee adequate impetus to recommend measures to limit the availability of these tests. Ironically enough, most gynaecologists have started offering these services in the last five years, that is, *after* the first major public debate on the issue. It is also significant that the sharp increase coincides with the time when the family planning programme has been refurbished with an added emphasis on achieving targets. Given the male bias in our society and the imposition of the small family norm, amniocentesis has been viewed as a boon, especially in the absence of information regarding its reliability and the risks involved to the mother and the infant.

NOT SURPRISINGLY, the campaign has generated intense reaction from certain sections of the lay population as well as the medical community. Many doctors feel that it is far better to abort an unwanted female foetus rather than let it be born to suffer as a neglected daughter. To counter this, Vibhuti Patel, a member of the Forum and of the Bombay Women's Centre, remarks in a recent article, "By this logic it is better to kill the poor rather than let them suffer poverty and deprivation."

There are many who are against the use of these tests and the foeticide which follows, but do not agree that legislation is the answer. Said a private practitioner from Vile Parle: "Why are they asking for more laws when even the existing ones are not implemented? This will only drive the tests underground and make it worse for women. The answer lies in social education."

A woman visitor to Bombay who chanced upon the Children's Day rally organised by the Forum countered this trend of argument: "I have three daughters and each of them have two daughters — all of us have had to bear this 'stigma'. But I still feel that banning these techniques is the first step

WHAT IS AMNIOCENTESIS?

AMNIOCENTESIS IS a technique by which amniotic fluid is removed from the amniotic sac and subjected to chromosomal analysis. The fluid contains foetal cells which are separated out and can be both directly observed or cultured. The sex of the foetus is determined by the presence or absence of a spot called the Barr bodies, or other bodies called the fluorescent F bodies, in the nucleus of the cell.

The technique was originally developed to detect genetic disease by direct chromosomal study of the foetal cells. Amongst these are diseases which are sex-linked, for instance haemophilia, which only affects the male foetus. Thus, in cases when a mother is a carrier of the disease, a male foetus has a high chance of being haemophilic.

Amniocentesis can cause various kinds of damage to the foetus. The chances of premature delivery are four per cent, and of abortions, 1.5 per cent. Besides, it can also cause hip dislocations, respiratory infections, infection of the reproductive tract, and puncture marks on the foetus. These risks are not just underplayed but were never even estimated until recently. For instance, although amniocentesis has been in use in England for 15 years and 20,000 tests are performed each year, the results of the first controlled study were published only as late as 1985. These studies reveal that babies of mothers who have undergone amniocentesis tests may be at a higher risk of suffering from respiratory distress syndrome and lung complications.

towards a change in attitudes towards women. If a procedure is banned by legislation, the implication is that it is socially wrong and this will act as a deterrent."

Dr Jesani echoes this point of view: "We have to accept that we are fighting against the dominant current in seeking this ban. We can't oppose sexist ideology, for instance, within the family, very successfully at the moment. In any movement directed at social change, there are times when one cannot choose the point of attack. Our focus is to deepen the debate on the issue."

THE MAHARASHTRA government committee, keeping in view the problems of implementation, has accepted the NGOs' suggestion of watchdog committees comprising representatives from voluntary groups. Such groups will need to oversee the implementation for at least ten years and will have to ensure that the number of amniocentesis or other genetic tests

performed does not grossly exceed the estimated proportion of mothers who face the risk of delivering genetically abnormal babies. As per Kulkarni's study, only five per cent of women who underwent these procedures sought genetic diagnosis of the foetus. Another fact that makes for the feasibility of watchdog groups is that although there are hundreds of clinics offering these services, there are only a few laboratories — 14 in Maharashtra — which actually undertake the analysis. Most doctors simply draw out the fluid and send it to the laboratories. Hence, the essential monitoring would have to be done at the laboratories.

It now remains to be seen what exactly the committee will recommend. But whatever that may be, and in spite of the new Bill, the campaign against amniocentesis is planning future action. In a sense this is just the beginning, for there are already signs of an influx of new medical technologies into the country. ♦

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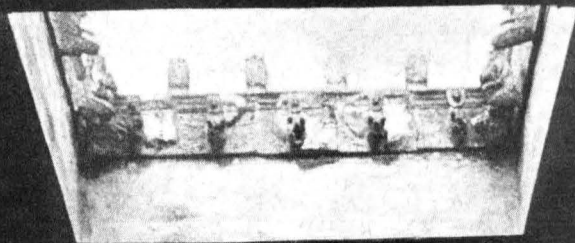


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POMPEII PRESERVED

When Vesuvius erupted in AD 79, the Roman town of Pompeii vanished under the debris that hailed down on the city. Until excavations began in the 18th century to unearth that fascinating monument to antiquity and the Caesars. In this riveting essay, GRAHAM HALL, who spent two years in Pompeii recently, recreates the Pompeii that was — the life, the splendour and the magic.

THERE IS A NEW FASHION in the West, that of placing time capsules in one's garden, the foundations of one's home or in the walls of buildings, to be discovered generations later by one's descendants. These time capsules contain photographs, letters, diaries and personal memorabilia, so that those in the future might see how we lived.

The biggest and most informative time capsule was not, however, planted by our generation, or even by our grandfathers; it was the burying in a volcanic eruption of a complete town on the Bay of Naples, in South Italy.

At about midday on August 24, AD 79, the volcano Vesuvius, believed to be extinct, erupted. The power it released was ten thousand times greater than an atom bomb's and the explosion lasted for four days.

The eruption began suddenly,



PHOTO ESSAY

without warning. In the town of Pompeii, on the slopes of Vesuvius, the baker had placed his bread in his oven fully expecting to extract it within the hour; a schoolboy had placed his books — wax tablets fastened with cord — on his bench; a tavern-keeper had placed his cups and jars on his counter, ready for his customers, and another shopkeeper had placed his customer's change on the counter for the customer to pick up — when suddenly the explosion occurred. There was a huge bang; the very earth shook; a massive column of smoke shot from the volcano into the sky, miles high; an overwhelming stench of sulphur swept over the town; the cloud of smoke obscured the sun and it became dark. And then the debris from the mountain rained down on the city. At the end of four days, Pompeii had vanished. It remained there, a time capsule from the age of the Caesars, ten feet under the soil throughout the centuries until, in the middle of the eighteenth century, work began to bring it back to light.

Today Pompeii is about three-quarters uncovered, and still work goes on. It measures about two miles by one, and it is roughly oval in shape, covering some 150 acres.

THE POMPEIANS WERE a prosperous and contented lot, happier than the dour Romans and more blissfully ignorant than the Greeks who came before the Romans. His wine was good, as was his *garum*, his fish sauce, and these were exported all over the Roman Empire. He liked to gamble, to drink, to make love and to quarrel; he liked to spend money and to boast, and when he finally left the world, he liked his tomb to be grand and majestic, to announce to all what a wonderful person he had been.

Pompeii is a complete town, with houses, temples, law courts, municipal buildings, shops, bakeries, factories, taverns, brothels, and theatres — left just as they had been on that fateful morning. It is without equal anywhere in the world; nobody can fail



Walking through Pompeii's paved streets one relives the past.

to be moved on visiting it, by walking the streets on which those ancient Pompeians walked and peeping into the bedrooms where they lived. It is not difficult to imagine them as they went about their everyday lives.

Pompeii is a well laid-out town, although it was not planned. The Forum, the main square, was at the highest point, dominated by the Temple of Jupiter and surrounded by markets, triumphal arches, public buildings and lesser temples. On the left, overlooking the sea with the

islands of Capri and Ischia on the horizon, was the more fashionable area; on the right, the less exclusive zone. A road leads down the gentle slope from the Forum to the commercial area, and beyond that, to the sports ground and the amphitheatre, one of the oldest in existence.

THE RICH OF POMPEII were very rich but the poor were not too poor. Even the slaves had time to idle in taverns, to play dice and watch the gladiators train in their barracks. The

most numerous of all the classes were the middle classes, as in most communities, and from the clues left in this time capsule, we can see that the middle-class Pompeian emerges as a slightly pompous man, ambitious for high office, envious sometimes of his betters, but with a sense of humour and a thoroughly human desire to enjoy himself.

WE KNOW ALL THIS about the Pompeian because of the clues he left us, in particular, the graffiti. When he scratched his love poems, his complaints, his insults or his messages, on the walls of public buildings, he imagined they would be cancelled out the next time the wall was repainted. A lover could never have known that nearly two thousand years later we could be reading on a tavern wall his impassioned plea to his driver to hurry, finish his wine, leave the tavern and whip his horses to take him to the girl he loved. Nor could the more humble Pompeian, scorned by his lover, have known that his less romantic but more touching lines would still exist:

*Ah, Victoria! Wherever you go
May you sneeze merrily.*

Caricatures of leading citizens adorn the columns of the sports ground. "Lovers, like bees, feed on sweet things", was followed by a disgruntled "Lovers are sick and should be cured". Another Pompeian wrote on the wall of a brothel: "I loved Caecilia but then I discovered she

was filth." And another customer to the brothel, equally frank, wrote simply: "I like boys." There was so much graffiti in Pompeii that one citizen wrote: "O Wall, if you receive any more messages scratched on you, surely you will fall down."

There are so many houses, walls, pictures, and monuments to look at that at every turn there is something of interest. Along the main street in the commercial area, the walls of shops are covered in municipal electoral slogans: "Vote for Rufus", "Vote for Valens", "Postumus is paying for games in the arena so vote for him." "Pollia, the whore with the broad backside, says vote for Silius."

Outside the Temple of Isis is a plaque loudly proclaiming that a freedman paid for its restoration, a monument to the freedman's wealth. It is vulgar, but then, were I as rich as the rich Pompeians had been, I would probably want everyone else to know about it too.

WANDERING AROUND the ruins you get the feeling not of being in a museum or a monument to antiquity, but of being in a living city. As you pass a *thermopolium*, a bar, you can almost hear the echoes of the laughter as wine was served, as dice were rolled, and as men grappled drunkenly with the serving girls. You can still feel the dryness of the flour mill as you look at the track made by the donkey going round and round. You can sympathise with the much-bejewelled lady whose skeleton was found in a cell in the gladiators' barracks. And you can feel the luxury of Fabius Rufus' new terrace with its windows, through which one could see Capri grossly distorted by the thick crude glass.

But throughout the town are reminders of the fate of those lively, cheerful people of Pompeii. In many rooms, in modern glass-cases that do not distort, are plaster casts of the victims of the eruption. Pompeii contained about 20,000 inhabitants and about 90 per cent of them

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Those trapped became themselves "part of the time capsule".

PHOTO ESSAY

escaped. But those who were left behind became themselves part of the time capsule. Many of those who perished were immediately covered in volcanic mud, which then hardened. As the body decayed, a void was left in the mud, and when the city was excavated, these voids were filled with plaster which was left to set, and then very carefully exhumed. In this manner we can see exactly in what position the man died, the clothes he wore, his shoes, his hairstyle, his build, and his weapons.

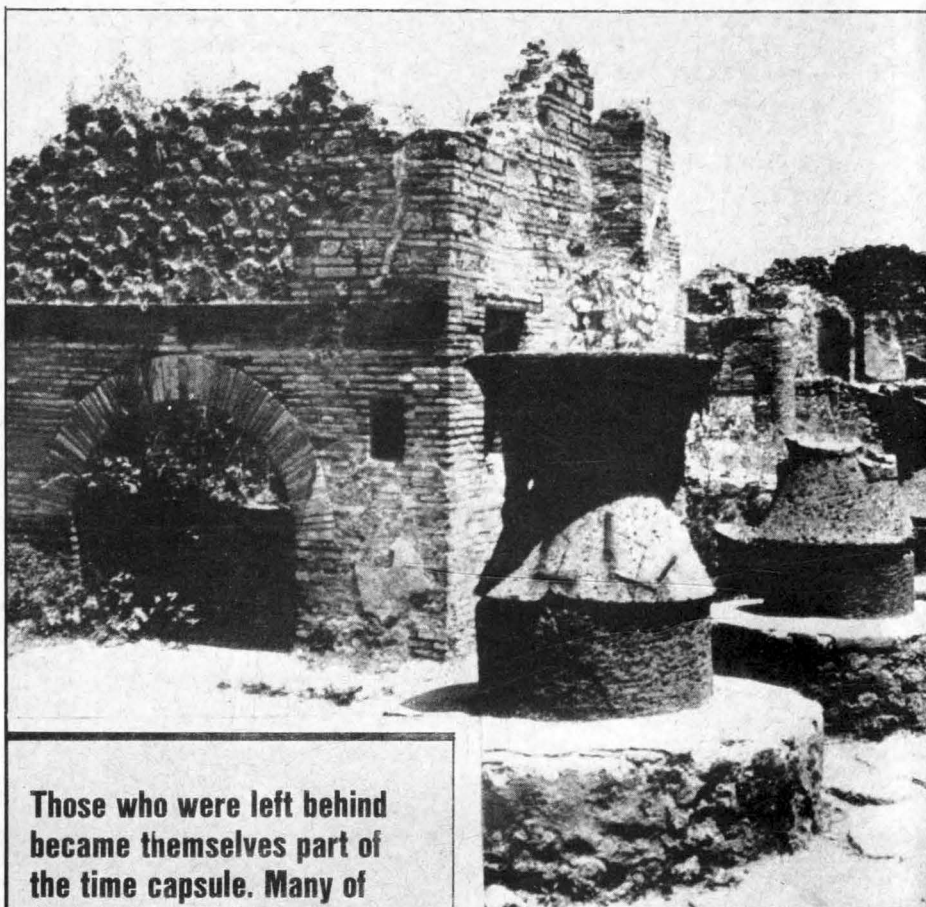
I WAS PRESENT AT A DIG where a group of thirteen Pompeians were found, the largest group ever found together. It was on a road immediately outside the town walls, and at first, all that could be seen was a hole in the ground the size of the entry to an ants' nest. An expert was called. He examined the hole. He inserted a finger. He inserted a metal probe. Then he nodded.

