

A dowry victim's mother cries out

# Thirteen years, still no justice

One of the earliest dowry death cases that hit the headlines was that of Shashibala in March 1979. Thirteen years later the case is still stuck in the sessions court at Shahdra. Shashibala's husband has married again and has children. The distraught mother of Shashibala, Satyarani Chadha, now 70, wishes she had killed her son-in-law. Even if she had been convicted for murder she would have, in all probability, completed her life imprisonment and would by now be free again.

Instead Satyarani, with parents of other dowry victims, has helped set up Shakti Shalini, which has so far recovered dowry in 250 cases. Since 1987 Shakti Shalini has also been running a short stay home at Jangpura with assistance from the department of women and child development. Should not the National Women's Commission intercede; seek the setting of a special court that would clear the backlog of about 40 dowry death cases pending in the various courts and ensure better investigation of the fresh cases.

by Viji Srinivasan

"SHE was dressed in a bright white sari and blouse. Her jet black hair was loose like the waves of the sea at midnight. I stretched both arms towards her with deep yearning. She drew away. I am pure - don't touch me," she said. My longing was not satiated. "You have come after such an infinitely long interval...let me hold you tight". She disappeared. I let loose a torrent of entreating words. My sons woke me up. I had been dreaming of Bala. Shashibala, my beloved, murdered daughter. She came in my dream only once though I think of her day and night."

I look at Satyarani Chadha as she speaks to me. Her brown face is almost wrinkle free though she is 70. Plump, somewhat cherubic, Satyarani wears bright, shiny clothes. But the ready smile is missing. Instead there is a half crazed glint in her eyes. I begin to panic, then check myself. I remember my long association with her since 1986. Her daughter, Bala, was almost the first dowry death which was widely publicised in 1979.

Satyarani reminisces. "For many, many years I was an ordinary middle class Punjabi housewife, knew nothing of the world outside... certainly not of police, courts..." "I was so innocent that even when two dowry deaths took place near our house, in 1975 and 1976, I thought it would never, never happen to my daughter. So much so that I was appalled at the thought of going to court for the case."

"My younger daughter, Shashibala - Bala I called her - was very beautiful...She had completed her BA degree. Subash, a manager of a Bata Shoe depot approached me through a 'Mata' in a temple. After a lot of hesitation, her wedding was settled for May 4, 1978."

"Earlier Subash and his family had assured me that they did not want any dowry. I had told them that I will give only three clothes - a salwar, a kameez and a dupatta. Even that we will give, they had said. But slowly they began demanding cash and other items. At a 'rokha' ceremony on April 12,



WOMAN OF SUBSTANCE: Satyarani Chadha

R K Dayal

1977, I gave Rs. 250 each to Subash's mother and father, Rs 101 each to his two brothers, five boxes of sweets, a small basket of mixed fruits..."

"Again on April 20, 1977, I treated 45 people at a 'takha' ceremony. I also gave Rs. 2,100 to Subash, Rs 101 to each of his five sisters, Rs 101 to a jija (brother-in-law) and Rs. 500 to all other relatives jointly etc."

"On May 1978, they demanded a 'sagan', another 'celebration'. I was forced to agree. I gave a refrigerator, a pair of earrings (gold) to Subash's mother, a gold chain to Subash, a ring to his father, and Rs. 1,001 to Subash. You gave me Rs 2100 at takha. I expected Rs 4000 today, he said. But I have already given a refrigerator, I said. He said 'Oh you have deducted that and added that you should have given the entire set of jewellery to my mother'. We were all upset."

"At the wedding, May 4, 1978, at least, Rs 75,000 was given as dowry (all inclusive)...but she (Bala) was never happy. From May 1978 till her death, March 20, 1979, it was one demand after demand. Finally, when I found she was pregnant, I hoped that the birth of the child

would improve matters." Since most of Bala's difficulties arose from the fact that she was living with her mother-in-law and sisters-in-law who were effectively "controlling" her and suppressing all attempts to build up a strong relationship with her husband, I began to plead with, to entreat Subash to take Bala to Mathura."

"Why set up another totally new establishment. It means double expenditure. Besides my sisters are here. My mother would definitely want and expect my wife to live with them," said Subash. He continued "you have, in your house, a costly television set, a refrigerator; your sons have scooters...I could have given a car, you have not given me even a scooter." "Your relationship with me is through Bala only. Keep her happy," I said. This was on March 1."

"After a long argument I gave him Rs. 3,000 and said: "This is for you to take Bala to Mathura." She went to Mathura with him; Subash brought her back 12 days later - on March 12. She stayed with me till March 15. On March 14, Holi, he came. He asked me for scooter again. "Please give me at least your son's old scooter. I will give you a

scooter when a son is born to Bala", I said. I added "You are not letting me live in this world... I'll tell you why" he said. Till you give me a scooter, she will not be happy... When a son is born I'll give you a scooter. Her fate was sealed and settled with these words of mine."

"Will you send me back, Ma?" she kept asking me. And then she added "He has no need of me". She was sad, pensive and melancholic."

"On March 15, 1979, before he came I told my sons please go away before Subash comes, otherwise he'll take away a scooter and you all will scold me." When he came he asked me for my son's scooter. "They have gone to work", I said. He tried to browbeat me. "These words will be costly for you" he said. "Will you give me a scooter whether it is a boy or a girl?" He asked. "Only if it is a boy" I said otherwise I'll have to give you something again when a boy is born. I'll give you in writing" he said that I won't ask you for something later on, give me a scooter now. "I don't have money" I said. "It is only Rs.4,000!" he shouted I shook my head. I saw Bala in the mirror... terrified...he took her away. That

was the last time I saw her alive." "On March 17, at night, someone from Subash's neighbourhood brought me news. We think your daughter has been burnt. Go immediately". We rushed to their house. When I did not see her anywhere I panicked. "Where is my Bala, where is my Bala" I kept demanding. Finally Subash's mother said "Ugh" pointing to a bundle here is that 'kooda' (rubbish), take it away..."

"I saw the bundle... God knows when she was killed... there was a foul smell, she was wrapped in seven bedsheets - her lovely hair alone was unburnt... it was difficult to identify her." I began to shout, to abuse the mother... but my sons stopped me. My son said "Ma, don't shout, don't make a noise. Lodge an FIR". Blood rushed to my head."

"Some of the men telephoned to my husband. In the meantime more and more people of my family had arrived. Subash came a little later. "I was in Mathura he said. I wanted desperately to kill him. Then I would have surrendered to the police; I should have done that. I would have gone to jail and been out by now. But my sons stopped me. You will be hanged they said. Then what will happen to your sons. And other daughters?"

"I called him names, I accused him, I abused him, then I demanded the dowry back. "Dowry", my sons said "you are shameless; she is not yet cremated." All of you go away I said I'll get the dowry, I'll

### Ironic twist

Of the innumerable dowry death cases that Satyarani Chadha has handled, the one that she cannot forget and which clings to her like a nightmare is the one where her son's friend was involved.

Hardi, for that is how she knew him, visited her almost every day for a week soon after the death of her daughter, Shashibala. He would ask her how the case was progressing and what were the chances of convicting the offender. Despondent, Satyarani would always reply in the negative. Soon after his wife, Kanchan, was burnt to death, Satyarani felt that she had subconsciously aided Hardi, and in order to make amends, went out of her way to help Kanchan's parents but failed as the case was dismissed.

A few years later he married again and even had a girl. Three years ago the second wife was also burnt to death. But even while she was in flames she clung to Hardi and said that she would not let him escape. Hardi died of leishmaniasis 10 days after allegedly burning his second wife.

cremate her myself..." But the dowry I have to take... he cannot win in the end..."

"The police... the investigation proceeded so slowly... Then for three months all of them were in jail, but then they were released... I get a very strong and powerful desire for revenge..."

"All women's organisations supported me, all media wrote about my case. He will be hanged they all said... but the system won in the end... nothing happened... now, in 1992, 13 years later, I am still going to the Sessions Court, then he will appeal to the High Court, then to the Supreme Court... I will be dead by then. I am 70 years old now he has married again, has children... blood still rushes to my head..."

"But I have found comfort and solace from another source. Some of us set up Shakti Shalini, a women's organisation..."

boxes. This mistake could not be repeated in Jhansi which in any case is barren and almost treeless.

But the villagers were determined that their efforts should not go to waste. It is they who decided to put to use the lantana growing wild. Men and women combed the lantana wilderness, extracted long stems and began cleaning them. The miracle had happened and exquisite baskets were made.

The tomato crop blooms from December to March and for those three to four months there is hectic

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activity in the village. Most homes are making baskets or tending to the tomato crop. Even those not engaged in the cultivation of tomato are able to earn anything from Rs 7000 to Rs 10,000 in one season just making baskets.

The baskets are sold directly to the company transporting the tomatoes. There is no middle man. You cut the lantana, it grows again and provides the biomass for baskets again the next year.

Lantana baskets can be made in other parts of the country and used for transporting coal, flowers and maybe even apples in Himachal!

