

# frontier

Vol. 2: No. 11

JUNE 21, 1969

PRICE 35 PAISE

## On Other Pages

COMMENTS	..	2
<i>Letter From America</i>		
CORRUPTION IN U.S. POLITICS		
ROBI CHAKRAVORTI	..	5
<i>View From Delhi</i>		
THE RUSSIANS ARE COMING?		
FROM A POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT	..	7
<i>Kerala</i>		
KELAPPAN ON THE WAR-PATH		
RAMJI	..	9
TELENGANA: ANOTHER ASPECT		
ELKAY	..	10
OVER THE BRIDGE		
N. K. SINGH	..	11
LAND REVENUE: A SUGGESTION		
N. K. CHANDRA		
N. KRISHNAJI	..	12
CALCUTTA DIARY		
GYAN KAPUR	..	13
<i>The Press</i>		
VISIT TO KABUL		
KAJAL SEN	..	14
ROMEO AND JULIET		
PRABODH KUMAR MAITRA	..	16
LETTERS	..	18

Editor : Samar Sen

PRINTED AT MODERN INDIA PRESS,  
7, RAJA SUBODH MULICK SQUARE,  
CALCUTTA-13 AND PUBLISHED WEEKLY  
BY SAMAR SEN FROM 61, MOTT LANE,  
CALCUTTA-13

## A NEW GOVERNMENT

AS New Delhi is neutral it is hesitant to recognise the Provisional Revolutionary Government formed by the NLF while quite a few socialist and Arab countries did not waste even 36 hours to grant it recognition. But India is the chairman of some non-functioning control commission on Vietnam ; though impartial, she has been trading with South Vietnam after banning all trade with the North under pressure from the U.S., the violator of the Geneva agreements.

About who is the effective authority in South Vietnam there cannot be the slightest doubt. Those who have fought the monstrous American war machine to a standstill, forcing one President to pack off while another is resorting to the duplicity that characterises super-powers, those who have created a wave of mounting unrest among the rising generation—though most fraternal workers of the world have remained united in their economism—, those whose suffering and magnificent fortitude are a legend of our times are the people who matter, and not the unashamed bootlickers in Saigon to whom when the Americans fart it is music.

The one handicap that the Provisional Revolutionary Government suffers from is the lack of an elegant city which can function as the capital. Where will the NLF government house the embassies, consulates and trade agencies ? It has no air-conditioned palaces where Presidents and Prime Ministers think during the day of the problems that confront their parties and sleep in peace at night. Ho Chi Minh was amazed when he saw how our rulers lived when he visited New Delhi way back in the forties. But barring the possession of a capital-city, the NLF has everything else to claim the status of a government. Even Americans when they put their blinkers off have to admit in their testimony that about 10½ million or about three-fourths of South Vietnam's 14½ million rural residents are under varying degrees of Liberation Front control. And NLF authority is not confined to the countryside. It is also an explosive force in the cities where business establishments pay taxes to it. In fact the NLF has a more effective tax-collecting system than the South Vietnam Government in Saigon. It provides land to the peasants and a system of free education and free medical service to the people.

Of the leaders, the Chairman of the Council of Advisers to the new Government, Mr Nguyen Huu Tho, has a long record of struggle against

the French, the puppet regimes and the Yankees. He is not a communist. Mr Huynh Tan Phat, Chairman of the Government, is a former architect and a veteran of the anti-French war of independence. The majority of NLF leaders have one remarkable common characteristic which no Saigon Government has so far been able to match: they are all from the south of the 17th Parallel. The new Government was formed at a Congress of the resistance groups, including the National Alliance of Democratic and Peace Forces.

The formation of the new Government will bring matters to a head at the diplomatic level and further rally the Vietnamese people to the task of liberating the country. It came after Messrs Nixon and Thieu had declared from Midway Island that there could be no question of a coalition Government before the elections (in 1971, under the so-called South Vietnamese Constitution?) How elections can be free and fair in the presence of over 500,000 U.S. troops and about the same number of puppet and "allied" forces, and when Thieu has declared that he would take measures against officials or politicians who use the term 'coalition', is a mystery which even Mr Sen Verma, with his experience of Kashmir, will not be able to solve. The plain fact is that Nixon still clings to the theory of a war of attrition and thinks that somehow, some day, his big-bang B52s will win the war. But since the Vietcong will be sending very many Americans to a dire fate in jungles, paddy fields, rubber plantations and towns and cities, and since so many Americans at home are weary of the slaughter, Nixon would have to do something other than hugging Thieu. Meanwhile, it would be a shame, an everlasting shame that the second most populous country in the world should wait for Nixon to nod before recognising the new South Vietnamese Government.