All excavation was stopped. A barrier was erected around the hole. Plaster was brought, mixed, and very gently poured into the hole. It took several bags of plaster, but at last it would take no more.

A temporary shelter was erected, a custodian left to guard the site, and the archaeologists went home. Two days later they returned. The head archaeologist warned me not to be disappointed. Often all they had were casts of trees, or rubbish, or carts abandoned as people had fled in panic.

The team of excavators worked slowly and carefully, digging with trowels about the size of soup spoons. Gradually the plaster cast emerged but the men were not to be hurried. They dug a little, they brushed the soil away with little brushes, the soil was sifted for coins or any other articles, and bit by bit one of the victims was revealed.

He was a middle-aged man, tall, thin and dressed in a simple tunic. His mouth was open and his expression strained; most of his teeth were



Those who were left behind became themselves part of the time capsule. Many of those who perished were immediately covered in volcanic mud, which then hardened. I was present at a dig where a group of 13 Pompeians were found, the largest group ever found together.

still in position — in an agonised snarl. Across his stomach was a large log: it was easy to see what had happened. The force of the erupting debris falling on Pompeii had caused a branch to break off a tree and trap the fleeing man. "Gas came out of the mountain in waves," the chief archaeologist explained to me. "So probably, as he was trapped there, he suffocated. Poor devil."

The ruins of a once-busy bakery bearing the ravages of time and a volcano's fury.

WORK DID NOT STOP once this single figure had been revealed. He lay there, on his back, the log still pinning him down, as the ground around him was minutely examined. Time and again the chief archaeologist was called, and his little probe came into use. Sometimes he would shake his head; but often he would nod. Work would stop, plaster would be prepared, poured in and left to set.

Eventually, thirteen people lay arranged on the ground in various agonised positions, including a few children. From their positions it seems probable that they had stopped to help the man trapped by the branch. Since they were lying on debris, and not on the road itself, we know they were trying to escape; and since one of them was armed with a

sword, we know that that one was a soldier.

There was considerable excitement as the sword, in its leather sheath with a matching dagger on the side, came to light. The leather had almost disintegrated, and the soil and volcanic ash were lifted away grain by grain to avoid disturbing the leather. As this was going on, a breeze blew a fragment of leather onto my foot: as soon as it touched my toe it disintegrated into dust.

The sword was photographed on all sides like a corpse in a thriller movie, and then a cover was placed over it. The soil beneath, and the plaster on the one side, was carefully cut away. A slide, like a small stretcher, was inserted under it and then it was carried away with infinite care. I noticed a man in a white coat, a mild-looking man with the air of a clerk, who occasionally gave directions. I spoke to him. I asked him where the sword was going.

"Why, to my laboratory," he answered. "I shall wave my magic wand

and then this lot" — he gestured towards the archaeologists with a good-natured smile — "can be as clumsy as they like and they won't damage it."

HE WAS DOTT SCOLGIAMIGLIO, the Head Restorer of the ruins of Pompeii, and he invited me to his laboratory, which was inside one of

The team of excavators worked carefully, digging with trowels the size of soup spoons. Gradually the plaster cast emerged. He was a middle-aged man, dressed in a simple tunic. His mouth was open and his expression strained; most of his teeth were still in position — in an agonised snarl.

the Pompeian houses near the Forum.

"Do you like jig-saw puzzles?" he asked me as soon as I arrived. I said "not particularly", so he continued: "Then you wouldn't like this." He held up a basket of some two or three hundred pieces of broken glass, the largest of which was about one square inch. "It was found in the tomb of Obellius Firmus," he said. "They told me to reconstruct it."

"What is it?" I asked.

He shrugged.

"I don't know. I don't even know if all the pieces are there, or if they are from the same item. It might be a bowl, a jar, a cup — or it might be one of each."

"How will you do it?"

"With patience. With a lot of patience."

He showed me an assistant with a bowl of sand before him. In the sand was a piece of curved glass made up of tiny fragments stuck together. From the basket he was taking more fragments with tweezers and, with a magnifying glass, he was examining the edges against the edges of the glass in the sand.

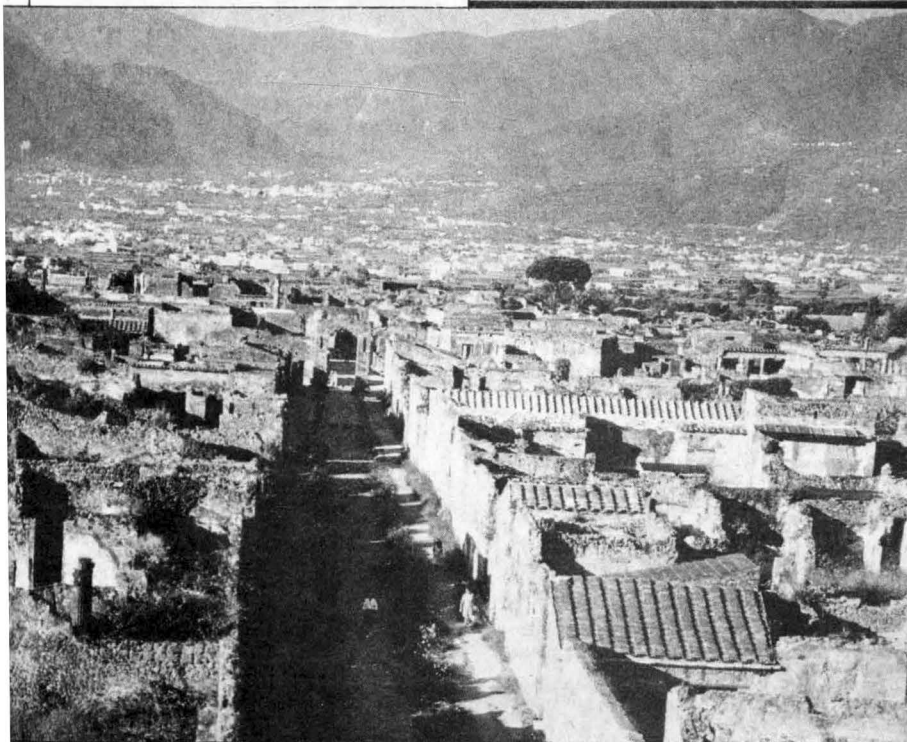
"How long will it take you?" I asked.

Again Dott Scolgiamiglio shrugged.

"Some days we might find two or three pieces which fit," he replied. "At other times a whole week may go by without matching two pieces."

All around the laboratory, on shelves, on benches, and even under the tables, were vases, plates, busts, and other objects, all of which had been painstakingly recreated. On some of them the cracks were as unobtrusive as those seen in the paint of Old Masters.

Dott Scolgiamiglio promised me that before long he would allow me to handle the sword found at the dig, to prove to me that he could restore the leather. In due course I held it in my hand, the very sword and the very sheath that that soldier had held so many centuries ago as he had tried to escape from the world's most fascinating time capsule. ♦



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HIS FILMS MAY NOT RUN to packed houses. But they are sensitive, incisive, and thought-provoking. Over a career span of less than a decade, Girish Kasaravalli has already picked up the coveted national award for the best Indian feature film, twice.

The low profile film-maker lives in an old cottage with a big garden, in Bangalore. His tiny living-room is crammed with awards of all shapes and sizes. A new, polished sofa set reveals a recent spurt of affluence. "I am quite incapable of making popular masala films," says Kasaravalli ruefully, "they call for a different sort of approach which I lack."

His first full-length feature film, *Ghatashraddha* (Kannada), won the *Swarna Kamal* for the Best Feature Film a few years ago, and young Ajit won the Best Child Actor award for his performance. More recently, Kasaravalli's latest venture, *Tabarana Kathe*, which won the national award for the Best Feature Film of 1986 and was premiered on television, was screened as part of the Indian Panorama at the International Film Festival in Trivandrum. Talented actor Charuhasan walked away with the award for the Best Actor for his performance as *Tabara Shetty*, the aging octroi-collector.

Tabarana Kathe examines the theme of bureaucracy: its impersonality and attendant problems of negligence and unnecessary delay. The film itself took about three and a half years to complete simply because Kasaravalli could not find a financier. It was finally produced on a minimal budget of Rs 5.5 lakh, taken on loan from the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC). Ironically enough, *Ghatashraddha* was turned down by the Film and Television Institute (FTII) of Poona when Kasaravalli submitted the script for his diploma film in a proposal many years ago.

M D Riti met the middle-aged film-maker in Bangalore recently, on the eve of the Film Festival.

Imprint: The parallel cinema movement in Karnataka was once led by

EXPLORING NEW DIRECTIONS

In the span of just a decade, and with two national awards to his credit, Girish Kasaravalli has already carved a niche for himself in the world of parallel cinema. In a candid conversation with M D RITI, he discusses his medium and his message.



the three K's — B V Karanth, Girish Karnad, and yourself. You are the only person still here. Now, with two national awards to your credit, will you too sell out and move to greener pastures?

Kasaravalli: I do not think that description is quite right. Karanth went back to the theatre, which had always been his medium. As for Karnad, he *did* move to the Bombay film industry, but he says it was only in order to earn money to make Kannada films. As for me, I currently have enough opportunity to make Kannada films. But if such a situation were to arise in which I have no work here, I would definitely move away.

Have you ever felt tempted to make a fast buck by directing a mindless pot-boiler?

I do not ever want to make the kind of popular film that is being churned out these days. But I do have a high regard for the idioms they employ; their images are highly codified and operate on a totally different level from the ones we use. If, for example, I had cast a popular actor to play the role of *Tabara* in my film instead of Charuhasan, he would have been accepted as *Tabara* on the one hand, but would still be identified with his star image on the other; I would have had to use strong conceptualisation to counteract that stereotyped star image, and would probably have failed miserably. The popularity of the star would have been an advantage, however.

There is yet another problem — the people who control such films. One can either get into the system and try to use the prevailing idioms, or stay out. I am sure that I would never be able to get into the system and still control my films. I know that such a system exists in Bombay; that is one of the reasons I do not want to move there. Besides, I don't know Hindi!

Do you think that Hindi films influence Indians as much as regional cinema?

Regional cinema has always had a

INTERVIEW

greater impact on people than Hindi cinema. Only Bombayites consider Hindi films to be really important and that is because it is their kind of cinema; it is limited by their culture and language boundaries. I see very few Hindi films myself.

Do you think films can be classified into art films or commercial films?

There are two kinds of films at either end of the spectrum, but there are several shades in between. However, 'art films' are seldom commercially successful; ideally, art should be the subject with commerce as the predicate. These terms are commonly used to differentiate between two kinds of films — those in which the commercial angle is predominant and those in which the film-maker attempts to sustain a dialogue with his audience through the medium of cinema.

People who are conditioned to the idioms of commercial cinema and its clichéd pattern of story-telling, initially resist any other kind of cinema. A successful film-maker can overcome these barriers; there are some directors who are on the right path, but who have not yet been successful. There are others who are pretentious, and whose aims are dubious, but who pretend to be on the right path.

Which contemporary film-makers would you classify in this last category?

I do not want to name specific people. . . but I always suspect the motives of people who talk about 'middle' cinema and who say that they are trying to bring two streams of cinema together. Their style is so deceptive.

Do you mean people like Ramoji Rao and I V Sasi?

I have not seen their films, so I would not like to comment. . .

G V Iyer once told me that he believes in making films "only for the classes and not for the masses." How would you respond to such a statement?

How can you categorise people in this way? The entire concept is wrong; it has been created largely by popular film-makers who sit in their air-conditioned offices and decide what people will or won't like, and therefore, the kind of films that should be made. I am against this *nouveau riche* class that lives as luxuriously as possible and whose concept of a film constitutes a two-hour long extravaganza with a lot of gloss.

Some people think that education is what differentiates between classes of people, but I can think of so many people who might have studied only upto the fourth standard but who really appreciate films like *Ghata-*

Are you trying to say that commercial film distributors have the Indian film industry in a stranglehold?

It is much more complex than that. The problems are the same as those faced by any industry in which the consumer is all important. Distributors and producers want a film to be seen by the largest number of people possible. So, in their films they present a sort of buffet spread so that there is something in it for everyone. The story is woven around all these elements. As they try to make it more lavish, the cost inevitably escalates, which in turn means that they have to draw an even larger audience than they originally targeted for.



From Tabarana Kathe: Winner of the President's Golden Lotus Award.

shradda. Education and urbanisation are not the only two factors that determine what type of person will like a particular kind of film. For instance, the population in a village is smaller than that of a town; naturally, fewer people will actually come to see a film. It is not that people in rural areas don't like that kind of cinema. One should look at the ratio of viewers to the total population, not the absolute number of viewers who view a particular film in a particular place. My films have been shown to tribals who have liked them just as much as city viewers.