# Rice bowl to begging bowl



Threshing operations on in Kuttanad paddy field

by P Venugopal

KUTTANAD, once described as the 'rice bowl of Kerala', is facing the grim prospect of being reduced to a 'begging bowl' as a result of the complex problems caused by the unscientific implementation of development projects in the region.

This low-lying region, forming the delta of the rivers Pampa, Achenkoi, Manimala and Meenachil, covers an area of 700 sq km spread over Alapuzha, Kottayam and Pathanamthitta districts of Kerala and was once an unique ecosystem supporting a wide variety of estuarine animal life.

Over the past 150 years or so, about 55,000 hectares of the Kuttanad wetlands were reclaimed for paddy cultivation. The farms in this region are comparable to those in Holland since they lie eight feet below the mean sea level and are protected from the waters in the adjoining lakes by clay bunds.

Now this region is an intricate network of rivers, canals and lakes with extensive boulders and thickly-populated villages in between. The Vembanad lake, which originates from Kuttanad and extends upto the mouth of the Cochin port, is the biggest brackish water body in South India.

If Kuttanad could be called the rice bowl of the State, the Vembanad lake deserves the appellation, 'inland fish basket of Kerala', from where the major part of the estimated 20,000 tonnes of inland fish comes.

Nearly one million people reside in this region. Their main occupation is agriculture, followed by fishing on which are dependent more than 10,000 families. Though the paddy fields of the region make up only eight per cent of the total area under paddy cultivation in the State, they account for nearly 14 per cent of the production.

The region's problems include the severe degradation of the aquatic environment due to human intervention, the consequent depletion in fisheries resources and health hazards posed to over 40 per cent of the population. The people here depend on surface water sources for drinking purposes, untimely cultivation which exposes the crops to floods and droughts, resurgence of pests and diseases due to unscientific use of agrochemicals and a host of socio-economic issues which act as hurdles to long overdue changes.

The Thanneermukkom salt water barrier and the Alapuzha-Changanacherry road, although bringing some benefits to the region, has had a disastrous impact on the ecology of the region.

The Thanneermukkom barrier, constructed in 1976, has transformed the Vembanad lake into two distinct zones - the upstream area in Kuttanad which is being converted into a polluted body of fresh water and the downstream area towards Kochi, retaining brackish water conditions.

A review of the situation during the last seven years shows that the barrier is kept shut for five to six months a year due to delayed launching of the 'puncha' crop in Kuttanad.

The studies conducted by the College of Fisheries, Panangad near Kochi, have shown that the consequent change in the aquatic environment has, besides causing a depletion in the fisheries resources in the region, resulted in the virtual extinction of the once abundant and commercially important species like the Giant Fresh Water Prawn (Macrobrachium Resenbergii) from the region.

Scientific opinion also has it that environmental pollution has acted as a predisposing factor for the outbreak and worsening of the fish disease called 'Epizootic Ulcerative Syndrome' which, according to the Government's estimates, has caused

a loss of more than Rs 10 crore to the fisheries resources in Kuttanad since August 1991, wiping out certain species like the delicious Varal (Channa Stratus) from the region.

The farmers have become a thoroughly demoralised lot due to diminishing returns from their holdings, increasing cost of production and frequent damage to crops from floods, drought, pests and diseases.

A definite indication of how unattractive agriculture has become is provided by the fast conversion of paddy fields in Kuttanad for non-agricultural purposes like construction of houses and the revival of the 'pattam' system under which an increasing number of farmers are leaving out their farms to those who have resources to withstand the risks involved.

The agricultural labourers, numbering over one lakh in the region, are underemployed and still have to fight the drudgery of an 18th century system under which everything from sowing to threshing is done manually.

Recently a three-day seminar, titled 'Save Kuttanad', was organised to discuss the complex problems facing the region and recommend steps to evolve a new development strategy which gives equal importance to the restoration of the region's estuarine ecosystem, control of water pollution, improved returns from agriculture and integration of paddy crop with scientific prawn farming in areas where a second crop is not usually grown.

Those who participated in the discussions took the Government to task for sleeping over the report of the Kuttanad Water Balance Study, an Indo-Dutch venture, submitted to the Government as far back as 1989.

The State Government, has of late, initiated the process of consultations with experts and farmers with a view to implementing some of the recommendations contained in the report.

# IIT students on altruistic mission

by Vijaya K Pushkarna

WHEN workers in Kanpur picked up their spades, brooms and bins and piled garbage on to a tractor to clean up the sprawling campus of the Indian Institute of Technology, on July 2, it may not have been an unusual sight to most visitors. But to the students, the faculty members and most of all the workers themselves the day marked the end of an eight-month long struggle against the corruption-ridden contractor system, and the beginning of a new era.

This feat by the workers under the aegis of the Shramik Vikas Sahakari Shram Samvidya Samiti (Shramik Samiti to the campus residents), traces its beginning to November last, when a group of students who taught the children of labourers learnt that the workers were getting only Rs 18 a day, or sometimes even far less, against the prevailing minimum wage of Rs 32.60.

Students smelt collusion of the institute officials in what they thought was a scandal involving the exploitation of the very poor, and launched a signature campaign calling for payment of minimum wages to workers on the campus.

The pile of signatures were sent to the Ministry of Human Resources Development, followed by a gherao of the superintendent engineer of the IIT. By the end of the month, the management agreed to pay the minimum wages fixed by the Government.

But to the dismay of workers, the contractors began throwing out workers, and all work on the campus ground to a halt.

That was when 25 indignant professors decided it was time they stepped in. They gheraoed the acting director M P Kapoor for a whole night on December 6. The next day, he directed the workers to resume work.

Though work began, the academic community kept itself fully informed of the intrigues of the contractors - obviously in league with vested interests. Campus newsletters began discussing the subject, and in one newsletter, the idea of a cooperative society of workers was mooted as an alternative to the contractor system. Soon after, the students and faculty members rallied some workers together and registered the Shramik Samiti towards January end.

However, on February 3, when the IIT Kanpur invited a tender for campus cleaning, Shramik Samiti supported, the old tender was cancelled.

A demonstration by all sections on the campus resulted in the tender being re-advertised. An unheard of and unregistered Dalit Kalyan Samiti had heavily underbid, ostensibly to keep the Shramik Samiti out. But the Samiti's bidding turned out the lowest, by a very slender margin: Rs 17,100 a month to the Kalyan Samiti's Rs 17,140 a month. Still no decision was taken.

Meanwhile, newly appointed IIT director R C Malhotra, simply gave the contract to the lowest bidder, the Shramik Samiti.



supporters applied for the tender form but were unceremoniously refused. Ironically, the form was given to a single contractor only, says campus resident and labour lawyer Vishnu Shukla, who is secretary of the Shramik Samiti.

Exactly 24 hours before the bidding was to begin, some faculty members succeeded in getting a form for the Samiti, which made the lowest bid. According to Shukla, the IIT would have saved Rs 60,000 a year if the Samiti had been given the contract. The decision on the clean-up garbage clearance contract was called for a month, for no apparent reason. When tension dis-

rupted, the old tender was cancelled.

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The Shramik Samiti has received manpower and moral support from the unemployed youth of the area who have formed a separate society. The Balmiki Samiti has also extended support to the workers and their members too have been smitten by the cooperative bug. "The real achievement lies in the fact that workers have been ensured justice and simultaneously the corruption prevalent in the system of allotting contracts has been weeded out," says Shukla. Senior faculty members are not members of the society. But the workers are guided by them, for they are on Shramik Samiti's advisory board.

# Cursed lantana turns saviour

by Usha Rai

from Rs 100 to Rs 125. Even if they work just 20 days in a month they make Rs 2000 to Rs 2500.

The people of Tejpura are still as simple and humble as they were before they discovered the economic potential of the lantana. But their remarkable transformation began some four to five years ago when the agriculture department of the state decided to develop the watershed in which these villages fall. Four or five small bunds were constructed to hold the rain water and ensure that it did not run off. Slowly the water soaked the parched earth and trickled down raising the water table in the area. Within a few years, even in the month of June there was as much as 30 inches of water in the catchment area.

As the water table rose, some 200



wells were sunk in these villages. Making full use of the water available, and with some guidance from experts, the villagers began growing tomatoes. For the last three years there have been bumper harvests of tomato.

Markets were found for the

luscious tomatoes of Jhansi in Nagpur and Kanpur. But with two truckloads to be transported daily there was need for proper packaging of the tomatoes. In Himachal, where there is a bumper harvest of apples, there is ecological vandalism and they are packed in plywood

By Edgar Rice Burroughs



# Recipe for quake-proof houses

Usha Rai

Laurie Baker and the Department of Architecture and Technology of the Department of Science and Technology to study the impact of earthquakes on houses. He said that the traditional houses used for construction should be retained. They should be replaced by modern designs.

He does not support the 'roofing' of the rebuilt houses. The new ones. The houses have lived in the villages for two decades, have survived several minor tremors. The cups and saucers look or two off the shelves of Garhwal and due to these tremors the indigenous design has withstood the test of time.

What is needed is that the houses be properly constructed with good material and design. If this is done, 99.9 per cent of the reconstruction work can be done by special 'earthquake-resistant' masonry. Better masonry stands all but major tremors, says Dr Baker.