FRONTIER is available from  
CENTRAL NEWS AGENCY  
23/90 Connaught Place  
New Delhi-1

## Tension Again

For more than two weeks now in Indore it has been necessary to impose curfew for long hours so that deaths may not exceed the dozen announced officially. There was good reason behind the "gentlemen's agreement" between the Government and the Press that communities in conflict should not be identified in newspaper reports; instantly there would be a mad passion to settle the score. It may well be wondered whether the agreement is now leading to dishonest and misleading reporting. In Indore, for instance, communal rioting broke out on June 2. From what has appeared so far, the provocation was the defeat of a Muslim wrestler in a tournament. Soon Indore was on fire.

Mr Nirad C. Chaudhuri had a point when he said, with his usual exaggeration, that the Muslims of India were the least of the minorities. That Muslims in India are not nearly as supine as the Hindus in Pakistan is not necessarily a certificate of good character to the secular Government of India, although it is obvious that a certain demoralization has set in among all the non-Hindu communities in the country. Undoubtedly politicians of all hues never fail to squeeze out the maximum advantage from inter-caste and inter-communal disaffection; and in Indore these gentlemen were very active. There has always been a certain crudity about politics in Madhya Pradesh where the aboriginals are not yet extinct and the Hindus still fancy themselves as Aryans. In so mixed a society conflicts are inevitable. The 12 deaths reported so far may not be the whole story.

Nor is it right to blame it all on perfidious politicians. In the last two decades of democratic Congress rule the entire administration has acquired all the vices of its political masters. The Muslim League taught the police to act communally in 1946-47; the lesson has been well learned by its successors so that for years now it has been foolish to expect the po-

lice to act impartially. In the Indore affair, therefore, it is not enough to curse the politicians, purely tribal though their behaviour has been; it is the deeper administrative failure which needs to be looked into. There is no warrant at all to pamper the minorities, Muslims or others, but the predominantly Hindu administration is under an obligation to take into account the minorities' vulnerability. A judicial inquiry has been ordered into the deplorable incidents in Indore. These inquiries are so time consuming and there are so many inquiries into so many incidents all over the country that the end-products, voluminous reports, are now subject to the economic law of diminishing returns. The tension in Indore has gone on since June 2; it has been necessary to call in the army. It does not appear to occur to the by no means humble civil administration of the country that every military intervention is a vote of no confidence in the IAS and the IPS.

## The Crucial Season

This is an awkward season for Ministers and civil servants in New Delhi: the summer heat has been properly on for the last one month or so, and the current preoccupation is simply to sit out and wait for the crucial season. The Plans or no, the high-yielding varieties or no, fertiliser plants and irrigation networks or no, the character of the Indian economy remains what it had always been in the past: utterly shackled to the tyranny of the rains. Agricultural output sets the pace for industrial and commercial activity, and in the over-all, also determines the level of contentment. It regulates the movement of prices, and therefore the state of contentment in the system at a particular point of time. It also influences the tax yields, and therefore the level of government expenditure and, finally, the state of the country's balance of payments.

JUNE 21, 1969

Since external accommodation has become almost as uncertain as the timing and intensity of the monsoon, it is altogether impossible to predict the general direction the economy is likely to take during the next few years. The monsoon operates as one constraint, the magnitude of annual defence expenditure another. Alongside these two, there are still other rigidities such as the structural inefficiency of nearly all Indian industries. Scrap the rupee payment arrangements with the East European and Middle Eastern countries, end the blocking of the Suez Canal, allow internal demand to reassert itself following the stupor of the recession, and Indian exports will crash down to an eerily uncomfortable position of vulnerability. The recommendation of the Aid India Consortium in such a context can mean precious little. The maximum net accretion of external funds, even according to the recommendations, is unlikely to exceed \$500 million, and the actual realisations, after the World Bank and Mr Nixon and the gentlemen in the capitals of the West European countries have acted, may fall significantly short of even this modest figure.

As they wait for the crop-giving rains, the Indian planners cannot therefore but own the fact that the prospects are generally bleak. Crystal-gazing of the more moon-struck variety apart, it hardly seems possible to make any safe prediction about the likely rate of growth of the economy over the next few years. We will be lucky to reach back the rate of 3.5 per cent per annum registered in the 1950s, but which would actually be meagre enough in the context of our annual population growth. What a contrast to the story in most of South Asia! Take, for example, Ceylon, which is confidently predicting an annual rate of growth of national income of 13 per cent between now and 1977. Since Ceylon has more or less the same rate of population growth as India's, this order of increase would imply an increase of per capita income of more than 10 per cent annually, about as good as achieved under the Japanese miracle. There is no reason to suspect that the planners in Ceylon are unduly ambitious; they

have just the right mixture of policies to usher in a new economic era. We waste 5 per cent of our national income on defence expenditure; the Ceylonese do not spend even half a per cent. We were forced into a silly devaluation of the rupee by the World Bank, with catastrophic consequences on internal prices and balance of payment. Ceylon's politicians successfully withstood the Bank's pressure and have evolved an extremely ingenuous dual exchange rate policy which discourages non-essential imports even as it encourages exports. India has turned away from trade with China; Ceylon is enjoying the sunshine of a mutually advantageous trade arrangement with her which allows the import of rice against the export of rubber. It may appear unbelievable, but given this arrangement, the Government of Ceylon finds it possible to distribute to

each citizen a rice ration of 2 pounds per week *absolutely free*; and this amounts to two-fifths of the average consumption.