Theatres face the same situation. They are constructed at great cost, and their rents are high — something like Rs 30,000 per week. The distributors are then compelled to select the kind of film that will fetch high returns in all shows. A film like *Tabarana Kathe* will not run to a full house for the entire week; consequently, no distributor will want to touch it.

In *Tabarana Kathe*, Tabara seems quite sane, but throughout the film, various characters declare that he has gone mad. Were you making a state-

ment that society dubs anyone who is individualistic in his attitudes, mad?

We see a sane Tabara contrasted with several unnatural people who keep telling us — or the invisible person beside the camera — that Tabara is mad. It is really the man with a gun amidst the peace of nature, or the man who worships his weights and measures who looks abnormal to us, not Tabara. Consequently, madness becomes defined as not falling in with others. The other characters in the film would like us to believe that the madness comes from within Tabara and not as a result of the treatment meted out to him; it pleases them to

the village is ignored by Tabara, until the doctor declares that he has to amputate Appi's leg. At that point, Tabara says that he would like to take her to a hospital in Bangalore, a city, as he is sure that the doctors there can cure her leg without amputation. By the time he gets there, it is too late. When people think of the modern world, they think only in terms of things that are grand and on a large scale — tall buildings, huge machines — many of which ultimately lead to the alienation of the individual. The tragedy of Tabara is this movement from the micro-level to the macro-level, and it is this which ultimately leads to alienation.

It is really another facet of the same issue. Men are no longer considered human, but are instead treated like machines.

Ghatashraddha shows the suppression of a child widow by society; **Tabarana Kathe** pits the poor government employee against bureaucracy; and **Mooru Daarigaly** portrays a woman who is oppressed by her family. Nargis once accused Satyajit Ray of exporting Indian poverty through his films. Your films too seem to exploit the predicament of the oppressed. . .

If that were so, Gandhiji should have been the first man to have been banned and criticised! It was he who accepted the reality of poverty in India and went to international conferences as the naked *fakir*. Do people want us to hide facts and show pretty painted pictures to the outside world? If Ray had not made those films, would outsiders have remained ignorant about Indian poverty?

Are you not compounding the exploitation already prevalent in India by making films that depict oppression but bring you personal glory and laurels?

No, because an artist or film-maker ultimately focuses (public) attention on a problem. A good work of art shows you the many dimensions of a problem and makes you think. That does not amount to exploitation.

Who are your favourite Indian film-makers?

Ray is one of my favourites; I particularly like his early films. Adoor (Gopalkrishna) is probably the next most serious film-maker in India today, and he has evolved consistently from one film to the next.

Have you ever contemplated re-making your films in any other language? You could perhaps make more money if you did. . .

No. I think a good film can be made just once and in one language. If I can recover the money I have invested in a film, that is good enough. ♦



The tragedy of Tabara is that of alienation.

think that he is a lunatic because they are then able to disclaim any responsibility for the situation he finds himself in.

You use the sustained image of a festering wound on Tabara's wife, Appi's leg, which ultimately kills her. Were you trying to draw a parallel between that process and the degeneration of society itself?

That image is used to depict the reigning belief that there is always something bigger and better outside one's own small society. A small wound that could easily have been treated in

Your films always pit the individual against society. Could one describe you as an anti-establishment film-maker?

I attack any institution that becomes dehumanised. I cannot think of a single situation in which the establishment is totally humane; institutionalisation invariably leads to dehumanisation. It is this process that I hate. We seem to think that efficiency can be achieved only by a mechanical, compartmentalised approach to work.

Do the different facets of oppression in society fascinate you?

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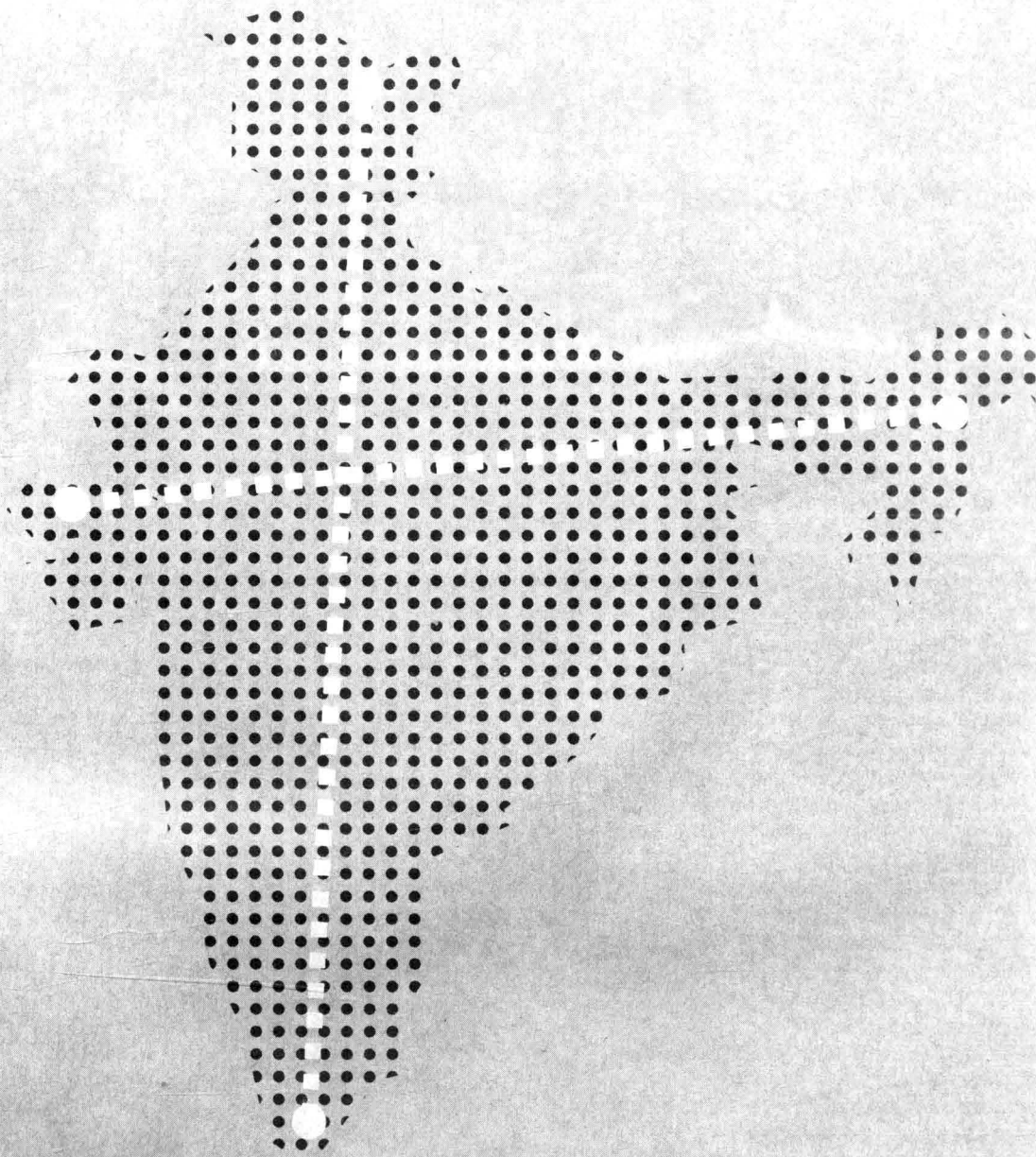
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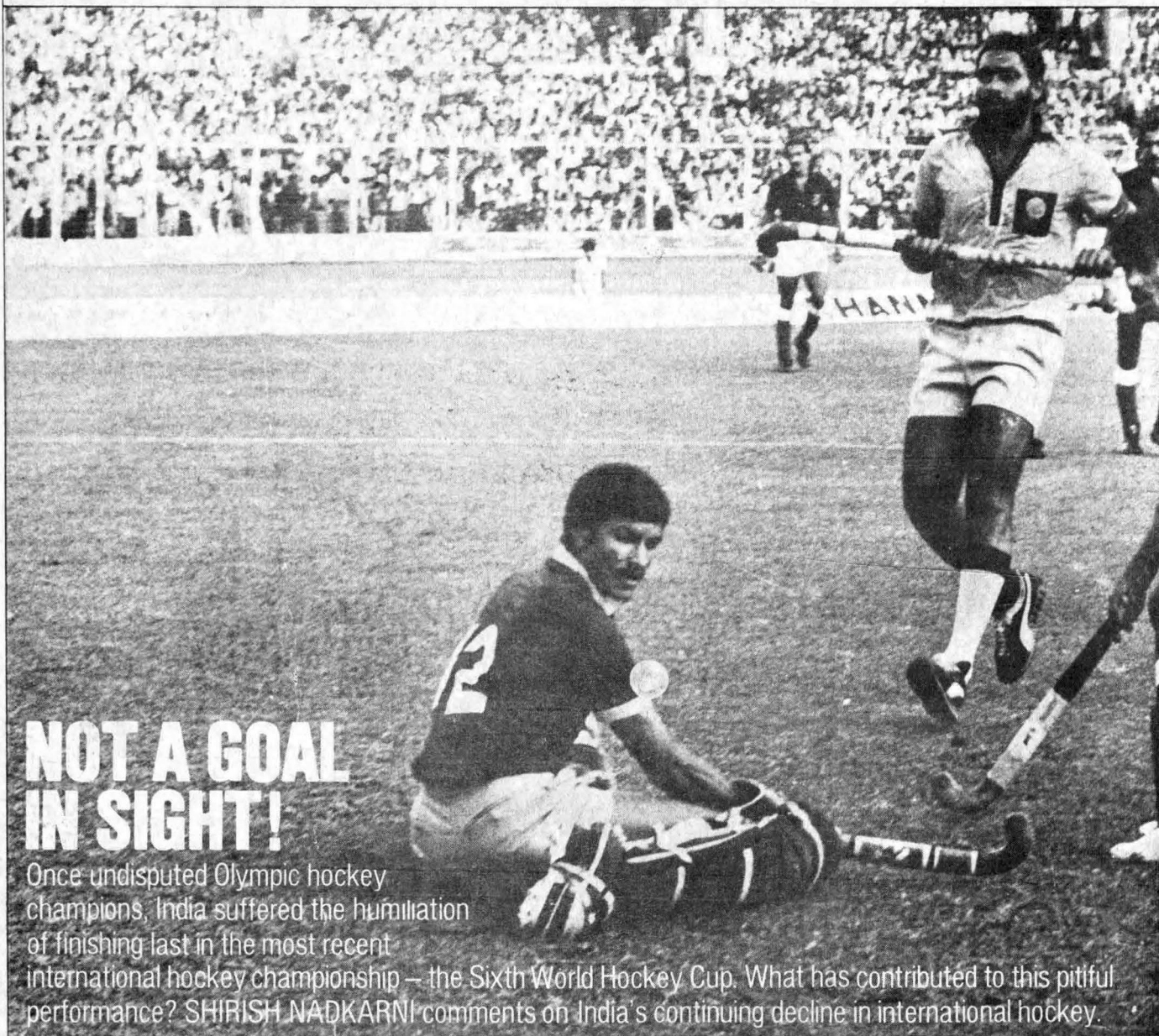
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From March 1988.



NOT A GOAL IN SIGHT!

Once undisputed Olympic hockey champions, India suffered the humiliation of finishing last in the most recent international hockey championship — the Sixth World Hockey Cup. What has contributed to this pitiful performance? SHIRISH NADKARNI comments on India's continuing decline in international hockey.

"World hockey has been transformed. Artificial surfaces have changed its very nature. Strength and speed are now far more important; but as if that were not enough, the Europeans and Antipodeans have raised their skills to new levels. But, most significantly, many countries have studied Asian techniques and learnt to combat them. 'Meanwhile Pakistan, and more particularly India, have continued to play grass hockey...'"

— Patrick Rowley in *The Sunday Times*, London, on the Sixth World Hockey Cup, October 1986.

IT IS NOW over a year since one-time international hockey champions, India (who still hold the world record of seven consecutive Olympic titles in the sport), had the traumatic experience of finishing last out of 12 teams in the Sixth World Cup Hockey Championships in the north-westerly London suburb of Willesden.

India has yet to recover from that setback which shocked every hockey-lover on the subcontinent, and which threatened the country's very participation in the next Olympic Games. Just how far the rot has set in can

be gauged from the results of the recently-concluded Indira Gandhi International Hockey Tournament at Lucknow. India failed to reach the semi-finals from an eight-team field by losing to Asian Games' Champion, South Korea, and only managing to draw with lowly Malaysia.

The results of the World Cup were just as bad for Pakistan, who had donned the mantle of the world's best hockey nation after the fade-out of the Indians. In what proved to be the worst-ever competition for the two Asian giants of the game, Pakistan



finished only one rung higher than India, and even behind such nonentities of the game as Poland, Argentina and Canada.

The two squads, who have played against each other in innumerable finals of important world-level tournaments, had the ignominy of playing-off between themselves to avoid the wooden spoon! And that, too, in front of a sparse, disinterested crowd that was looking forward to seeing the three crack European squads — England, West Germany, and the Soviet Union — battle it out with Australia for the pennant.

THE PORTENTS had been clear for the two Asian sides even before the onset of the World Cup. They were tired and stale from playing too much hockey throughout 1986; and had had to battle it out for the Asian Games title in South Korea only days before the Willesden contest. The short interval between the World Cup and the Asian Games was trotted out as an excuse for the poor performances, but the problems had begun well before the Asiad.