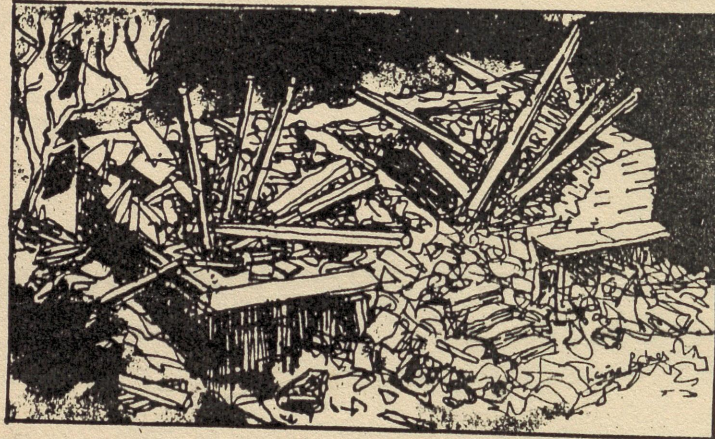
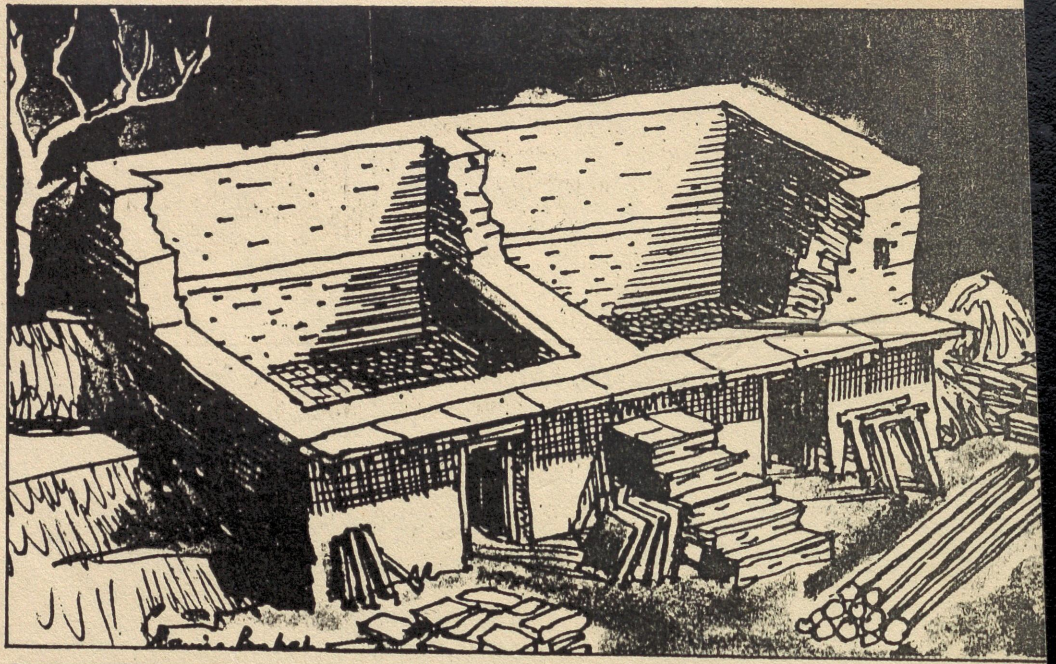
He requests for new designs. Dr Baker says that on different plans are the typical house in mountain regions has stood for hundreds of years and

is "mainly satisfactory."

Though concrete roof houses have begun to appear in villages adjacent to the motorable road, in most houses in Garhwal local material like wood, stone, slate and mud - all material that is locally available - has been used. "Most housing sites are sloping and it is not possible to cut far into the rocky mountainside, so there is usually a low-ceilinged basement room used by the cattle, and above it are the living rooms. Warmth rises through the wooden floor from the animals below."

What is unique about the report presented to the Department of Science and Technology are the illustrations. Excellent sketches of the villages, houses that have been damaged, the material used, segments to show how the damage has been to just one part of the house. These are all sketches done at the site by the COSTFORD team earlier this year. The report is entirely handwritten. With Dr Baker were T.R. Chandra Dath of COSTFORD and Dr Anil Joshi of HESCO (Himalayan Environment Society). Mr A.K. Sharma of the DST and Dr Joshi helped the experts reach inaccessible places to meet people and study the damage to the houses.

The report says that three months after the earthquake no effort had been made to remove the debris, sort out the wood, stones and slate and salvage building material. All or most of this material can be reused, says Dr Baker. While some houses in a village at a height of 5,000 feet were destroyed, others were partial-



(Top) Stones and wood can be salvaged from (left) a quake-damaged house. (Bottom) A remodeled house by Laurie Baker.

this because of a fear that snakes and rats will hide in the cracks.

The cracked corner walls (due to lack of bonding and use of too many small stones) can get the support of a buttress to prevent further enlargement of the cracks. The report does not favour use of rounded stones found near the river. Though they are broken and used for building walls, due to the rounded shape of each stone they can slip and slide out. Many walls which used the stones had fallen with the vibrations of the earthquake. It is therefore better to use these stones for paving the entrance to the house.

In the traditional buildings a lot of timber and balis have been used. In many cases the whole trunk has been used. The balis and logs, the report says, should be salvaged and they can be sawed into two or three pieces and reused.

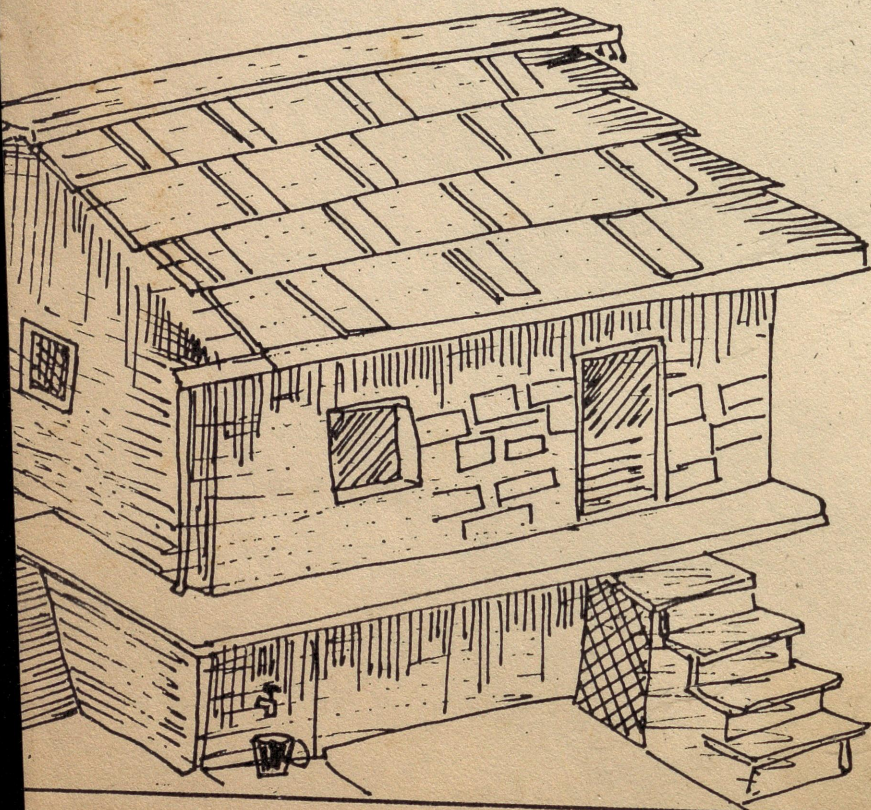
Most houses were constructed where ever there was a more or less permanent supply of water - mainly from springs coming out of the mountainside. Since 99 per cent of the travel is by foot, water is more important than roads and is the main reason for choosing a site.

The DST has decided to fund HESCO for a demonstration project in Garhwal. The house or houses constructed will implement the cost reduction technology proposed by COSTFORD. They will incorporate improvements like energy efficient stoves, water storage and conservation facilities. Copies of the Dath/Baker report have been sent to various departments involved in house construction and hill area development.

ly damaged and some remained untouched. The villagers said if they cleared away all the mess they would get less compensation.

In the typical Garhwal house, large stones and a lot of little stones are set together in mud. There is no attempt at 'bonding' (interlocking stones on one side of the wall with stones on the other side). Though the wall looks neat and nice from outside, the lack of bonding has proved fatal. If the wall collapses the roof collapses too. The few masons available were found wasting their time on 'looks' instead of ensuring the stability of the structure. After the earthquake they jacked up their rates from Rs 60 per day to Rs 100.

The COSTFORD team has recommended that good sized stones (anything as big as a loaf of bread) must be extracted for reuse. The small stones must not be used. The stones found in most areas, except along the river banks, are of ideal shape for the buildings. Rectangular and cube-like, they could even be built as dry stone walls without mortar. But the people don't like



## Denied BCG shots in Tamil Nadu

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meeting and afterwards - to the risk of tuberculosis, which kills thousands of Indians even today, for the sole purpose of facilitating the trials of the Convit vaccine.