Not that Ceylon has better economists or administrators than India has; nor are her politicians necessarily more full of integrity compared to their counterparts here. But certainly they are egotistic; certainly they do not confuse the shadow of a thing with its substance; and certainly they talk a whole lot less than our dialecticians. While the flow of punditry spills beyond endurance here, on other Asian shores concreter things happen. Even as the weariness of words, incessant words, gets us down, the little countries thrust forward. We can feel morally superior towards them, but that would not do a fat lot of good to empty stomachs.

## Rice This Year

Rice is getting scarce in West Bengal markets because, according to a UF spokesman, four crores of people in the State ate rice twice a day from November to May. The utter inconsideration has made the Government helpless. It has been of course doing all it can—it has brought nearly all the people of the State under some sort of rationing, a feat unmatched by any other State Government. What the UF spokesman didn't say was that, people living on modified or fringe rations, cannot buy rice from the open market because there is no rice there. They queue up for hours for the modified ration quota of 750 grams and 500 grams in fringe areas and often get less than 200 grams or none at all. They are supposed to live on that. Else they must switch over to wheat twice a day.

Wheat is in plentiful supply, no doubt about that. People will not die starving—thanks to Haryana and Punjab wheat. But the people here may ask why they should be denied rice this year too and why they should continue to take a lenient view of the UF Government's operation on the

food front. The State needs 72 lakh tons of rice a year for the people to have rice twice a day. The State has produced 50 lakh tons this year. There should have been more than enough rice, according to this official statistic, for people who are having rice once a day, notwithstanding the twice-a-day thesis. What has become of the rest of the rice produced? Why is it that the price of rice is Rs 2.50 a kilo in Calcutta, Rs 2.20 in Nadia, Rs 1.80 in Malda? And that too at the beginning of the lean season?

The Food Minister stated that the UF Government came too late to power to effectively procure rice from the fields. It has had to be satisfied with 4.12 lakh tons procured from the 50 lakh tons produced. True enough. But the way the Government is dealing with millers, wholesalers and hoarders does not help one imagine that the situation would have been any the brighter even if the first UF Government were not prematurely dislodged from the seat of procurement. Why has it allowed the 20,000 jotedars to get away without depositing the statutory levy? Why are food

and relief committees still being formed even though the UF came to power almost four months ago? Why is the special cell on the food information not yet formed although it was supposed to have been formed by May? The age-old wailing that there is no proper machinery to get hold of the State's rice is beginning to irritate. To top that, the Food Minister complains that Home Department does not cooperate with his Department and district officers do not respect his orders. Let the Government note what inner party politics and the uncertainty of the Food Minister remaining as Food Minister have

made of what is called a food policy.

There is only one way out of this tight situation, as the UF Government sees it. People in the statutorily rationed areas must teach the hoarders a lesson by not buying rice from the open market. The Government has even issued press advertisements exhorting people not to buy rice at inflated prices. People who can jolly well pay Rs 4 a kilo of rice will no doubt enjoy this priceless humour. But those who voted the UF to power, expecting that it would at least try to curb the hoarders, if not hang them on the lamp-posts, are beginning to have second thoughts.

## 'War Against Hunger'

Both the wars launched by Lyndon B. Johnson, it seems, have suffered the same fate. That he would lose one—the Vietnam war—could be foreseen by anybody who cared to look at facts, past or present. And the failure of the other war—the so-called 'war against hunger'—was a foregone conclusion, for the whole business was phoney. Five years after the declaration of 'war', some Senators have now discovered that abys-

mal poverty and hunger rage beneath the glossy surface of the Great Society. A recent survey conducted among 12,000 Americans (whose income ranged from \$180 to \$40,000 a year) shows that one out of 20 has the protuberant belly typical of protein deficiency; one-third of the children under six have been found to be anaemic. Happily, however, the wonderful electronic computers that make instantaneous logistical calculations for the Vietnam war or for that matter chart Apollo-10's flight course to the moon have not found time to count the number of hungry people. According to conservative estimates, about a fourth of the population lives in a dark America and there are at least ten million people who, in the words of Senator McGovern, "don't eat enough, not well enough, sometimes scarcely at all." Civilised Americans have been scandalized no end by the report which tells about the widespread prevalence of diseases associated with the poverty and squalor of the Third World. President Nixon, however, does not even resort to a gimmick. Nixon's Communication Director, Herbert G. Klein, has plainly told that the problem of hunger would not be solved by "traipsing around the country with television cameras", and Nixon himself has rejected the proposed \$1 billion pro-

gramme against hunger. Hunger can wait, but not the liberty of the country for the defence of which he has forked out this year \$79 billion.