Believing, in the aftermath of deteriorating results right through the 1980s, that their best bet lay in increasing the level of international competition, both Asian champions were guilty of overdoing their preparation for the World Cup. India followed a punishing schedule that had the team playing international matches on 57 days out of the 290 in the calendar year, before their meeting on October 17, 1986, at Willesden (their thirteenth of that year alone!).

And yet, before the onset of the tournament, there had been no denying the charisma of the hockey magicians from the subcontinent, built up as it had been over the years. They were among the most feared teams in the competition. Had a script-writer dared, on the eve of the tournament, to produce a scenario which had Pakistan and India finishing second-last and last in a field of twelve, he would have been laughed out of sight.

“Continued to play grass hockey.” That was the catch-phrase that Rowley, one of hockey’s best-known and most knowledgeable commentators, used to describe the playing style of both Pakistan and India. The two neighbours stuck doggedly and futilely to a brand of open, attacking hockey that was no doubt spectacular and appealing for the spectator, but it was also outmoded, and had no place in the modern context.

THERE WAS SCANT POSSIBILITY of producing the renowned oriental legerdemain in the face of the heavy body play of most of their rivals. And by foolishly persisting with a style that gave even the weakest of teams enough space to launch counter-thrusts, the Asians gave the impression that they had deliberately turned a Nelson’s eye to the need to adapt to artificial surfaces like poligras, astro-turf and superturf, on which all international matches are now played.

In the course of that one traumatic month that started in the third week of September at Seoul, and culminated in the third week of October at Willesden, the world’s most skilful



The jubilant Pakistanis after recovering the World Cup in 1981.



Stephen Batchelor (England) tackles Russian forwards in World Cup '86.

and artistic hockey sides were mercilessly cut down to size, reduced to the level of whipping-boys for all and sundry. In the South Korean Capital, it was the Koreans and the Malaysians who made merry at the expense of the two erstwhile champions, while every minnow had its day against them in England!

It is hard to equate modern hockey techniques with the style and attack formations of the past, thanks to the playing surfaces. It is highly doubtful whether all the exquisite skills of a Dhyen Chand would have had much place in the hit-and-run hockey of today. On synthetic turf, the prerequisites for winning have changed drastically. Dribbling and body-swerve, short-passing and 'throwing the dummy', all take a back seat to sheer speed, top physical fitness, stamina, perfect trapping, and opportunism.

Most of the European teams came to Willesden after strict physical conditioning which enabled them to keep running without flagging, right through the 70 minutes of a match, or even through a further half-hour of extra time, if required. They were all very fast on their feet, and ruggedly built like soccer stars; hence, they did

European forwards, having made a deep study of Asian strategies, have been displaying enough skill to evade the odd defender in their goal-quest. The moment they sense a chance, they cut a swathe through the 16-yard circle, and make straight for the goal.

not think twice about utilising their superior body-weight in the tackles against the slighter-built Asians.

THE GAME HAS CHANGED so much in recent years that tight marking and robust tackling are dominant features. Mercurial speedsters who play a highly individualistic brand of hockey, like Pakistan's Hassan Sardar and India's Muhammad Shahid, are being marked out of sight, with some teams placing two men to muzzle these potential threats to their goals.

Again, defenders use a different strategy for tackling. On artificial

turf, where the ball tends to hug the surface much more than it does natural grass, the men in the defence sweep at the ball with their sticks almost parallel to the ground, instead of at the sedate 45-degree angle employed by the Indian defenders.

Similarly, secure in the knowledge that the ball runs much more true on a synthetic surface than it does on grass (where natural undulations and unevenness tend to make it bounce more), the European defenders lay long passes, traversing more than half the length of the field at times – to be trapped perfectly by their forwards lying in wait for just such a chance. With Asian teams leaving just two full backs to the aid of their goalkeeper, and bringing the entire intermediate line into the rival striking-circle, such long passes often find the Asian defenders totally unprepared.

European forwards, having made a deep study of Asian strategies and techniques for years, have been displaying enough skill to evade the odd defender in their goal-quest. The moment they sense a chance, they cut a swathe through the 16-yard circle, and make straight for the goal, wingers do not stick to the flanks, as of old.

IN CONTRAST, Indian and Pakistani forwards have also been seen to be far too rigid and inflexible in their play. Their wingers keep running down the flanks in the orthodox, traditional fashion, and then attempt the copybook-centre to a waiting colleague. It just does not work against packed European defences, where the additional man or two in the intermediate line gets that vital half-second to fall back to the aid of the deep defence.

The pattern in a game involving an Asian and a European side has therefore become entirely predictable – a scrimmage in the European 'D', the referee's whistle for a foul, the long pass from the European defender to his waiting forward in the other half, a business-like thud as the stick makes perfect contact with the ball, and then

the straight run for the goal.

The same thing applies to penalty corners. The Indians persist in following a rigid pattern of hit-in, horizontal-stick stops, and low, straight drives recommended by their coaches who have played that sort of game on grass in their halcyon days. But this style is ineffective today, and the Continental sides have eschewed it totally.

With a couple of onrushing defenders cutting down the shooting-time, a well-padded goalkeeper measuring his length sideways on the ground to take the ball anywhere on his body, and another couple of men on the alert at the goal-line to deflect the ball away, the old techniques are useless. There is just too much of a forest of legs and sticks — with the custodian's supine body thrown in for good measure — for the ball to have a chance of sounding the boards!

What the European taking the penalty drive does is to pat the ball a foot or so into the striking-circle, and then step forward and scoop the ball over the prostrate goalie. At other times, he does not take the shot at all, but switches the ball onto an unmarked colleague on either side of the circle. A shot by such a player has a much better chance of catching the rival defence by surprise.

THE WORLD CUP LAST YEAR saw the forward lines of both India and Pakistan lacking the teamwork that is so essential in modern-day hockey. The forwards tended to be too individualistic, trying to beat whole massed defences on their own. The efforts looked pathetic, with their short-passing and desperate long scoops being easily anticipated by the opposition, even as their own trapping of the ball was nothing to write home about.

Individualism is a trait that is peculiar to grass hockey, since fantastic speed and ball-control are required to dribble the ball past a host of defenders on a bumpy surface. But it just does not work on the true artificial surfaces of today. Muhammad Shahid, who led India at Willesden, was



The World Cup last year saw the forward lines of both India and Pakistan lacking the teamwork that is so essential in modern hockey. The forwards tended to be too individualistic, trying to beat whole massed defences on their own. The efforts looked pathetic.

the biggest culprit in this regard. As Rowley tellingly wrote, "The Indians have been undermined by obvious failings — low work-rate and excessive individualism . . . India have consistently dribbled themselves into oblivion."

It was easy to contrast this with the disciplined teamwork of the West Germans, and that of the brilliant, creative Australians who eventually took home the title. Over the years, the Australians have been able to perfect a style they call 'total hockey'; every one of their players can play in any position other than his normal

The Indians at play — lacking the essential teamwork.

one. There is no distinction between forward, half-back, and full back as players switch positions between themselves. This thoroughly confuses the opposition, for it is not easy to mark these wraiths who flit hither and thither, with no apparent pattern of movement! And all this, with superb teamwork.

BOTH INDIA AND PAKISTAN will have learnt, by now, that their attacking pyramid-formation of 5-3-2-1 leaves their defences sorely understaffed in case of a counter-attack. On synthetic turf, where the sheer evenness makes the trapping of even powerful hits much easier than on grass, more than just two full backs and the custodian are needed to keep the citadel intact. The European sides utilise the 4-3-3-1 pattern, making do with four forwards, and leaving the three men in the intermediate line to fall back, in times of need, to the aid of the deep defence.

As there have been changes in the patterns of attack and defence, so also goalkeepers have had to adapt to the times. The custodians from Europe have taught themselves the trick of lying flat, when needed, to stop a

SPORTS

ball with their entire bodies. They know just when to advance to meet the ball and kick it out of harm's way. It is no longer enough to narrow the angle from either extremity of the striking-circle; razor-sharp reflexes are required to keep the rebound out of the goal.

Then there are the rules — infinitely tricky things, and recently being blatantly amended to suit European sides. There is so much distortion in their theory, and so much misinterpretation in practice! The offside rule, the scoop rule, the one about dangerous play — all leave so much in the hands of the referee, giving him the right to allow or disallow a goal — something that can completely turn the tide of a match.

THE MENTION OF REFEREES, incidentally, brings us to another problem area, as far as India is concerned. At home, our national players assume the status of superstars, often aggressively questioning referee-decisions, and getting away with it. Consistently lax supervision at home has inculcated in our players several bad habits, which they are made to rue when they encounter officials at key international tournaments.

With the players trying everything in their power to bend the rules, if they can, officials are being increasingly strict in pulling up offenders. The Indians' understanding of the latest laws of the game is so abysmal, that often their trainers and coaches too are mystified when a player is pulled up for some infringement he cannot understand. And in hockey, there is just no time to waste in arguments, for the next moves are split-seconds away!

These days, any arguing or remonstrating with the official on the field instantly leads to the pulling out of the green card. Any deliberate hooking of a rival forward's legs, or elbowing, can lead to the yellow card and a temporary suspension. And it certainly does not pay to lose your temper so publicly on the field, as hard-working full back Pargat Singh found



European techniques — well worth emulating.

to his discomfiture at a crucial stage of India's World Cup campaign last year — he was handed the red card and a one-game suspension.

Yet another demerit to chalk up on the Indians' slate is the blind faith that the men in officialdom place in Indian coaches. It has been proved time and again that our ex-Olympians are out of touch with the modern-day game. Ajitpal and Harmik, great grass players in their prime, are ideal on that surface, but are hopeless on synthetic turf.

IT IS THEREFORE ESSENTIAL to have an experienced coach from Europe or Australia to teach our boys the modern-day techniques of attack and defence. If the Europeans and the men from Oceania have taken the trouble to study Indian and Pakistani techniques, and invented ways of combating them, there is no reason for us to sit on our high horses, or to have misgivings about learning their style. We have been left behind; the onus of catching up is on us.

The twelfth position at Willesden means that India has to face the ignominy of having to qualify for the next World Cup in 1990 through the Inter-Continental Cup — a tournament in which the world's top six

teams do not even participate. Nations like Spain and Argentina qualified automatically for the Champions' Trophy, held earlier this year at Amsterdam, while the Indians had to cool their heels at home. How are the mighty fallen!

West German coach, Klaus Kleiter, had a word of solace for the dispirited Indians and Pakistanis at Willesden, "It is not the rough, defensive tactics employed by teams like Russia and England that will bring the spectators to the grounds. It is the style of hockey played by India, West Germany, Pakistan, and Australia that will take this great game forward. All that the Indians and Pakistanis need to do is to blend their open style of hockey with some European techniques."

A year has passed since that sage advice. Pakistan has been able to make up some of the lost ground; our neighbours have been attempting to rebuild the side, sloughing off the older players, and placing their faith in youth. For Indian hockey, however, it has been a period completely and comprehensively wasted. Nothing constructive has been done since our last World Cup debacle. One could say Indian hockey does not have a goal in sight! ♦

A NUMBER OF YEARS AGO, a book was published called *The Duke of Deception*. It was written by a fellow named Geoffrey Wolff, and it was about Wolff's late father, a fascinating *raconteur*, con man and liar. Wolff Senior was a compelling rogue who had unfailing insights into what made people tick, and who used those insights to raise petty fraud to an art form.

The Duke had a credit rating somewhat worse than the Government of Mexico's, yet he managed to buy anything he wanted on credit.

He could walk into the finest men's store, and walk out again with half-a-dozen suits charged to a newly-opened house account on which payment would never be made. He would drive convertibles away from used-car lots on the strength of a spurious promise. He would 'buy' watches, jewellery, television sets, and he would use a variety of spiels that ranged from the ingenious to the bizarre.

He got away with it again and again. Why?

He got away with it because he had the genius to penetrate to the deepest truth about how salespeople function. *Salespeople, he realised, are so obsessed with selling that they barely notice anything else.*

In the face of an opportunity for a sale — especially a *big* sale, to an apparently wealthy customer full of swagger and the implied promise of repeat business — other considerations fade into insignificance.

Judgement grows fuzzy. If something does not seem exactly kosher, chances are a salesperson will overlook it. Procedures can somehow or other be bypassed if need be.

Priority number one is not to let that customer out of the door without some merchandise. The Duke understood perfectly the psychological make-up that correlates with the sales mentality, and exploited it.

To put it another way, he realised

Excerpted from "The Terrible Truth About Lawyers" by Mark McCormack. Published by William Collins Sons & Co Ltd and distributed by Rupa & Co, Bombay. Price Rs 169.

Why Lawyers Drive Businessmen Crazy

"Businessmen are like dogs; they are high-spirited, frisky; their tails wag at the thought of a deal. Lawyers are like cats — careful, coy and retreating. Put the two in a conference room together, and anything can happen," says MARK McCORMACK, author of the internationally acclaimed 'What They Don't Teach You at Harvard Business School', in this entertaining and instructive extract from his new bestseller.

that *there are certain personality types that correspond with different occupations.*

This, in turn, has to do with two factors:

1. What sort of person picks what sort of career to begin with.
2. How people are affected by the pressures and traditions that pertain in various fields.