The logic behind this dubious exercise was that since the bacteria which causes tuberculosis and the one responsible for leprosy are closely related, a

children in the trial area according to the national programme. It also said the design of the trial should be modified after taking into account the effect of the BCG vaccination. A copy of the letter was sent to Prof A.S. Paintal, then director general of ICMR.

So why did the ICMR insist on a BCG-free population?

would not surprise anyone if the 'pressure' was still on.

This is not all. At the second meeting of the advisory committee for the leprosy vaccine trial, held at the ICMR headquarters on June 25, 1990, one of the members submitted a dissenting note

### READERS' RESPONSE

**Govt at fault, not officials**

Apropos the Bigha Zameen

Malik on J

# Japanese aid for greening of Aravallis

by Usha R

NEW DELHI

Japan to take on the leadership on the environment front. Mr Nakamura too, seemed keen to forge new environmental ties with India. He said, 'we are a developed country who see the needs and concerns of the developing countries'.

The Japanese Overseas Economic and Development Fund (OECD) already provides Rs 170 crore for the greening of the Aravallis. The Japanese delegation visited Surajkund where a presentation on the greening operation underway was made. Senior officials of the environment and forest ministry, Haryana government and representative of external affairs accompanied the Japanese team. Since the Ridge area bridges two states and a Union Territory—Haryana, Rajasthan and Delhi—and needs to be greened to arrest the march of the deserts, it has been given high priority. Mr Nakamura expressed satisfaction at the work done so far and has assured a doubling of assistance for this project.

Mr Kamal Nath also explained India's stand on the Narmada and the Government is hopeful that the proposed Japanese funding for the project which had suddenly stopped after adverse reports, will be renewed. In the light of the Bradford Morse committee report

and understandable government concern that World Bank funding for the Narmada could dry up, Mr Kamal Nath has been explaining India's position on the controversial project to the Japanese and in his recent visit abroad to the Swedes, the Finns, the Germans and the British.

India has however maintained that the project cannot be abandoned at this stage and all suggestions for improving the environment and resettlement package will be adhered to. In Finland, the 31-year old Miss Sirpa Pietkainen, who is

considered an environmental activist expressed reservations on the Narmada project.

However, Mr Kamal Nath used his gift of the gab to explain that while India recognised the concerns of the NGOs, the basic question of whether there should be dams will not be reopened. He maintained that the project would provide water to half a million people in drought-prone areas and 1.8 million hectares would be irrigated. The returns, he has argued, justify submergence of 37,000 hectares of which 13,000 hectares are forests.

Germany's environment

minister, Dr Klaus Topfer, has offered India financial and technical help for the ecological conservation in the Narmada Basin. The proposal is to be placed before the ministry of water resources.

For the first time, the Indian Government has sought timber worth Rs 100 crore as aid, which will be monetised. Mr Kamal Nath put forth this request during his discussions with Mr Erik Olsson, the Swedish minister for forestry and agriculture. The environment ministry sees a dual advantage in the deal. The timber can be sold in the Indian market to meet the house building needs of poor people who illegally extract it from forests.

India is already importing timber worth Rs 1200 crore annually from about a dozen countries—the major ones being Sweden, Malaysia, Brazil, Canada and Burma. The new deal with Sweden could mean another reprieve for our forests. Forest management in Sweden is so advanced that in the warmer regions in the south, trees like the birch, pine and spruce can be harvested in seven to 12 years. In the colder north, the harvesting cycle is once in 25 years. Enlarged SIDA activity in India and funding for the Narmada project was also discussed.

In Finland, Mr Kamal Nath and his team were impressed by the sophisticated equipment used by the forestry sector in timber extraction. India's has sought assistance from FINNIDA for purchase of a 'plywood peeler' for the Indian Plywood Research Institute in Bangalore which falls under the environment ministry. The equipment is to be bought from a company called Raute which will install it as well as conduct research for two years on its functioning in Indian conditions and on Indian trees.

The equipment helps peel wood of young, fast growing species like eucalyptus and subabul in layers like swiss rolls so that there is minimum wastage. The Indian equipment works on trees which have a solid girth (normally teak and sal trees of 50 to 80 years) and a third of the core area is wasted. The deal with FINNIDA and Raute is being slotted as 'technology transfer.'

In Britain, Mr Kamal Nath met the environment minister Michael Howard and the minister for overseas development, Linda Chalker. He explained India's stand on the Narmada to them too. Mr Kamal Nath has pleaded with the British, the Germans and the Japanese for the strengthening of the FAO as the most appropriate structure for forestry.

## Unique envoys to Sweden

INDIA has not one but 20,000 ambassadors in Sweden, as discovered by Mr Kamal Nath in a recent visit to that country. He is not only the environment and forest minister but also the President of the Delhi Child Welfare Society.

Palna, the founding home run by the Society, gives children for adoption in India and abroad. Some 4000 Indian children have been adopted by

Swedish parents in the last 20 years. Some of them have married and all are well settled.

Over a hundred Indian children got together to honour the President of the Society that had found them such excellent homes. Most of these children have visited India at least once with their adoptive parents. The 4000 children, their parents and brothers and sisters, Mr Kamal Nath said, were unique ambassadors for India.

Legal

Siddiqui new SC Registrar-General

BJP MP alleges Kalpnath's involvement in stock scam

The hand work H

# Burgeoning population

The state sleeps as reports predict doom

By Usha Rai

**F**IRST the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) and now the Population Crisis Committee (PCC) of Washington in its country study of India's family planning programme have warned that if serious political attention is not given to control population growth, by 2035 India will have more people than China. By 2040 we would have more than 2.5 billion people.

It is like a prophecy of doom, for with our limited resources and facilities we are not able to provide even today basics like education, clothing, shelter or jobs to a large percentage of our 883 million people. There is evidence too that countries that have made economic strides are those that have been able to control their population growth. India's efforts at economic liberalisation could come to naught if matching efforts are not made on the population front.

The PCC report, based on field studies by Shanti R. Conly and Sharon Camp should have sent the Family Welfare Department into a frenzy of activity. It should have given sleepless nights to the Prime Minister's Office and to the Cabinet. But everyone seems to have taken the report as just another irksome indictment that has to be quickly buried rather than taken note of and acted upon.

The manner in which the report has been cold-shouldered is symptomatic of our attitude to the programme itself. The report was sent to bureaucrats, journalists and demographers towards the end of last month with an embargo on its use till September 14.

On September 15, the new Family Welfare Secretary, still cutting her teeth in the department, was contacted - at least efforts in that direction were made. The private secretary to the secretary first wanted to know who wanted to speak to her and for what reasons. When all this was duly explained along with the urgency of the need for a government response, the PS said madam had received the report only three days ago and since there was a weekend had not had the time to study it. He promised to get back when madam was ready to react to the report. A week went by and still no response.

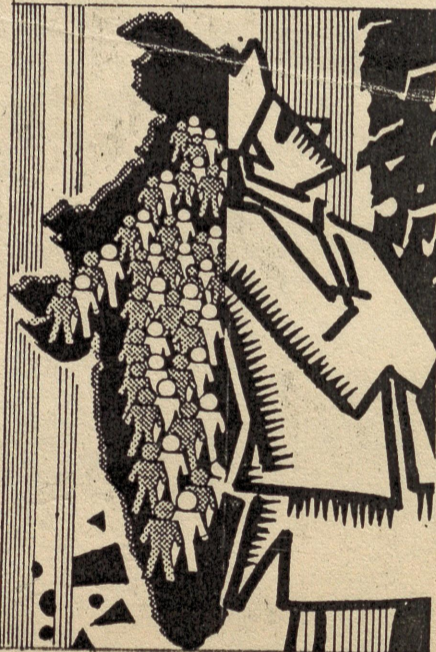
At the recent Asia Pacific Population Conference, India - which normally assumes leadership roles for this region - was sidelined because the Family Welfare Secretary who was expected to implement the new population policy which he had a hand in formulating, was suddenly transferred. His replacement, Ms Usha Vohra, is believed to have actually lobbied for the job because she was keen to prove herself as another Sarla Grewal in family planning. There was glimmer of hope in that.

The PCC report points out that lack of continuity in top bureaucratic and technical leadership is an important reason why our population containment programme suffers. It takes a year for a new official to become familiar with the technical and organisational issues relating to the large and complex family welfare programme. The constant process of re-educating top officials has a cost in terms of

programme momentum and efficiency. Between 1980 and 1988 there were five appointments to the key post of Secretary, Family Welfare, at the Centre. The frequent transfer of top programme officials, the report says "undermines accountability for major policy decisions". By contrast, the successful population programmes in Indonesia, Mexico and Thailand are managed by a permanent cadre of professional family planning specialists.

The report says the Government's long-standing goal of reaching on a voluntary basis a national average family size of slightly over two children - the replacement level that will eventually lead to a stable population size around the year 2000 - appears unrealistic.