These observations go a long way towards explaining why businessmen and lawyers drive each other crazy.

Businessmen are like dogs; they are high-spirited, frisky; their tails wag at the thought of a deal.

Lawyers are like cats — careful, coy and retreating.

Put the two in a conference room together, and anything can happen.

WHAT-IF-ING A DEAL TO DEATH

The best and worst thing about lawyers, from the businessman's point of view, is that they are thorough.

Often it is good that they are, because businessmen, like salesmen, sometimes risk letting their enthusi-

asm for doing a deal cloud their assessment of the potential downside.

Still, there are times when lawyerly thoroughness just is not appropriate — when the real danger is that the attorneys will get together and what-if a deal to death.

CLASS WILL OUT

Several years ago I negotiated a contract between Michael Parkinson, the British television personality, and Rupert Murdoch involving a TV series to be broadcast in Australia. The major points of the deal had all been discussed and agreed to — we knew how much Parkinson would be compensated, who would actually own the programme, how foreign rights would be divided up, and so forth.

Appended to these crucial matters was a simple provision that Parkinson's expenses to, from, and within Australia would be paid for.

Well, this made the lawyers on both sides very nervous.

Would Parkinson be content with a single room in a hotel, or would he expect a large house with a staff, chauffeur and cars for himself and his

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family? Should not everything be spelled out? Should not a floor and a ceiling be placed on the expense budget? What if he stayed longer than expected? What if he went shopping?

What if, what if, what if?

Had all these what-ifs been addressed in the kind of detail the lawyers felt necessary, deadlines would have been missed, enthusiasm would have dissipated, and there would have been a real risk of losing the contract altogether.

Lawyers like things to be as explicit and as airtight as they can ever be. Both their personality and their training point them towards fastidiousness; and, of course, they live in terror of the day when something goes wrong, and a client turns on them and says: 'You idiot! Why didn't you tell me that could happen?'

But it is my contention that, in many if not most contracts, there are things which, by their very nature, have to be left and should be left to trust, goodwill and commonsense.

Murdoch's lawyers had to realise — as Murdoch himself understood, of course — that Parkinson was a professional doing a job, not a freeloader off on a joy-ride.

And Parkinson's people had to trust that Murdoch would not simply be Parkinson's employer in Australia, but his *host*, and would therefore be nothing but generous and gracious.

To put it simply, *each side had to trust that the other had some class.*

Eventually, despite the typical 'OK, but don't blame me' objections of the lawyers, the contract was signed with the 'fuzzy' language still intact.

Needless to say, it did not turn out to be a problem for anyone concerned. In fact, it provided an opportunity for reaffirming the goodwill and mutual regard between our company and Mr Murdoch.

Eight months after the deal was done, at a time when the precise discussions were not very fresh in anybody's mind, Murdoch simply made good on Parkinson's expenses.

No one, with the possible exception of the lawyers, was surprised at



Rupert Murdoch.

this civilised and gentlemanly conclusion of the business.

THE END RUN AROUND THE LEGAL BEAGLE

It is an absolutely basic rule of conducting business effectively that to get a favourable result, you have got to get to the decision-maker.

Of all the many ways that time, effort and money are wasted in business, probably one of the worst is talking to people who cannot really help you even if they wanted to.

Getting to the decision-maker is not always easy, of course; in fact, I would argue that the true meaning of the word 'clout' is *access*.

There are any number of obstacles that can interfere with access — and lawyers happen to be one of them. One of the main things that drive businessmen crazy about lawyers is that lawyers will generally do everything to prevent you from talking directly to their clients.

There are several reasons for this, and some are more praiseworthy than others.

Lawyers would like you to *think* they are keeping you away from the principal because they have a sacred obligation to do so; they have been hired to protect the client from complications and annoyances, and to advance his interests without causing him any bother.

And, of course, there are some clients who instruct their attorneys to do exactly that.

At the risk of sounding cynical, however, I would have to say that, in my experience, when lawyers keep you away from their client, *it has at least as much to do with their own desires and convenience as with their role of protectors.*

As long as the lawyers know more of what is going on than do the actual players, they are in control. They control the pace of the proceedings — which is to say, they have a large role in determining how much will be rung up in hourly fees.

They control the *tone* of the proceedings — whether the atmosphere will be friendly and co-operative, or will take on the hostile overtones that waste time and erode goodwill.

Unless a businessman is content to leave his fate in the hands of the attorneys, then there are times when he has to end-run around them, protocol be damned.

FIRST, KNOW WHO THE DECISION-MAKER IS

Complicating matters is the fact that, even without stonewalling by attorneys, tracking down the decision-maker can be a bedevilling process. It is such a crucial aspect of doing business, however, that I think it is worthy of a brief digression.

I still remember when, back in the early days of IMG (International Management Group), the person I most wanted to meet in the entire world was the Chairman of the Board of General Motors International (GM). Here was the man who headed the biggest company on earth, who controlled resources which, for all practical purposes, were infinite; here, in a word, was the man who could afford to buy absolutely everything I was so intent on selling.

Well, to make a long story short, I worked for *two years* to get a meeting with the Chairman. I angled for introductions; and I cashed in favours owed to me.

When I finally got my meeting, he greeted me with a fraternal handclasp and motioned me into an enormous leather chair. "What can I do for you,

Mark?" he asked, and I felt as if I had died and gone to heaven.

It took me about two minutes to realise he could do *zero* for me, and that my grand ideas about having him as an ally had been a fantasy.

In fact, the Chairman operated solely in a staff capacity. His job, essentially, was to pass along corporate policies to the various GM subsidiaries, whose general managers were almost autonomous when it came to decisions of interest to IMG.

The time I spent trying to get that meeting was not altogether wasted, however. I learned a valuable lesson from it: take nothing for granted about where the decision-making authority actually lies. Look for the subtleties. Assume nothing.

And understand that every organisation is different.

Consider Rolex. For many years, IMG has had a terrific relationship with Rolex, whose brilliant Chairman and Managing Director, Andre Heiniger, is a businessman for whom I have the very highest regard.

Heiniger, like any good executive, is consistent — but consistent *in his own way*. He leaves most marketing decisions to his local representatives and managers around the world; *however*, on issues that are clearly multinational in scope, he insists on personally handing down the final word from Geneva.

The challenge is figuring out where, with a global firm like Rolex, you draw the lines between what is 'multinational' and what is not. You have to try to think along with the person on the other side — and thinking along with Heiniger is a strenuous but worthwhile exercise!

These intuitions get trickier the farther afield you go, culturally speaking — as I learned some years ago at a tiny conference table in Japan.

At this point in time, any Western businessman with any sophistication at all is aware that to do business successfully with the Japanese, it is helpful to lay aside one's usual assumptions, biases, and habits of mind. Still, in the heat of selling or negotiating —

The time I spent trying to get that meeting was not altogether wasted, however. I learned a valuable lesson from it: take nothing for granted about where the decision-making authority actually lies. Look for the subtleties. Assume nothing.

and under the influence of trans-Pacific jet lag — that is not so easily accomplished.

I had flown to Tokyo, at the request of Toyota, to discuss Toyota's possible sponsorship of the women's professional tennis circuit. An executive from our Tokyo office joined me, and we were escorted to a cramped and totally unadorned conference room with a puny table and four simple chairs.

In walked a Japanese gentleman named Soe, who handed me a card that read 'Assistant Manager'.

I saw that title and a wave of unpleasant emotions swept through me. First of all, although I make it a policy to leave my ego at the door when embarking on any negotiation, it was difficult not to feel insulted having travelled for 15 hours only to meet someone from the lower-middle management.

More to the point, I could not imagine that this fellow could possibly have the authority to say 'yea' or 'nay' on the multimillion-dollar package I had come to discuss. But I put on a brave face, and made my pitch.

To my great surprise, within a few weeks IMG got a telex from Toyota, confirming that it had decided to sponsor women's tennis on a worldwide basis.

The 'Assistant Manager', Japanese style, had in fact had discretion far in excess of anything an American would have expected.

As a bit of practical advice, I would urge you to be sensitive to the Mr Soes of this world, who wield their clout quietly without the armour of a fancy title. Sometimes they can do more for you than the chairman of the board!

SHOWDOWN AT PEBBLE BEACH

But again, when lawyers are screening out the person in charge, there are times when they have to be gone around or bulldozed.

Back in the 1960s, in the early days of our company, I had an object lesson in this which still strikes me as valuable.

In those years, IMG's main involvement was with golf, and we were fortunate in having as clients both Arnold Palmer and Gary Player. Aside from being superlative athletes, Arnold and Gary were highly poised, attractive and utterly professional; they were constantly in demand and it was a great pleasure to handle their business.

At some point we were asked to arrange a deal between the Lincoln-Mercury division of the Ford Motor Company, as sponsors, and the Revue Studios subsidiary of MCA (Music Corporation of America), as producers, to do a series of shows called *Challenge Golf*, in which Palmer and Player would compete against other two-man teams.

The negotiations were entirely amiable, and a contract was soon signed which provided, among other things, that the matches would be filmed during a 90-day period at various golf courses within the state of California. In the course of the discussions, some specific venues had been talked about, but in the spirit of reason and co-operation that then prevailed, there seemed no need to spell them out in the written agreement.

The plot thickened, however, when the bean counters from Revue sat down with their adding-machines and figured out that the studio could save a fair amount of money by filming all the matches on courses in and around Los Angeles. There would be less overtime to pay, and no travel and

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lodging expenses for crews and production executives.

So Revue's lawyers scoured the contract, and — what do you know? — there was nothing in it that said the matches *could not* all be played right there in Los Angeles and Orange counties!

There was only one small problem with this plan: Lincoln-Mercury's General Manager, Chase Morsey, remembered quite specifically that during the negotiations it had been clearly understood that some of the matches would take place in Northern California, and that one, in particular, would be played at Pebble Beach — a glamorous and upscale club with which Lincoln-Mercury wanted, understandably, to be associated.

Now Morsey got *his* lawyers on to the case, trying to find something in the contract that gave Lincoln-Mercury the right of approval on the choice of courses, or, if need be to tank the agreement together.

By this point everyone was getting mad at everyone, and a deal that had begun as a love feast was giving everybody headaches.

As it turned out, however, the stalemate was easily broken by a single phone call from Morsey to Lew Wasserman, the Chairman of MCA.

Morsey told Wasserman his side of the story, and Wasserman, in turn, confronted his people with a single question: "Did you or did you not lead the executives of Lincoln-Mercury to believe there would be a show produced at Pebble Beach?"

He did not want to know what the contract said.

He did not want to know about his company's legal rights.

He did not want to hear about what the change in venue would cost.

He just wanted an answer to that simple question.

When MCA's people acknowledged that there had been talk about a match at Pebble Beach, Wasserman told them to apologise to Morsey, dispatch a crew to Carmel *pronto*, and stop wasting everybody's time.

In that single exchange, Morsey and

Two factors enabled them to resolve their problem so efficiently: good faith and good communication. Both are essential for mutually advantageous business dealings. Both are often mucked up by lawyers.

Wasserman not only got *Challenge Golf* back on track, but also cemented the relationship between their two companies by making it clear that each would stand by its commitments, whether or not those commitments were expressed in letter-perfect legal form.

TELEPHONE

Two factors enabled Morsey and Wasserman to resolve their problem so efficiently: good faith and good communication.

Both are essential for mutually advantageous business dealings. Both are often mucked up by lawyers.

Remember Chinese Whispers, and everybody laughing at how much the original message had changed?

Well, going back and forth between lawyers who will not let their clients speak directly is a lot like that — but with two significant differences.

One difference is that it is hard to laugh when the garbling of the message is costing you cash, credibility, and maybe a relationship.

The second difference is that the garbling does not come about by simple mumbling, but by a *clash of differing styles and agendas*.

Let me give you an example of how this game of poor communication works in practice.

A few years ago, IMG negotiated a deal with Sony, whereby Sony would sponsor the world computerised ranking system of men's professional golf. Among the provisions of the deal was

a perfectly clear understanding that Sony and IMG would work together to stage *three simultaneous press conferences* — in New York, in London and in Tokyo — to launch the new arrangement.

Then the deal, as drafted by executives, went to the attorneys.

Here is what happened to the press conference provision once the lawyers got hold of it:

First it got garbled so that three *separate* events were staged in the cities mentioned above, so the impact of simultaneity was lost.

Then it was misinterpreted to mean that Sony and IMG had an ongoing responsibility to hold press conferences together — a responsibility that *neither* side particularly wanted.

Then it became mangled to the point where it was thought that IMG and Sony were supposed to hold a press conference before every event on the pro tour!

I would never even have *known* about this last distortion, except that I got a call one day from our New York office informing me that the Sony people were very upset with us. 'Upset about what?' I asked.

'Upset that the press conference in Chicago was a flop.'

'What press conference in Chicago?'

And so it went, until we struggled our way back through the morass of legalese and finally uncovered the original message.

NOT BY LAW ALONE

Just as sound business judgement dictates that there are instances when the best move is to go around the lawyers, there are also situations when the wisest action is to go around the law itself.

By this I certainly do not mean that it is acceptable to *break* the law. It is only that, in certain situations, an issue that seems legal at first glance is in fact more effectively approached in pragmatic and non-technical business terms.

SELLING THE CUP

The truth of this notion was de-

monstrated recently by a controversy involving the Royal Perth Yacht Club, which we represent.

When the Australian sailors defeated the Americans at Newport, Rhode Island, in 1983, the ownership of the famous America's Cup moved to Perth. For the New York Yacht Club, the loss was more than just a psychological blow: the licensing of the America's Cup name and logo is quite a considerable revenue source that goes a long way towards underwriting the races and, in fact, towards keeping the entire sport of competitive yachting afloat.

The New Yorkers, for whom lack of confidence has never been a problem, had apparently never given a thought to what would happen to their cash-flow if they ever lost the Cup, apparently because it had never dawned on them that they might be beaten.

Having lost the trophy, however, and in keeping with their habit of changing the rules when the game was no longer going their way, the New York Yacht Club began refusing to assign trademark applications around the world for the exclusive licensing rights to the name and the logo of the America's Cup.

At first glance, what was developing seemed to be a legal battle, and a fascinating one at that. In some jurisdictions, ownership of a trademark is determined by first use, irrespective of first filing; in other places, rights go to the first filer, regardless of who was the first user. Then there was the intriguing question of whether licensing rights automatically went with the ownership of the Cup itself or were to be regarded as a separate entity. The issues were complex and juicy enough to keep several batteries of copyright and trademark lawyers busy for many months, if not for several years.

In the meantime, however, the Royal Perth Yacht Club had a multi-million-dollar event to stage, and, because of the New York Yacht Club's filings around the world, Perth was running into obstacle after obstacle

What was developing seemed to be a legal battle, and a fascinating one at that. In some jurisdictions, ownership of a trademark is determined by first use, irrespective of first filing; in other places, rights go to the first filer, regardless of who was the first user.

in arranging the fees and royalties to which, by common sense and simple justice, it was entitled as host club of the races.

With time before the 1987 Cup defence growing ever shorter, it became clear that in regarding the trademark business as a legal squabble, Perth was agreeing to fight the battle on New York's chosen turf, and by doing so was effectively conceding defeat. *Time was the real enemy, as it so often is when litigation looms.*

The solution — simple enough once we thought of it — was to stop arguing in legal terms and shift the battle back to business basics.

Accordingly, at a meeting in Australia late in 1985, I suggested to the officers of the Royal Perth that they call off their attorneys and instead write a simple letter to the New York Yacht Club as well as to all other competing parties.

The letter should say essentially this: If anyone did anything to hamper the Royal Perth Yacht Club's efforts to market the 1987 defence *in exactly the same way that it had been marketed in years past by the New York Yacht Club*, that party would be barred from racing at Perth. Period.

Would such a prohibition be legal? My contention was that it would be; it would certainly be just.

But I knew that the threat of disqualification would never be put to the test because now it would be the other side racing against time and

taking on the risk.

Would the New York Yacht Club, having spent millions on new equipment, jeopardise its chances of being allowed on the starting line Down Under — especially knowing that if it challenged the validity of the Royal Perth edict, the matter would have to be tried in the jurisdiction of Western Australia?

So, strictly speaking, the trademark issue was never solved; it was simply made to disappear. Perhaps such a resolution might be disappointing to a legal scholar. For a businessman, it was the most expedient and least costly of all possible outcomes.

THE FORCE OF SHAME

A great deal has been written about the real or perceived decline of business ethics, and about the shameless shenanigans of certain highly visible businessmen.

However, I would argue that, as a group, business people are as concerned as ever with their good names — and *appeals to their sense of shame can sometimes be a highly effective way of avoiding litigation and finding short cuts around legal dilemmas.*

Let me illustrate this by way of an anecdote, although it may be significant that the company involved was Japanese, and perhaps more prone to compunction than its American counterparts.

In 1986 Harvard University celebrated its 350th anniversary, and the Harvard Corporation hired IMG to handle the licensing of products and promotions connected with the event.

Accordingly, we did a worldwide survey of how 'Harvard' this and 'Harvard' that were being marketed. We discovered that there was a company in Japan — where the name is hugely prestigious — calling itself 'Harvard'. This company had been doing about (US)\$10 million worth of business a year for the past decade, and had never paid the university a dime in royalties!

At first glance, this seemed like the most flagrant sort of piracy, although there was more to it than met the eye.

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Back in the mid-1970s, executives of this Japanese firm had in fact visited Cambridge (Massachusetts), with the intention of working out a licensing arrangement with the Harvard Corporation. Prior to the 350th anniversary, however, Harvard had not wanted to sully itself with the taint of commerce, and its officials refused to talk to the Japanese businessmen.

Piqued by this rebuff, the Japanese went back to Tokyo, where they discovered that the name 'Harvard' had never been filed as a trademark *within Japan*. They registered it and had been operating in accord with Japanese law ever since.

So, we once again faced an intriguing legal situation — one that might have kept a pack of attorneys profitably employed for a long time.

Our counsel in Tokyo, however, pulled a *business* masterpiece that cut a terrific path through the potential legal morass.

He called a meeting and patiently listened while the other side's lawyers aggressively spelled out all the reasons why the company was right. It had *tried* to do business with the university, and been turned away. It had complied with all appropriate local statutes. It had invested time and money, and taken significant risks to make this a successful enterprise — *now* the university was hitting it up for a percentage?

Our counsel heard the lawyers out, and realised that they were trying a little too hard to protest their innocence: there was an undertone of guilty conscience.

So our lawyer calmly announced that he understood their position and would not fight them after all. To clarify matters, however, *he would send a memo to everyone the company did business with, explaining why it did not see fit to pay a royalty for the use of the Harvard name!*

The licensing arrangement was summarily concluded.

**AC-CEN-TUATE THE
POSITIVE, E-LIM-INATE THE
NEGATIVE**



John DeLorean.

In 1968 I negotiated a contract with John DeLorean, then the General Manager of the Pontiac Division of General Motors. The contract involved Pontiac's sponsorship of the US Ski Team and the US Ski Association, and there was a high level of enthusiasm for the arrangement in all quarters.

At a meeting in which DeLorean and I discussed the major deal points, and at which Pontiac's attorneys were present, John turned to his lawyers, waved his finger at them in mock scolding, and said, "I really want this thing, and don't you guys dare screw it up."

This vignette graphically summarises an important axiom: McCormack's Axiom of Checks and Balances:

Businessmen accentuate the positive, while lawyers are left to wrestle with the negative, and all parties struggle towards a situation somewhere in between.

Since this meeting took place at General Motors, let me put it in these terms. The businessman — the one who wants the deal — is the gas pedal; he provides the forward momentum, the thrust, the push that gets things started.

The lawyer is the brake; his job is to keep things within a safe speed and to stop the machine at any sign of trouble.

When the brake and the gas pedal are in balance, the vehicle of business runs smoothly.

The point I would like to make, however, is this: until the car is rolling, a brake pedal is redundant. And if the brake is applied from the beginning, chances are the momentum will never get a chance to build.

For that reason, I am a firm believer in keeping the lawyers out of the early stages of a deal.

Why contemplate the things that can go wrong before savouring the things that can go right?

Why create the anxiety that inevitably attaches to the presence of lawyers before establishing the enthusiasm that attends the care and feeding of a deal?

Eventually, of course, lawyers do need to get involved, and I freely admit that there is a potential downside to bringing them into a deal late.

Sometimes, inevitably, effort must be duplicated.

Sometimes, for technical reasons, certain deal points need revising.

And then there is the discomfort of dealing with lawyers who are testy about not having been consulted sooner.

But I contend that in the great majority of cases, business ends are better served by stressing the positive up front and dealing with the negative only after the momentum is established and agreement in principle has been achieved.

WHY BUSINESSMEN DRIVE LAWYERS CRAZY

But let us be fair.

If lawyers sometimes drive businessmen to fits of rage and distraction, the terrible truth is that the opposite is also true.

If businessmen, in the throes of frustration, sometimes view lawyers as obstructionist killjoys who gum up the works and prevent people from making a living, then it is also true that attorneys, at moments of crisis, think of deal-makers as irresponsible cowboys who would all end up bankrupt, or worse, were it not for the intervention of cooler heads.

In this connection, I must relate the sad saga of a man named Chuck

Sullivan. Sullivan is a scion of the family that owns the New England Patriots and is himself the owner of Sullivan Stadium, in which the team plays. He is a highly educated and sophisticated man — and he even has a law degree! In his heart, however, he is a businessman, with all the enthusiasms and occasional excesses pertaining thereto.

A few years ago, Sullivan decided that he was going to make himself a tonne of money by aligning himself with pop singer Michael Jackson. At the time, Jackson was the hottest property since the Beatles, and it seemed that *anything* — clothing, fragrances, soft drinks — could be marketed in his name. Accordingly, Sullivan reputedly shelled out around (US)\$50 million as promoter of the Jackson family's 1984 concert tour, and committed an additional (US)\$30 million for the licensing rights to Jackson's name and likeness.

In fantasy, Sullivan had pulled off a real coup. In reality, he had locked himself into a disaster.

The concert tour entailed such enormous transportation, staging and insurance costs that in spite of sell-outs everywhere, it reportedly lost more than a million dollars.

When the tour was over, Jackson's managers became fearful that he was being 'overexposed'. This meant that, just when Sullivan was trying to sublicense Jackson's name, no one was hearing as much about Jackson anymore!

Having already incurred losses, Sullivan approached IMG for help in disposing of the licensing rights he controlled. He showed us his contracts, and our attorneys were frankly surprised that a man of Sullivan's sophistication could have got himself into unworkable contract provisions.

Sullivan's story perfectly illustrates several classic mistakes made by overfervent deal-makers, and points up exactly what businessmen *should* look to lawyers for:

1. He very probably saw dollar signs that were unrealistically large. Whatever the potential windfall, (US)\$80



Michael Jackson.

million was too big an exposure to risk in a business as volatile as pop music.

2. He was possibly too intent on being where the action was. It might make great cocktail-party conversation to be able to describe oneself as Michael Jackson's *impresario*, but level-headed advice would have pointed out the downside.

3. He was perhaps too single-mindedly intent on sealing the deal, and Jackson's lawyers, sensing that Sullivan would agree to almost anything to get the contract, again and again put him on the short end of clauses that unemotional outside advice would not have allowed him to accept.

THE DEAL MEMO TO THE RESCUE

Given, then, that lawyers can bust up a deal if brought in too soon, and that businessmen can get themselves into no end of trouble if lawyers are brought in too late, how can deal-makers and their attorneys stay usefully *in sync*?

One way is by effective use of the *deal memo*.

The deal memo is an integral part of how we do business at IMG. Here is how it works:

One of our executives negotiates the points of a deal — *but* it is made clear to all concerned that he or she does not have the authority to *conclude* that deal.

The executive then writes a deal

memo — just a letter, in plain English — to the legal department, outlining the agreement that has been negotiated. The deal memo serves several purposes:

1. Since it will involve the legal department *before* any commitment has been made, it justifies keeping the lawyers out of the early talks.

2. It forces the executive to be *crystal clear* about what has or has not been agreed to, since it has to be put in writing.

3. It allows the executive and the lawyers to work together, away from the pressures of the negotiating table, to put the final document in the optimal form.

4. When necessary, it provides a mechanism to let us stall for time or simply pause for breath.

THEORY VERSUS PRACTICE

The theory of the deal memo is simplicity itself, and at our company it is regarded as an absolutely standard procedure.

Yet, at one time or another, virtually everyone who negotiates for IMG has given in to businessman's impulsiveness and neglected to do a proper memo.

This drives our legal department batty — and rightly so.

The lawyers' annoyance is not to do with mere protection of their bailiwick, but with substantive issues.

If a deal memo is not done, or is done improperly, and if the eventual contract does not accurately reflect the deal-maker's understanding of the terms, whose fault is it?

Worse still, if an account executive skirts the legal department, and unilaterally sends his customer a writing that could be *construed* as constituting a contract, could IMG be held to that agreement?

To avoid this latter possibility, our General Counsel, Bill Carpenter, is *constantly* coaching us on exculpatory language that *every* business negotiator should have as part of his or her working vocabulary:

'If this reflects our understanding, I

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will have the contracts drawn up.'

or

'If this is correct, I will arrange to have it finalised.'

Phrases like these can save an enormous amount of trouble, and will steer you clear of being held to commitments you did not even *know* you had made.

DOWN, BOY!

Before leaving the subject of how lawyers can sometimes save over-eager executives from themselves, let me give one more brief example of this dynamic in action.

At IMG, as agents we are hardly ever in a position to commit our clients to anything; we *advise* our clients; our clients commit themselves.

This is an extraordinarily basic distinction, designed for the protection of all parties; you do not need a law degree or an MBA to grasp either the

notion itself or the reasoning that lies behind it.

Still, in the midst of deal lust, it is truly amazing how often even this rudimentary point is overlooked.

Not long ago, one of our junior line executives was approached regarding a lucrative clothing endorsement for a client. Over the course of several long conversations, during which a lot of intoxicating numbers were bandied about, our young executive's ardour grew to the point where he made the endorsement sound like a done deal — regardless of the facts that:

1. The final authority to conclude the agreement rested not with him but with the client.
2. The proposed endorsement, unbeknown to the eager young executive, was in clear conflict with an agreement that had been signed before he had come on board.

The legal department (by way of a deal memo!) caught the potential problem, and the upshot was nothing worse than some wasted time and some deserved embarrassment on the would-be deal-maker's part. Had Legal not been on the case, well, all of us could have had a real problem on our hands.