A new family welfare programme was announced this January and there was hope that the Government was finally moving away from rhetoric to action. There has been talk of a population commission for the last two years. A subcommittee of the National Development Council headed by Chief Minister Karunakaran of Kerala was expected to take the final decision on it as well as on the



two-child policy for those seeking elected office. But the committee has met barely once or twice. Similarly for the last two or three years the 90 districts of the country in nine states, including one in Kerala, having a high birth rate have been identified but the much-promised zeroing in on these states has yet to begin.

The gap between policy and implementation is enormous. The official policy talks of a range of contraceptive choices but in fact at the field level there is a strong bias for sterilisation, particularly of females, followed by use of IUD. The use of the pill and the condom is limited to 3 and 11 per cent of the

population respectively. A community-level study found that official reports on use of spacing methods were grossly exaggerated and only 20 per cent were using them.

Biases against hormonal methods of contraception like Norplant and Depo-Provera are stronger among physicians and women groups than among consumers. The result is that though India was one of the first countries to have an official family planning programme, the choice for spacing methods far too limited.

Considering the tardy pace of family planning, the extent of illiteracy and the limited options for spacing, it would, however, be foolish for the Government at this stage to come back on its sterilisation programme. Targets are necessary but there should be no compulsion for sterilisation. The responsibility has to be shared by men and the focus has to shift to vasectomy. The rural folk have to be persuaded to limit the size of their family and the sterilisation camp method has to continue. People should not be treated like dumb driven cattle.

Women's groups have to be persuaded to support the family planning programme. Instead of opposing every new contraceptive the Government seeks to introduce they should be integrated into the programme. They could even maintain a check list of those getting the Norplant and other injectibles, and if the woman has any complications or discomfort they should have the power to get her treated and if necessary the injectible removed before the mandatory five-year period. I am sure that the women's organisations are as concerned about the welfare of the nation as they are about women.

But above all we need to improve the basic health care facilities in our rural areas. A significant proportion of the rural population still lives more than five kilometres away from the nearest source of family planning services. In Bihar, one of our BIMARU states, 25 per cent of the posts of female health worker, the lynchpin of the health services, remained vacant just last year. A 1987 survey of primary health centres in UP indicates that fewer than a fifth of the doctors attached to the centre had been trained to perform female sterilisations, early abortion or IUD insertion. Though abortion is legalised in India, women in rural areas are not aware of it and just 10 per cent of the rural health facilities were equipped for it in the early eighties.

The population policy makers should see how best to incorporate the suggestions of the PCC report. Among the significant ones are to raise the couple protection rate from 45 per cent to 75 to 80 per cent, to provide a much wider choice of contraceptives, to involve government departments and voluntary organisations in the population programme and above all to improve the quality of care.

UNFPA, USAID and the World Bank are pumping in money for the programme but ultimately it is political commitment at the top, local commitment at the grass roots and administrative capacity that will make or mar India's family planning programme.

## King Of The Kitchen

By P. Subramanian

**T**HE irresistible dark brown *satha sathayam* should have truly earned the title of the food of the gods. Who was the inventor of this sweet seductive syrupy recipe of Kerala, perhaps no one knows. But at the hands of its maker, Appu Iyer, this coconut-milk based sweet confection led to multitudes of harmonious marriages in Kerala.

"When the grim-faced mother-in-law peeps into the kitchen, I usually say, 'This is the

salty and spicy flavour with lip-smacking lingering taste. And there was always so much to choose from his menu, *sambhar, rasam, kalan, olan, avial, eriseri*.

Like most cooks, Appu Iyer too had no formal training in cooking. "It took lots of

feast that the ultimate credentials should not go to the host, but to the maker of the exotic dishes, Appu Iyer.

He was once decorated with Veer Srinikhala by the Maharaja of Kollengode - a traditional princely way of honouring great men in public life. People of Trissoor revered Appu Iyer so much that when he completed his thousand full moon days, they celebrated the occasion

Shankar Dayal Sharma will address the joint session on the inaugural day in the central hall at 11 am. According to an official release, the Rajya Sabha is scheduled to conclude on March 1. It will meet again after an interval, while the Lok Sabha will be busy passing the budget and related Financial Bill. •UNI

### Rockets kill 72

★★ KABUL — Renegade rebels stepped up their two-week-old siege of the Afghan Capital on Tuesday, firing scores of rockets that killed at least 72 people and wounded more than 80, according to the state-run radio. • AP

### PWG deadline

★★ HYDERABAD — The outlawed People's War Group (PWG) saboteurs who are holding the Congress MLA, Mr P Bala Raju, and five others as hostages, have set up a fresh deadline until Wednesday morning for the release of three of their associates. Earlier report on Page 11)

### Development News

► This week Rasheeda Bhat describes the shattered lives of mentally deranged women in Madras, forsaken by their kin and sexually exploited on the streets of an apathetic city.



### DELHI WEATHER

FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY: Mainly clear sky. Night temperature will be about 8 degrees

The maximum temperature on Tuesday was 23.3 degrees C (73.9 degrees F), 1 degree C above normal. Minimum 7.8 degrees C (46.0 degrees F) 1 degree C below normal.

# Natwar, Sheila give a fillip to anti-Rao drive

## EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI — The Congress dissidents questioning party president P. V. Narasimha Rao's leadership has received a boost with several prominent party leaders and MPs coming out openly in support of their demand for an AICC session before the February 25 BJP rally here.

The ranks of the dissidents swelled on Tuesday when former Union ministers K. Natwar Singh, Sheila Dikshit and Ram Dulari Sinha along with several party MPs endorsed the "requisition-AICC campaign" which had so far been carried out by K. N. Singh and B. P. Maurya. The three MPs who openly took a position

against the leadership on this issue were: Mr Ajit Jogi, Mr Jagjit Singh Brar and Mr Assad Maqsood.

These leaders left no doubt about their unhappiness over the direction of the party in the post-demolition situation and gave notice for a thorough appraisal of its policy towards the BJP. "All we are asking is for convening the AICC before the BJP rally on the 25th of February so that the party can deliberate on the grave communal and other issues facing the nation," they said in a joint statement repudiating the leadership's decision to hold the party session in early March.

Meanwhile party spokesman V N Gadgil announced that a cru-

cial meeting of the Congress Working Committee has been convened here on Sunday to finalise the date of the AICC session.

Talking to ENS, dissident MP Brar warned that if the Congressmen decided to remain "silent spectators on February 25 as before December 6, we will commit a very big mistake." Recalling the Congress history of standing for secular ideals and safeguarding the Constitution, Mr Brar regretted that the present party leadership had "failed very miserably" in upholding such values. He shared the dissenters' view that Mr Rao should give up the party presidency in view of the pressing situation. "Unless the one-man-one-post norm is strictly

adhered to at this crisis hour people will not forgive us," he said. "If the BJP rally is not stopped, these ten lakh people are sure to go on a rampage demolishing some other religious places." He apprehended that such a huge crowd might even set on Parliament. He demanded that the BJP rally be stopped.

Mr Jogi said that the AICC session should take place before the BJP show of strength. "In view of the unprecedented rise of communalism and fascism \*\*there is a need to discuss the situation and work out a strategy in the highest party forum," he said. "What we have done so far is not enough to counter such forces and

► p 11 col 8

# National parks face danger from skies

by Usha Rai

NEW DELHI

A helicopter of the India International Airways Pvt Ltd (IIAPL), which on one of its surreptitious runs inside Corbett National Park crashed into Kalaghar dam allegedly in the first week of October, has been seized by the Park authorities and impounded at Kotdwara, 100 kms from Corbett.

The seizure of the helicopter is seen as valuable evidence of a new kind of threat to national parks from rich, powerful tourists who use helicopters to land inside a park without prior permission.

Some years ago when the late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi wanted to hold a Cabinet meeting in Sariska and bring his Cabinet colleagues by helicopter, enraged wild life lovers saw to it that the meeting was not held in Corbett.

There could be no greater disturbance for wild life than the construction of a helipad and choppers flitting around.

According to Corbett Park officials the Kalaghar dam accident was not reported by the Airways because these helicopters have been trespassing and bringing in poachers or tourists into the park. On December 21 the police at Bijnore and the SSP at Nainital reported that a helicopter flying from Kotdwara to Corbett was missing.

The next day a search party of the air taxi operators landed at Dhikala and Khinnanauli between 10.30 am and 12 noon without permission of the park authorities. There is photographic evidence of this with the officials. On the evening of December 22 the police control room at Bijnore even reported the safe return of the helicopter.

On January 4, Capt Sahi of

IIAPL wrote to the park director, Mr A S Negi, that a helicopter had crashed on December 21 and that he would like to retrieve it. No permission was given.

The submerged helicopter, park officials maintain, was the one seen in the area in October. With the water level of the dam receding towards the end of the year, the chopper could be sighted and hence the second mission to retrieve it. The alarm sounded on December 21 was to ward off suspicion. It is suspected by park officials that the entire "drama" of December 21 was enacted so that evidence could be tampered with. The seats of the helicopter were removed, the official maintained.

Frustrated and angry with these nefarious activities of fly by night helicopter operators, park officials 'slapped an 'offence' report for landing without permission in the core area of the national park.

The incident was also reported to the UP Government.

But on January 20 the airlines, with the support of officials from the Irrigation Department, hired two trucks and two boats through Oriental Insurance, their agents in Delhi, entered the park and retrieved the helicopter from Kalaghar dam.

Trucks, boats and the damaged helicopter were seized by the Project Tiger staff on January 25. The impounding of all these vessels has been reported to the district magistrate at Kotdwara.

The premier national park of the country has been plagued by terrorists for well over a year now. Terrified forest officials had even fled from Corbett at one stage. The threat of the militants is currently restricted to the southern part of Corbett. Just a fortnight ago 10 labourers were killed by terrorists just outside the Project Tiger area

# MAG

SBIMF: Pen

Prices for February 1993

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MULTIPL PLUS

A Pure Growth Scheme closes: 20

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- Listing & Repurchase
- Incentives



# Mutual funds # Past performance

# Literacy—the backlash ha



by Usha Rai

Our record on the development front has been dismal—the only silver lining being the literacy programme. The National Literacy Mission, which came into existence in 1988, has done a commendable job in identifying key persons and NGOs in every corner of the country and setting alight the torch for literacy.

For four years, while governments came and went, the Mission pursued its task relentlessly. There was a sense of euphoria when Kerala became the first totally literate state in the country. Other districts and states followed suit... Pondicherry became fully literate last November, and Goa is 90 per cent literate. Five districts of West Bengal are well into post-literacy programmes, and in another five districts the campaign is on. At present, literacy programmes are on in 165 districts all over the country.

In recognition of the tremendous job it has done in literacy, India received three UNESCO awards for literacy in as many years. In 1990, Kerala Shastra Sahitya Parishad, which led Ernakulam into literacy received the \$ 35,000 King Sejong award; in 1991, the West Bengal Government received the Nema award, and this year the King Sejong award has been bagged by Puduvai Arivoli Iyakkam, the NGO at the forefront of the literacy movement in Pondicherry.

Alas, though, the going has become tougher over the last year. Various hurdles are being placed in the way of committed workers. Poli-

tics is rearing its ugly head. The mass movement through jathas to motivate people for literacy is seen by politicians as a direct threat to their survival...

In states where literacy has taken roots, politicians find themselves marginalised, and are therefore unhappy with the literacy programme. They see distinct advantages in keeping people dull, driven, mute and subservient. Literacy has even become a bone of contention in Centre-State relations.

A sub-committee of the National Development Council was set up for literacy, but since it is headed by Kalyan Singh, the Chief Minister of UP—not a very senior politician himself, Arjun Singh and Jyoti Basu did not attend its two meetings.

Literacy activists have been accused of being "former card-holders", "subversive and disruptionist elements", "anti-nationals" linked to militants... Even NLM director-general Lakshmi Dhar Mishra, who eats, walks and sleeps literacy, has not been spared. The Tamil Nadu Education Minister, at the last meeting of the Central Advisory Board of Education, said "We have received a very serious complaint that volunteers engaged for this work are attempting political proselytising, particularly in place like Kanyakumari district where some ex-card holders have been engaged as volunteers."

The reason for the complaints, he said, was "wrong selection of the NGO as the state resource centre; wrong selection of the chief coordinator and misplaced sympathy of some bureaucrat in charge of the programme at the Centre." No one protested at the minister's comments, and this statement has gone into the minutes of the CABE.



In Pondicherry, the Science Forum, which organised Puduvai Arivoli Iyakkam, the movement for light of knowledge, has been accused of being anti-patriotic. What has irked the Chief Minister of Pondicherry as well as the Speaker, is a song in the post-literacy primer which asks "freedom for the country but why poverty for us?" So angry were the politicians that they wanted that the literacy association be disbanded.

The Congress, the DMK and the AIMDK wanted to remove teachers who were science forum activists, and to punish the education secretary, the director of public instruction and others. Though Lieutenant-Governor Harswaroop Singh intervened, he was not able to prevent the transfer of the officers. Nor was the primer allowed to be printed...

Of the 2,500 post literacy centres that were to be set up, only 500 are

in place. Currently, the Chief Minister of Pondicherry is adamant that he, and not a representative of Arivoli Iyakkam, should be sent to Spain to receive the UNESCO literacy award.

The impact of the literacy programme in Pondicherry was visible. Neo-literate women launched a programme to check boot-legging; when a health worker did not arrive for the immunisation programme, and when at times public taps did

not work, people complained they got the work done.

Tamil Nadu education Minister Ranganaiakam accused the working for literacy of being "desirable elements" having "connections." The Tamil Nadu Government sought to remove the Gyan Vigyan Samiti coordinator Venkatesh Athreyai of the university in Trichy.

Qudsia Gandhi and Shyamal Chugnat, collectors of

by J.S. Ifthekhar

Until recently, it was not easy for Laxmi, an illiterate beedi worker, to keep a correct account of the number of beedis she rolled during a week. She tried to maintain an account of sorts—in her head: which often resulted in her getting duped of her rightful earnings by the beedi factory proprietors, notorious for exploitation. All that, however, is a thing of the past. Twenty-eight-year-old Laxmi can now keep a tab on the amount of work she does, and even check whether the sum being deducted from her wages is being credited to the provident fund account.

Laxmi is not the only such person to benefit from the 'total literacy campaign' which concluded in the north Telangana district of Nizamabad in Andhra Pradesh on August 15. Over just a year, 'Akshara Kiranam' campaign has successfully imparted the three Rs to a staggering 3 lakh illiterate people in the 36 mandals and three municipalities of the district. Of these neo-literates, beedi workers, majority of whom are women,

account for a lakh. The district has already embarked on a post-literacy programme, and will probably be declared fully literate on November 1, the State formation day.

What is the reason for the success of the literacy programme in Nizamabad, when similar programmes launched in other districts are being implemented in a humdrum manner? One need not look very far: behind every success is a strategy, and in this case it is the volunteers that have made the programme successful.

"The success is not because of the money spent, but on account of the commitment.... We realised people are not going to learn through inducements, so we offered none," says Nizamabad District Collector Binoy Kumar. Of course, attracting the masses to the world of letters has not been an easy task, in the absence of incentives, especially in a district where the literacy rate is 35 per cent as compared to 45 per cent in the state and 52 per cent in the country. Initially the beedi workers were not

receptive to the idea of 'learning', as they felt things would not change even if they knew how to read and write. The managements were also opposed to the drive, as they were worried about work being affected.

Sustained arguments relieved them of their apprehensions, however, and today most of the 80 beedi karkhanas in the district have become 'seats of learning'.

**People who have benefited from the campaign are making sure their children attend the school...**

"I am glad I started learning. It is now easy for me to read the name-plate on buses and know what my children are studying at school," says Manemma, a worker at a beedi karkhana at Yedapally



N.K. Wasif

Right from the start, the programme was a task. Finding volunteers in rural areas, was more so when it came. Nevertheless, the author aged to put together 45,000 volunteers, along with a host of organisations and officials from various governments, succeeded in a near impossible feat.

Occasionally, the literacy ran into rough weather. Clashes between the Naxalites. Once, Naxalists in the jeep of a Divisional Officer, A.V. Joseph, pur village. The result was enough to scare literates from school. However, for a change dropped their approach and talked into participating in

## Nizamabad's success story

## At crossroads in Bengal

by Malabika Bhattacharya

Usharani, 90, is a resident of Kandua, a faceless village in Midnapore district. Married almost in childhood, she lost her husband at 16. Life has been a bitter struggle for her, but on the last leg of her long innings, Usharani feels she must do something to bring some zest to her life.

And so, she has embarked upon acquiring literacy. "If only I could have learned at an early age."

Sachin Das, 49, is a small-time coal dealer and a resident of Utaganda, near Calcutta. For him, living always has meant learning to overcome odds to make money. This life did not allow him to educate himself.

Today, he is busy making up for

now underway in West Bengal. About 56 lakh people spread across Burdwan, Midnapore, Hooghly, Birbham and Bankura districts have acquired literacy.

The National Literacy Mission is impressed by the Bengal programme. As against the Rs 70 per head the rest of the nation spends on spreading literacy, the Mission's programme is costing the State just Rs 50.

This can be attributed to the wider participation of volunteers, despite almost nil monetary expectations. Says R.S. Mathur, a member of the Mission's executive committee: "We must preserve the

literacy centre in a village provides an excellent opportunity for mass contact on a sustained basis. It comes handy in heading off superstition, sharpening minds, and at various stages, spreading a political message.

It would be naive to assume that the ruling Marxists are trying to stuff the semi-literate or illiterate villagers with Marxist ideas, though, as the villagers lack the requisite mental rigour to grasp the nuances of political teachings.

What is actually significant is the narrowing of the gap between the full-time party worker who is participating in the implementation of the programme in the district, and the beneficiary of the programme, who is getting exposed to the life

themselves with the literacy programme, and their energies are being put to productive use.

Says Dhritin Chakraborty, a political observer: "It is amazing how educated unemployed people are being put to managing human resources, hitherto neglected." Going by reports from the targeted districts, it must be said that the average voluntary trainer is employed at a daunting job, as he is discharging his responsibilities in a highly political state, where every public welfare issue is put under the microscope.