The point is that while there *are* broad differences in style and priorities among businessmen and lawyers, and while those differences inevitably give rise to tension, *that tension can be a blessing as well as a bane.*

If businessmen and lawyers are natural adversaries, they are natural allies, too.

They temper each other's excesses and compensate for each other's deficiencies. And when they work effectively together, they can achieve results beyond what either group could accomplish alone. ♦

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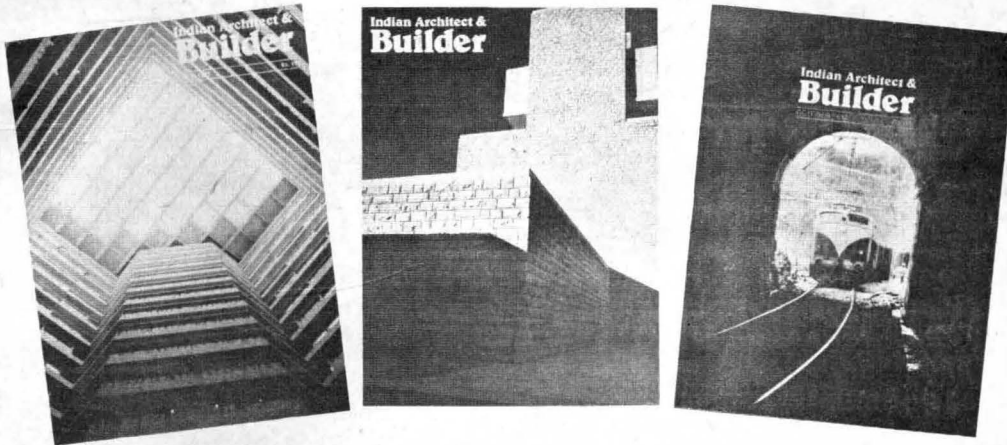
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Leaving Home

SPIKED HAIR WOUNDING THE SKY with its hard pink tips, she stood against the railings of Tooting Broadway, contemplating the smoke that billowed out of her mouth. With her free hand, she felt absently in her bag for a knitted cap which would swallow up her spikes before she turned the key to the front door. Garish posters advertising *Dhulan* (Bride), the latest outpouring of cinematic diarrhoea from Bombay, triggered off a nervous twitch in her left eyelid. Weakened by the length and breadth of the strange looks that her skin-tight, shiny black trousers were drawing, she inhaled quickly. Butting out the cigarette with a smart twist of her booted heel, she walked into Oriental Tandoori and demanded a sweet *paan* which she would suck all the way home on the train to absorb the pungent, stale smell of smoke on her breath.

She had lived this schizophrenic life ever since she could remember. It was the overlap she was afraid of, the unnoticed leaking of one world into the other. She toyed with her latest idea of leaving home, undaunted by the memory of her past hundred failures. *This* time it was fool-proof. Mum and Dad were not so bad really, considering what Shammy was lumbered with – if only their love did not hover quite so close to oppression, if only they had not responded to living here by closing up. And living meekly to put others on the straight and narrow was just not her scene. Anyway, did they really think that Tahir and Sajeda would follow their eldest sister's deviant path? What with their diet of Hindi films and *Disco Diwane*, that was hardly likely. The red stain of the *paan* juices gave a fiendish edge to her black painted lips as she relished her latest plan with a vigorous chomping of *paan*. This weirdo, she thought with a giggle, was going to ask her parents to approve her marriage to a nice Muslim boy from the same tiny village in Pakistan, and what is more, from a cosy and quite acceptable niche of that hierarchy. Not all your culture runs colour in the multi-cultural wash.

HE SEEMED AN OKAY FELLOW, a bit reticent for a political activist, but at least their cultural divide would exclude any possibility of romance. *That* she could not face. She could not even meditate on the plan in peace in case someone trespassed on her thoughts. Secrecy was so important. As the train rattled into a station whose advertisements she recognised, she picked up her huge bag and made for the door. She popped into the public loo to do her Cinderella act, whipped out her cleansing cream and cotton wool, wiped off her lipstick, brushed the gel out of her hair and tucked every straying pink wisp into her knitted cap. She pulled out her black T-shirt from her trousers until it hung over her knees, a crumpled but quick *churidar kameez*. Only the incongruity of black lace-up boots, which al-

ways jarred on her mother's sense of femininity, hinted at what had been.

She walked up the garden path, suddenly noticed the fraying black lace gloves on her hands, tiptoed back a few steps until her silhouette merged with the shadow cast by the overgrown hydrangea, and slowly, nimbly removed the gloves so that they would not fray further. She went for the controlled effect – frayed but not torn. The key had barely turned in the lock when her mother's voice whined out over the Hindi video film, "Zara, is that you?"

"Yes, mum. Did you think that the local cat-burglar would use the key?"

"In that skin-tight black *churidar*, I can hardly be blamed for thinking so. Anyway, what's kept you so late? Your *chappatis* are in the oven."

Zara dished out her food. *Bhindi*, mmm, her favourite vegetable. She would miss that. It would be eggs and bread after a few days. She took her plate out into the lounge. "Mind if I eat out here? Promise I won't wipe my hands on the settee."

"Shsh. . . the film's just ending. If the father dies, then the widow can't object to Hema Malini's romance with Dharmendra."

As the music reached a deafening crescendo, so that the man could breathe his last in time with the music, Zara experimented with her opening lines, 'Mum, I'm going to be married. . . *Ammijan*, I've found the boy of your dreams . . . Mummyji . . .'

The hum of the blank video interrupted her thoughts. "Where's dad?"

"At the Islamic Centre. He'll belt you if I tell him what time you came home. You better have a good reason if you want me to keep quiet."

Zara set her plate down, squeezed in on the armchair between the armrest and her mother, wiped her hands discreetly on her mother's *dupatta*, and said in honeyed tones, "Mum, I've the best reason in the world and it's so good, I don't mind you telling dad at all. In fact, you *must* tell him. A Sunni boy from Ferozepur has proposed to me. His father owns 20 acres of land and Ahmad is the eldest son. And, with your permission, I'm going to accept. Now, there's no need to look cross just because I beat you to it. And found a more eligible boy than any of your sisters could conjure up!"

Her mother stood up, switched off the TV and with hands on her hips, tried hard not to look pleased. "So, what's so special about him? You turned down all our suggestions because boys from Pakistan were 'Pakis'. Anyway, at 21, it's high time you were married. If the boy's from our community and his background is suitable, then I'm sure it will be OK with dad. What's his family name? Dad can start making inquiries tomorrow."

"Khan."

"Oh. . . Khan. . . Find out if his father's land is by the railway-line. It stretches from the signal-box to the first crossing just outside Ferozepur. He might be a cousin. No,

don't worry, at least four times removed. That's a good family." Zara's mother lapsed into counting the generations that had passed between the first blood-brothers down to the present day, keeping track of which children belonged to which of the wives.

"I'm going to bed," said Zara relieved, "it'll take you at least two hours to sort out the family tree. Not quite the kind of gripping stuff which keeps me awake!"

THE NEXT MORNING, after her fortnightly dose of depression at the dole office, she was shocked to find the family assembled in the living-room. Her father's eldest brother and his wife were also present. Her father, looking slightly embarrassed, made the faintest visible gesture of 'come here' with his head while his voice choked on *beti*; marriage was not an easily broachable subject with one's daughter. "Your uncle knows the family and the boy. The background is OK, but, do you know that the boy is seeking political asylum, and his application was rejected twice by the Home Office. I hope he isn't going to ditch you after a couple of years. Your uncle and I want to have a chat with him."

Zara wondered which act to put on: the shocked and horrified one or the quiet, smug 'I know all about that' one. The first would have alerted them that this was not quite the madly-in-love story. So, she took the second tack. "Oh, yes! He told me the whole story. You know why he's a political refugee though, don't you? His politics are the same as yours, dad — Pakistan People's Party and Benazir Bhutto, *zindabad!*"

"He's a PPP man?" her father smiled approvingly. "That rogue, Zia, must've made his life intolerable. Right, when are you going to bring your young man home?"

"Whenever you want, dad."

So the following Sunday was fixed. Ahmad would lunch with them, after which Zara would have to retreat upstairs to her bedroom while the men talked.

That night, she phoned Pradeep, Ahmad's friend and middleman, to arrange a meeting with Ahmad at Pradeep's office the following day. To Pradeep's suspicion-laden voice, Zara whispered, "Tell you tomorrow," and hung up.

The next day Zara went to the City to meet them. Ahmad was already there in a *kurta pyjama*, looking irritatingly ethnic, thought Zara, with a maroon embroidered jacket amongst all the City gents. Pradeep took them to a quiet little cafe round the corner for a beans-on-toast meal, and demanded, "What's up now?"

"How many apples in a bunch of grapes?" countered Zara.

"Wha... at. Be serious."

"You think I'm silly because I've got no sense?" giggled Zara.

"Look, I don't have much time," Pradeep's voice rose a threatening decibel or two.

"Well, my dad wants to see Ahmad on Sunday. Lunch at our house and all that. But, *you* can't come. Haven't told

the folks about the monkey in the middle or gooseberry," she disclosed, looking at his hairy arms.

"Ahmad can't talk about such things; these are delicate matters. He might let the side down. He can talk politics but romance is entirely my forte."

"You can tell him what to say. But you. . ." Zara warned, forming the sign of the cross with her index fingers as if warding off Dracula, "you'll mess it up."

"Now listen! If you two are supposed to be staying with me temporarily after marriage, then, as your best friend, I've every right to be there."

"OK. OK. But for goodness sake, not a word," pleaded Zara.

"There's something else I've got to tell you. You realise that after you marry Ahmad, he won't have any rights here for at least a year; he won't be able to work or claim dole or anything. Now, seeing that he's doing you a favour, helping you to leave home, plus we'll both be lying like mad for a year to your family when they call or phone: 'Zara's in the bath', 'she's just popped out, she'll call you as soon as she returns. . .' Well, that kind of support doesn't come cheap or easy."

FEAR BEGAN TO CREEP UP ZARA'S SPINE into her eyes. "What do you mean? What are you asking for?"

"£5,000," said Pradeep triumphantly, on noting her fear.

"I don't have that kind of money! You're a friend, you *can't* do that. People in Ahmad's position *pay* to arrange a marriage, whereas I'm doing you a favour. You scratch my back and I'll scratch yours."

"Well, as he'll be staying with me, rent won't be a problem. O K. £2,500 will do or the whole thing's off."

"My parents wouldn't let me go to art college, and you're not going to stop me either by taking all my savings. Bit pointless leaving home then, don't you think?"

"I'm sorry, art college or no, I can't accept less than £1,000. There's plenty of other fish. . ."

"Suckers. . ." muttered Zara under her breath as her eyes misted up as she thought of the £3,000 in her Abbey National account. So close to success, she *could not* let it slip from her fingers. She would just have to live on the grant or make it up in holiday-work. What the hell!

"Done," she said, and slapped her hands on Pradeep's outstretched palms.

Sunday dawned. Zara lazed in bed lamenting the precious cheque she had posted to Pradeep. Her thoughts were constantly being punctured by her mother's "Zara, come and make the salad," "Zara, come and do the washing up," until her sister, Sajeda, her sleep disturbed, answered. Finally, with half-an-hour to go, Zara strolled to the bathroom in her knitted cap to wash the pink dye out of her hair. Out came the silk *salwar kameez*, the heavily embroidered *dupatta* and golden *chappals*. When she made her appearance downstairs, her mother's delight was apparent as she hugged Zara, saying, "even you have your soft spot." At

least it has had its intended effect, Zara thought as she extricated herself from her mother's embrace and rearranged her *dupatta*.

LUNCH WAS A STARCHY AFFAIR with everyone exchanging meaningful glances with Zara who looked hazily at the picture of the large-eyed cherub with a tear on its cheek, giving every outward sign of being in love. She thought of the different meanings each person's glance conveyed and suppressed a smile. She swam in and out of the conversation, drowning yet, at the same time, feeling that her head was above water; and answering, yes and no, as expected of the bride-to-be. In short, her behaviour was exemplary. After lunch, she withdrew to her room as planned and sat on the edge of the bed, biting her nails and hoping that the scent of the burning incense would camouflage the smell of cigarette-smoke. After two hours, her father called her down. Ahmad and Pradeep had left. It was all fixed; a buffet-lunch would be hosted at the local school-hall for 300 people. Zara sighed with relief.

Tomorrow she would start her own preparations. Whilst her mother grumbled that there was little time to prepare her trousseau, Zara was out visiting her friends to check that the housing association flat had come through, to collect the keys, to look the flat over, and to start furnishing it with basics. Over the next few days, she bought a second-hand bed and mattress, a gas-cooker, a tiny fridge and crockery. Any luxuries like coffee-grinders and toasters would hopefully come as wedding gifts. Zara was brimming with excitement. She would open the door to the flat and stand there for five minutes gloating over what was hers, kissing the carpet in a pope-like gesture and fingering the black refuse sacks that were doubling up as curtains. Mine, mine, all mine, she thought. A daily dose of her flat helped her to remain patient, and even friendly, as her mother dragged her from shop to shop in Southall, worrying about the colour of her *gharara*, whether imitation pearls or diamonds should be woven in with silk embroidery, and the amount of gold in the jewellery and the clothes for Ahmad. Freedom was within grasping distance so Zara held on to her sanity.