Also, it must be noted that he is operating in rural India, where violent political elements, fundamentalists, casteists and petty politicians are opposed to welfare projects. According to Rajashree Biswas, a literacy movement worker, "There are villages where people often object to clubbing of Hindu and Muslim, high caste and low

## Aysha: A flashback



by K.A. Anthony

Aysha Chelakkadan, the 60-year-old from the conserva-

THE literacy tum in Mad district has achieved total liter gone unchallenged had also achieved by the State Govt. complaints of bungli campaign.

MP is among literacy—just 43 (1991 census). T females in the respectively.

The BJP Govt

## POLLUTION WATCH

## Ambient air quality at B S Z Marg (ITO Intersection)

Parameter	6am to 2pm	2pm to 10pm
Sulphur dioxide (SO <sub>2</sub> )	18	31
Oxide of Nitrogen (NO <sub>x</sub> )	75	86
Carbon monoxide (CO)	5000	1832 3870
Suspended Particulate Matter (SPM)	500	403 748

Acceptable Value\*

\*ug/m<sup>3</sup> = Unit micrograms per cubic metre of air

Data provided by Central Pollution Control Board

## 4 pilgrims killed in bus blast

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

AMRITSAR - Four persons were killed on the spot while another 55 persons were seriously injured when a strong time bomb exploded in a Jammu bound bus at Malikpur near Pathankot on Monday morning.

The Jammu and Kashmir state transport bus from Amritsar left Pathankot city bus stand at about 9.00 a.m.

Hardly 20 minutes had passed that the bomb lying beneath a seat exploded killing all the four passengers on the seat. Those killed could not be identified because their bodies were blown off and their limbs lay scattered over an area of 50 yards.

According to the police, bus occupants were mostly pilgrims destined to the famous shrine Vaishno Devi temple in Katra area of the Jammu district.

The police suspected the militants may have planted the bomb when the bus halted at Pathankot city bus stand to jeopardise Punjab government's move to reintroduce late evening bus service.

## Pak troops open fire in Poonch

JAMMU - Pakistani troops resorted to unprovoked firing at 10 forward positions in the border district of Poonch on Sunday evening.

According to official reports, Pakistani troops resorted to firing when Indian security forces objected to digging of trenches at the no man's land near the Line of Actual Control.

Small arms fire were exchanged for over eight hours but in some sectors it was continuing intermittently on Monday also.

No one was injured from the Indian side. However, the Pakistanis were seen carrying three bodies, the reports said. • UNI

## INSIDE

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BUSINESS EXPRESS Experts for abolition of badla system ..... P 17

## DELHI WEATHER

FORECAST FOR TUESDAY: Clear sky.

The maximum temperature on Monday was 35.5 degrees C (95.9 degrees F), 1 degree C above normal and minimum 21.3 degrees C (70.3 degrees F) 1 degree C below normal.

The maximum relative humidity for the past 24 hours was 72 per cent and the minimum 26 per cent.

The sun sets on Tuesday at 6.09 p.m. and rises on Wednesday at 6.14 a.m.

The moon sets on Tuesday at 8.03 p.m. and rises on Wednesday at 10.13 a.m.

## Checking Bangladeshi influx

## CMs endorse I-cards for border districts

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI

THE CONFERENCE of Chief Ministers of States affected by illegal migration from Bangladesh, on Monday favoured a Central legislation to issue identity cards to residents of border areas in order to check the influx of refugees. It wanted the process to be expedited taking into consideration the views of the State Governments.

The conference expressed grave concern at the continuing arrival of migrants from across the border which posed serious problems including demographic changes. The participants were also concerned about the connivance of some organisations, including one faction of the ULFA, with the refugees. They felt the problem should be dealt with both at the political as well as administrative levels.

It was felt that the Border Security Force and the Mobile Task Force should be further strengthened. The Prevention of Infiltration of Foreigners (PIF) Act should also be strictly implemented, they said.

Over and above the administrative steps, it was felt the ethnic and

cultural similarities rendered the identification of illegal migrants very difficult and people in border areas will have to be extra vigilant to check the illegal migration. They should be aware of the consequences of the continuing influx.

Some of the delegates from north-east pointed out that they faced a bigger problem from neighbouring Myanmar and that the Chakma refugees should also be deported as soon as possible.

The conference supported steps taken by the Centre for strengthening the BSF including its water wing, construction of border roads and fencing of the border, strict visa regulations and computerisation of visa control system.

The Chief Ministers were however apprehensive of the fact that putting up barricades was very difficult because of the uneven terrain. They said the Home Minister should talk to different parties and decide collectively.

West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu whose State faces the maximum brunt of the influx as it is used as a corridor, was of the view that the Government must introduce registration of the Bangladesh nationals with the Foreign Residents Registration Office (FRRO). He favoured early completion of border roads and strengthening of patrolling.

Mr Basu said the Government

should take up the matter effectively with Bangladesh but the "human aspects should not be lost sight of while dealing with the problem". He wanted the Government to have a clear assessment of the extent of the problem.

In his opening remarks, Home Minister S B Chavan admitted it was very difficult to make a realistic estimate of the extent of illegal migration. He said there was no denying the fact that "the problem had assumed very serious dimensions and had led to a number of inter-related social, cultural, economic and political problems".

The Home Minister said, "the Central Government is fully conscious of the fact that it has to play an important role in strengthening the surveillance, patrolling of the border and extending support to the State Governments for strengthening their machinery for detection and deportation of illegal migrants."

The Working Group on Border Management, set up by the Ministry, had made a detailed study of the border management responsibilities of the BSF, he told the conference.

He said the Government also attached high priority to the construction of network of roads and barbed fencing along the Indo-Bangladesh border.

He talked of overstay of Bang-

## Rao discusses terrorism, reforms with French PM

by R. Sasankan

PARIS - The issue of terrorism, Pakistan's nuclear capability, India's economic reforms and measures to boost bilateral trade and economic relations figured in the talks between the Indian Prime Minister, Mr P. V. Narasimha Rao, and the French Prime Minister, Mr Pierre Berezogovoy.

Without referring to Pakistan or any particular terrorist group, the Indian Prime Minister told his French counterpart that the terrorism sweeping across the world was a matter of great concern. Mr Berezogovoy agreed with him and said it called for a solution at the global level.

Talking to media persons after he came out of the French Prime Minister's office, Mr Narasimha Rao said he was immensely satisfied with the talks.

Mr Rao outlined the economic reforms and maintained that they had begun yielding results. He wanted the trade and economic relations between the two countries enhanced.

According to a spokesperson, the Indian Prime Minister asked Mr Berezogovoy for his perception about the development in the European Community over the move for a Unified Europe. The French Prime Minister maintained that an open Unified Europe was incapable. He assured Mr Rao that such a Europe would not be a fortress.

The spokesperson declined to go into the specific bilateral issues dis-

cussed between the two Prime Ministers.

Rao will have a luncheon meeting with President Francois Mitterrand during his three-day hectic schedule.

France is keen to revive its offer to supply nuclear reactors

to India. According to highly placed diplomatic sources, France is also keen to collaborate with India in defence-related areas on a long-term basis.

Despite the French Government's

background.



Prime Minister Narasimha Rao reviews a guard of honour on his arrival at the Orly airport in Paris on Monday at the start of his three-day official visit to France. He was received by the French minister for foreign trade Bruno Durieux, who is seen in the background.

by Usha Rai

NEW DELHI

A MONTH and a half after this newspaper broke the story on large-scale female infanticide in Salem district of Tamil Nadu, there is acknowledgement that this ghastly evil does exist. But neither the Central Government, which funded the research, nor the State Government is doing very much about it at present.

Officials of the social welfare ministry of Tamil Nadu were more worried that the large-scale practice of female infanticide in a State headed by a woman Chief Minister, and that too by someone as status conscious as Jayalalitha, would tarnish her image than about the ghastly social problem.

The workshop that was to be conducted by the two voluntary groups that did the survey, the Community Services Guild and Adithi, at Namakal in the heart of Salem district so that the women of

the district could participate, was literally hijacked by the State Government and held in the secretariat early this month. No journalist was alerted about it, leave alone invited for it. A girl from Frontline did, however, manage to sneak in.

Some 50 people attended the meeting including activists from West Bengal, Bihar and Delhi. The worst fears of the NGOs that instead of looking at the problem with sensitivity and understanding, the Government could come down hard on the women were confirmed when a senior bureaucrat at the meeting suggested that the mothers should be identified, arrested and charged with murder. Immediately there was chorus of protests and fortunately the suggestion was dropped.

But the signals sent out by the meeting - that the women should be punished - made the women's groups hide the tremendous evidence they have collected. Albums of photographs of women who admitted to having killed not just one but several baby girls were even



A baby girl who survived three attempts to kill her.

## In clear violation of rules

## PSUs deployed huge sums in Stanchart

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI - In a major revelation, officials of the Standard Chartered Bank told the Joint Parliamentary Committee probing the stock market scam that several public sector undertakings had deployed hundreds of crores of rupees in a Stanchart scheme similar to the Portfolio Management Scheme in 1991, in clear violation of the rules operating at the time.

Stanchart officials also admitted, in response to pointed questions from the JPC, that the bank's London office was alerted as far back as September 1990 by one of its own officials in Bombay about serious infringements of banking rules by Stanchart's Merchant Banking Division.

The bank's Assistant Director in charge of risk management, Mr Prakash Yardi, had written a confidential note to his superiors in London on September 10, 1990, warning them that the bank could

be hauled up by RBI for wilfully infringing regulatory provisions. This revelation is in sharp contradiction to the stand taken by Stanchart officials that London had no idea of the wrongdoings committed in Bombay.

Stanchart officials, who were interrogated by the JPC for the second time on Monday for nearly five hours, admitted that the bank had given an unsecured loan of Rs 15 lakh to the Attorney General of India, Mr G. Ramaswamy.

The Indian Railway Finance Corporation, Indian Oil Corporation, HUDCO, HDFC, Kochin Refineries and IDBI are among the PSUs which deployed huge sums of money during 1991 in Stanchart's Customer Cash Deposit Scheme, which according to JPC members was a "thinly disguised version" of the Portfolio Management Scheme.

Highlighting this fact at his press briefing on Monday, the JPC Chairman, Mr Ram Niwas Mirdha, said it was very clear that Stanchart was

receiving money from PSUs well before PSUs were allowed to deploy money in the Portfolio Management Schemes of foreign banks.

It was only in the beginning of 1992 that the Ministry of Industries issued instructions allowing PSUs to deploy funds in Portfolio Management Schemes.

Reading out from a list provided by Stanchart of funds deposited by PSUs in the CCD Scheme between April 1991 and May 1992, Mr Mirdha disclosed that IRFC had deployed as much as Rs 500 million in

one instalment and Rs 280 million some days later. IOC had deployed Rs 101 million in one instalment and Rs 103 million in a second instalment, while HUDCO had deployed over Rs 193 million.

It is also learnt that IDBI deployed funds in Stanchart's CCD scheme to the tune of Rs 340 million in one instalment and Rs 197.4

million in another instalment. Goa Shippyard and Bihar Caustic also deployed substantial funds with Stanchart under this scheme.

In another major development, Stanchart officials admitted before the JPC that Mr Yardi had written to the bank's London office on September 10, 1990, highlighting serious irregularities committed by the Division.

JPC sources told ENS that Mr Yardi informed his superiors that transactions aggregating loan amounts of Rs 833.97 million had been structured and executed in the Merchant Banking Division without his prior knowledge and without following the bank's credit approval procedures.

Mr Yardi warned the London office that as a result of these actions the bank not only stood potentially exposed to financial risks but was also flouting the regulations of the RBI. He pointed out that if there was an inspection by the RBI,

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## 167 feared killed as PIA plane crashes in Nepal

KATHMANDU - A Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) Airbus A-300 crashed near Bhatte Danda in Nepal on Monday, with all 167 people aboard believed to be dead, the Home Ministry announced over state radio.

A land search party including policemen and villagers reached the crash site close to Kathmandu airport, the homeministry said.

The Airbus's 155 passengers and 12 crew members were all feared to have been killed in the crash, the ministry said.

An official announcement over state radio said rescue team members did not find any survivors.

The aircraft was believed to have crashed 15 km south of Kathmandu.

In Karachi, PIA confirmed the crash of the aircraft. A PIA announcement, said the plane crashed just six minutes before its scheduled landing at Kathmandu airport.

The plane, which left Karachi on time, had been due at Kathmandu International Airport at 2.40 p.m. and lost contact with the airport when it was about 25 kms south of Kathmandu, an airport source said.

PIA's Karachi office also published a partial list of the nationalities of the passengers on board the plane including 29

Spaniards, 12 Dutch, 12 Pakistanis, 10 Italians, 10 Nepalese, three British, two Swiss, two Bangladeshis and one Japanese, an official said.

According to him, there were 31 Pakistanis including 12 crew aboard the plane.

The official said the nationalities of 66 transit passengers who joined the flight in Karachi were not yet known, although an airline source who did not want to be identified, said they were all foreigners.

A list issued by PIA's Kathmandu office said at least 52 passengers were Nepalese, including senior police officer Rupak Sharma. • AFP

## Two girls poisoned to death in Nand Nagri

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI - An entire family was poisoned on Sunday night at a house in Nand Nagri in north east Delhi. Two girls - an 8-year-old and a 6-year-old - died soon afterwards and, until Monday afternoon, their mother lay in hospital, gasping for breath.

An 11-year-old girl, however, survived to narrate a horrifying tale - a story at variance with the police version.

The woman's husband, 40-year-old Anand Swaroop who ekes a living by ironing clothes, has been arrested by the police.

Police claimed Swaroop decided to get rid of his family - wife and three of his four daughters - because he discovered that his wife had illicit relations with a bus conductor and had stayed away from home for three days last week.

But Swaroop's 11-year-old daughter, Saroj, who spat out the poisoned *barfi* (ice cream) on Sunday night, has a different story to narrate. According to Saroj, it was not Swaroop but Meena, her 35-year-old mother, who fed bits of the *barfi* to everybody in the family except Saroj's eldest sister, 15-year-old Seema.

"The man (Meena's paramour) who used to come home and meet mother in father's absence threatened to kill her if she did not give us the *barfi*," alleged Saroj.

The police, however, said the daughters - by shifting the blame on their mother - were trying to shield the father.

The tragic incident took place late on Sunday night at House B-4/382 in a congested part of Nand Nagri. While Saroj survived, her two sis-

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## Appropriation Bill passed

## Janardhana to quit today

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI - Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Janardhana Reddy will resign from his post on Tuesday, Congress spokesman V N Gadgil told journalists on Monday.

Mr Gadgil said the modalities for succession would be decided by party president and Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao. These had not yet been worked out, he said.

Party sources said Mr Rao did not want to exhibit "vaude haste" and initiate the process of selecting a successor till Janardhana Reddy had actually submitted his resignation to the Governor. The resignation could not be submitted because Andhra Pradesh Governor Krishan Kant is away and would be returning to Hyderabad on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, the State Legislative Assembly was adjourned sine die after the House passed the crucial Appropriation Bill, 1992, virtually paving the way for change in the leadership of the State, a report from Hyderabad said.

Though Janardhana Reddy had sought the "permission" of Prime

Minister to quit last week, speculations galore in the AICC whether the Chief Minister would actually submit his resignation. When questioned about this, Mr Gadgil told presspersons, "he (Chief Minister) has to resign and he will resign."

The Prime Minister did not have a meeting with senior party leader G.K. Moopanar before leaving for Paris as expected. Mr Moopanar was tipped to meet Mr Rao and work out how the succession is to be organised.

However, Mr Rao was seen having a word with Janardhana Pojary, AICC general secretary in charge of Andhra Pradesh, at Hyderabad House where his Cabinet and party colleagues had come to see him off early in the morning. Mr Pojary later requested Mr Moopanar to stay on in the Capital till the Prime Minister's return on Wednesday.

Mr Narasimha Rao's warm handshake with Union Law Minister Vijay Bhaskar Reddy at Hyderabad House, also sparked off speculation during the day. Mr Reddy has emerged as a frontrunner in the race for the chief ministership.

Informed sources said Rajasekhara Reddy, MP, who has been lobbying hard for himself, might also come around to accepting Mr Bhaskar Reddy in the hope that the vacancy in the Union Cabinet caused by the exit of the Law Minister would improve his prospects.

The chances of Rajasekhara Reddy are however remote, say party sources. Though considered dynamic, the dissident leader is neither acceptable to the Janardhana faction nor acceptable to the other groups in the party.

The other serious contender in the race is Ramachandra Reddy, minister in the State Government. He is reportedly Janardhana Reddy's first preference as his successor.

Janardhana Reddy attended the Assembly on Monday and even participated in the discussions preceding the adoption of the Appropriation Bill. However, he was not present when the House took up the consideration of the Bill in the late afternoon, after the members had skipped the usual lunch break.

## Arrest warrants against Farook's son, relatives

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

THANJAVUR - Arrest warrants have been issued against the son, nephew and brother of Union Minister M.O.H. Farook for their failure to appear in court on Monday to receive copies of the charge-sheet in the illicit liquor transportation case.

Mayiladuthurai judicial magistrate T. Sankaralingam ordered the issue of warrants as the accused - Mr. Shajahan, son of Mr. Farook, Mr. Saleem, son of Mr. Farook's brother M.O.H. Udhuman and the Minister's brother, Mr. M.O.H. Iqbal - were not present in the court when the case was called. Their advocates also were not available in the court because of the one-day strike by lawyers. (Advocates throughout Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry stayed away from courts on Monday in protest against the delay in filling up nine vacancies in the high court, three in the tribunals and many more in the subordinate courts.)

The magistrate also ordered the issue of arrest warrant against Mr. Chinnaasamy, who had loaded the illicit liquor bottles into the van owned by the Farook family.

Of the nine accused in the case, five appeared in the court on Monday, but the charge-sheet could not be given to them as all the accused were not present in the court.

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