As the day drew closer, she phoned Pradeep to make arrangements for transport after the reception. She wanted to leave separately and be driven straight to her flat. Pradeep was furious, protocol had to be maintained. She and Ahmad would have to drive together to his house, after which she could change and leave by minicab. She thought it over and sighed. How long this protocol, this etiquette, she screamed silently.

Meanwhile, the endless vulgar consumerism continued. Her mother was surprised at the ease with which Zara succumbed to her choices for this 'the' most important day of her life, when she had clung to the knitted cap and lace-up boots for daily dressing beyond the frontiers of good taste and the understanding of lesser mortals like herself. Even a little discussion on shades and matching garments, a little argument which lends piquancy to the whole enterprise of

shopping, was absent.

It was with the greatest amount of self-restraint that Zara passed those few days. The impatience that lit her eyes on her wedding-day made relatives remark on her radiance. The stream of congratulations, the hugging, the kissing, the smiling made her want to rush to the toilet and do her Cinderella act. Not long now, she thought.

WHEN THE RECEPTION WAS OVER, she hugged her family long and hard. An unexpected show of emotion from Zara, but marriage changes a girl, thought her mum indulgently. Ahmad and Zara sat in the heavily decorated Mercedes which was driven by Pradeep. She closed her eyes and lay back in sheer exhaustion.

"Your punk gear is in a carrier bag in the boot," Pradeep's voice boomed out, forcing her back into the immediate. She felt Ahmad's eyes fix on her and realised that he was still holding her hand.

"Cut that out," Zara remarked sharply, "the act's over; the loving bridegroom — that was for public consumption. By the way, Joey was going to wait for me at your flat, Pradeep. Did you leave the keys under the mat?"

"She'll be let in, don't worry," was the curt reply.

As they approached the house, Zara could see a crowd of silhouettes against the net curtains. "A party," she gasped, "can't face this."

"Time to celebrate the success of our little plan. You've escaped from home and so has Ahmad."

"But it's meant to be a secret."

"It is. Friends think it is a post-reception reception for the younger lot."

"Exactly what I can't handle now."

Zara was handed a glass of champagne. "Sorry. Couldn't wait to open the bubbly stuff," said an eighteen-year old who looked as if he was about to pass out.

"Be my guest." Zara's sarcasm was completely wasted.

Pushing back her anxieties into an unreachable part of her mind, she decided to enjoy herself. At least this crowd would not have any high expectations of propriety.

With the fourth glass of champagne, Zara was in a bubble frothing over with relief; tension released, she floated around to the guests she knew in common with Pradeep. Ahmad was now tailing her closely, a protective groom now that he was no longer prospective. And each time she swayed dangerously forward to make her point forcibly in some random but intent conversation with a guest, she would teeter almost as far back on her heels, and Ahmad's arm would shoot out and wrap itself around her midriff. Zara, vaguely aware of the tingling pleasure which arose from human touch, pushed at him clumsily, and when she found that she could not dislodge him without creating a minor stir, she let his hand stray behind the heavy folds of her *pallav*.

A responsible thought asserted itself. She must stop drinking. This was an unwanted complication although with any other man, she might have said, 'Your bed or mine'.

FICTION

For the next two hours she hung on to the same drink and desultory strips of conversation, feeling the bubbles sink slowly down to her feet, bringing the heaviness of sobriety in their wake. Eyes bloodshot with fatigue and drink, she made her excuses which were vulgarly interpreted. With any other man, maybe, she thought, as she graciously withdrew, Ahmad in tow.

Joey had been waiting, but Pradeep insisted on dropping Zara. For appearances, Ahmad had to tag along. Zara was too tired to complain. When they arrived, Pradeep decided to make coffee whilst Zara changed in the bedroom. When she emerged, she found Ahmad sitting on the living-room floor with no sign of Pradeep around. "Where's Pradeep?" she inquired.

"He's gone back to the party."

"Why did he leave you behind?"

"BECAUSE IT'S OUR WEDDING NIGHT." Eyebrows shooting up lustily, he stood up, and before Zara could escape, he had her against the wall. Her knee moved up slowly, deliberately, in a text-book manoeuvre on how to prostrate a male attacker. As he writhed on the floor with the classic symptoms of a man with his manhood injured, she ran to the bedroom and locked the door. She felt like a heroine in a Hindi movie only there was no Prince Charming running to her rescue. For an hour or so she heard nothing and wondered whether a kick in the groin could kill. Then she heard him tiptoeing about and with relief, the flat door banging shut. She did not particularly feel like venturing out to see whether the door had been locked from the outside.

That night, she slept fitfully, nightmares weaving in and out of her sleep, walls parting with riderless horses rearing up near her mattress. She was up at six. She decided to move to the squat where Joey hung out, where protection could be bought in return for cleaning duties.

As Zara turned the corner of her short street, two sickeningly familiar figures who had been lounging against the bus-stand ran towards her. Taking her by the arm and squashing her between them, they started walking her away from the tube-station down a heavily deserted street. Pradeep panted that he would ring her parents and tell all if she did not do her wifely bit by Ahmad. . .

A milk van clattered to a halt ten yards away. Zara stuck her elbows into their sides and, as they momentarily loosened their grip, made a dash for it. The milkman's suspicious glance rooted them to the spot, looking sheepish and unsure.

She took the tube into Central London. She needed to be surrounded by people. Aimlessly loitering amongst the throbbing mass of people rushing to work, Zara felt as if she would be trampled underfoot at any moment. She had been born into the wrong time and space. She stepped sideways into a newsagent, and hung around the magazine-racks behind the glass-frontage through which the sea of people heaved sickeningly into a tidal wave. Her eyes caught the word *Asha* (Hope). She picked out the magazine, a monthly for Asian women. She had never seen a magazine



for Asians before, at least not one published here, other than those imports from the subcontinent which her mother bought. There was a whole new world waiting here, some of it impinging directly on her life. Going through the classified section, she noticed an advertisement for a community centre — advice and counselling offered to Asians on immigration, welfare rights, marital problems. . . the works. Well, what about this, then? she mused. She had reached a dead end. She had messed up even this carefully planned escape. She had to seek help. She hoped that the centre was not run by Pakistanis just in case someone recognised her. She paid for the magazine and walked back to the station.

By coincidence, the woman at the centre was also called Asha. Zara's path seemed to be littered with hope-laden omens. Asha's friendly eyes hardened after a surreptitious glance at Zara's hair. Zara looked at the rings on her well-manicured fingers and thought bitterly that appearances do, after all, bear some relation to reality.

Asha listened to Zara in fascination, as if hooked by the decadence of this generation of Asian girls. "I think you have made a serious mistake," she said, reprimanding her gently. "There are two ways out of it. You have misunderstood the depth of the love of parents in our culture. They were only trying to do their best for you by giving you a comfortable, secure home and planning a good marriage for you. By going your way, you've landed yourself in hot water. Go back and ask their forgiveness. If you like, I will talk to them. The other way out is to go back to your husband. After all, he was only demanding his rights, nothing unreasonable. When you make your vows, they've got a right to expect something in return."

Zara walked away, head bowed, dragging her feet, all exits closed.

"You win some, you lose some," Asha sighed. "Poor girl. Don't know what's going wrong nowadays. Our girls want too much — like these *goris* they go to school with."

ZARA COULD NOT GO BACK to her flat. It was not safe. She could not go home either. Her head swam with the events of the last two days. She needed to sleep. Somewhere, from the corner of her eye, she could see soft, green grass nodding away into the horizon. Would she dare? A street tramp. What would her family say? She walked, undecided, towards that inviting patch. A contemptuous

sneer from a well-dressed passer-by decided it for her. What the hell! I am the pits in any case, she thought as she closed her eyes.

When she awoke the day was not quite finished. The sun was shining miles higher than the horizon. It was only seven. What would she do between now and nightfall? When was the best time to return to her flat? She was hungry. She went back to the footpath and walked towards the shops. Stopping at a Wimpy's, she picked up a hamburger and as the first bite sank into the depths of her stomach, she decided that a well-packed pint of beer could easily take her up to ten o'clock. With that pleasant thought filling her up warmly, she started looking around for a familiar sign.

"Hey you! Oi you!" someone shouted from across the road. Zara only dimly registered this as she was still engrossed in her search for a pint. That someone came sprinting across, "Hey, Zara, didn't I go to school with you?"

Zara looked at her, "Suri, am I glad to see you!" she exclaimed and hugged her warmly, as if they were long-lost friends. Suri stood, embarrassed, not sure if their acquaintance merited such a warm reception.

"Look, I need your help desperately. I'll tell you about it over a drink," Zara gushed effusively.

At the Cock and Bull, Zara launched into her narrative about Ahmad's furtive passion for her. Suri was overcome. When she had finished, Suri hugged her until tears came streaming down Zara's face in remembrance of things past. "Look, I'm working for this women's centre that some of us black women helped set up. We'll get you out of this mess."

Zara looked wary, "I know all about you lot. Go home, you'll say. Do you know Asha? Sorry, mate, can't take up your offer."

"Meet me tomorrow at 11.00 sharp. Not taking no for ..."

"Suri, where will I hang out between now and tomorrow? Can't go home," Zara hissed between clenched teeth.

"Oh God! Yes... You could come and kip in my lounge, I suppose, until you sort yourself out." Zara's relief was so total that the slight note of reluctance in Suri's offer went unnoticed.

NEXT MORNING, ZARA TRUDGED grudgingly up to the centre with Suri, her pessimism not uplifted by the peeling unmarked door squashed between a takeaway and a newsagent. Suvarna, Suri's co-worker, was waiting for them at the top of the dingy stairs.

Sitting around an electric heater, Suvarna listed the options briskly. "Right, your first need is housing. Can't go back there. I'm going to ring up the council, get you on to their homeless list. You should be able to get bed and breakfast tonight. But getting a flat may take up to six months. Being a black woman helps. Being single with no kids, doesn't. When they ask about violence, say he kicked you around. They do not recognise rape in marriage, so don't talk about his roving hands. If you don't fancy the council

option, get on to your housing association, explain the situation and ask if they'll exchange the flat for somewhere else."

"Third," Suri butted in, "come and kip out in my lounge whilst you're sorting yourself out."

"Now, the next thing you need to do is to get out an injunction so he can't touch you. It's not quite as easy as it sounds. It can take ages and if he's untameable he might still try, and it's very hard to get the police to enforce it. Considering his immigration problems, he might lie low with an injunction waving around in his face. There is another way of putting him out of reach. Far, far more effective. But it's an option I can't help you with. It would be politically against my principles. But women in D V cases. . ."

"Sorry?" . . . interrupted Zara.

"In domestic violence cases, women have written to the Home Office revealing how theirs was a marriage of convenience and got their husbands deported. But, as we also get involved in campaigns against the immigration laws, I can't help you there. However, threatening to use that last resort might get your money back. And you'll need that little nest-egg while you're looking for work."

"Thanks Su. It's been wonderful talking to you. Just one last thing. My parents. If Pradeep squeals, I'll have lost them forever."

"That is entirely upto them. I can ring them if you like, and tell them your side of the story. But whether that opens or shuts doors is another matter altogether."

"OK. I'll handle that side of it. Can I use your phone?" Zara dialled Pradeep's office-number with a joy she hadn't felt for some time, the joy of having the upper-hand.

"Thought you'd come round eventually, sweetheart. A bit quick on the uptake, though," crooned Pradeep smugly.

"That's right. I'd like my money back in full, no expenses deducted. You wouldn't want to drive your dear friend to Heathrow to catch the next flight back to Pakistan, now, would you?" said Zara thickly in a 'one-up to me' voice. She caught Pradeep saying, "Your parents already know. . ." as she put the receiver gently back into its cradle. "That was the sweetest connection British Telecom ever allowed me to make. Thanks," said Zara squeezing Su and Suri's hands.

THAT EVENING, accompanied by Suri, Zara dared to visit her flat, pick up her belongings and shift to Suri's. As she opened the door, she saw an envelope addressed to her in a handwriting that made her heart jump. "Mum," she whispered and tore open the envelope. Darling Zara, it began, Pradeep rang us today and gave us your address. We know everything. If we had only realised that you wanted to leave home that badly . . . As long as the relatives think you are still married, we won't lose face. Please contact us.

Carrying a suitcase and three carrier bags, they made their way to the nearest unvandalised call-box and joined the queue. ♦

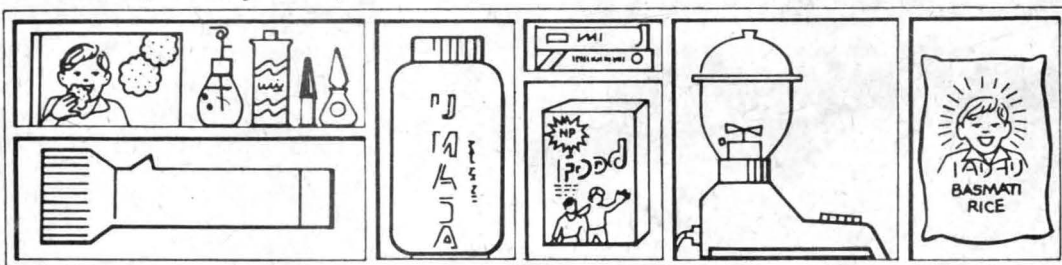
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