Meanwhile, under the impact of the war economy the area of darkness goes on expanding like a drop of ink on linen. The first three months of the year have witnessed a rise of consumer prices at an annual rate of 7.6 per cent, driving the ghettos several fathoms deeper in poverty. All the talk of 'cooling off inflationary economy without bringing on a recession' notwithstanding, more and more people are being thrown out of employment. The total of the sub-employed in the ghettos, i.e., unemployed and underemployed together, now stands, according to the *Economist*, at 22½ per cent. The Great Society, everybody admits, is in a shambles.

But to look for the dark side of things smacks of bad taste. Hadn't the Americans experienced a tremendous industrial boom? Hasn't the ammunition industry grown from strength to strength? According to a recent study, America's corporate profits from 1964 to 1966—the first two years of the 'big' war in Vietnam—increased 29 per cent, and war industries' profits had increases ranging from 56 to 176 per cent. If in the process several millions in the U.S. starved or several times more died in Vietnam that could not be helped. It is the cost of progress. The people who shout that U.S. imperialism is the common enemy of the starving Americans and the napalmed-Vietnamese do not know economics.

### Our Agency in Madras :

Mr A. KRISHNAMOORTHY,

Ananth Agencies,

14-H, Gopalapuram 1st Street,

Gopalapuram,

Madras - 6.

### Just Arrived :—

Burchett—Vietnam: Inside Story of Guerrilla War ..	14.62
" —Vietnam North ..	13.87
" —Again Korea ..	14.62
Garaudy—Karl Marx: Evolution of his thought ..	14.62
Guevara—Episode of Revolutionary War ..	12.37
Chen-Po-ta—Stalin and the Chinese Revolution ..	1.25
Epstein —From Opium War to Liberation ..	3.50
Morgan —Ancient Society ..	10.00
Cheng Feng—On The Long March with Mao Tse-tung ..	2.00
Programme of the Communist International ..	1.60
কমিউনিস্ট ম্যানিফেস্টোর শিক্ষা (লেনিন, স্তালিন ও মাওএর ব্যাখ্যাসহ)	0.70

### NEW BOOK CENTRE

(Near Vivekananda Road Junc.)  
195/1B, Bidhan Sarani,  
Calcutta-6

## Corruption In U.S. Politics

ROBI CHAKRAVORTI

IT was fascinating to watch the events leading up to the resignation of Abe Fortas, the liberal Supreme Court Justice who had been recommended by Johnson to succeed Chief Justice Warren, a recommendation that was later withdrawn under pressure.

First, there was the *exposé* of his accepting a fee from a businessman named Wolfson who is now in jail. It appeared in the *Life* magazine. Slowly but relentlessly, the story and its reported repercussions were repeated in the mass media. Newshounds got busy and printed ominous hints about his other deals. Indignant Congressmen sounded off warnings of possible investigation into the Justice's affair. Attorney-General Mitchell, the former law partner of Nixon and a close confidant, had a hush-hush meeting with Chief Justice Warren, while the White House aides continued to give the impression that President Nixon, who is trying desperately to project the image of a deity presiding high above the hurly burly of dirty politics, did not know anything about the Attorney-General's role in the Fortas affair. Speculations and hints were aired that there is additional incriminating material on Abe Fortas. Meanwhile, reporters hovered around Fortas like vultures over a dying prey. And, finally, to oblige them as it were, Fortas did indeed die — as the Justice of the Supreme Court.

The story is by now well known. The point of repeating it is to suggest that the whole episode smells of a plot, a clever plot to oust Fortas who had been under attack for his liberalism. He had defended victims of the late Senator Joseph McCarthy when it was risky to do so; his views on race relations did not endear him to Southern Congressmen. The plot cannot be proved; but the way a crescendo was built up with the final,

dramatic dash of the Attorney-General to the Chief Justice strengthens the hypothesis of a plot.

Plot or not, the Fortas affair raises serious questions on the character of the American political system. Fortas' crime — if you can call it a crime — was to take a fee of \$20,000 from a businessman who fell afoul of law. It was indeed an act of indiscretion to have such a connection with outside interests while on the bench. Even if Wolfson had not been imprisoned, the acceptance of a fee from a businessman could aptly have been treated with suspicion. Fortas' critics argue that a Supreme Court Justice should not be amenable to outside influences. This is fine, as a principle. But, the question is: Should this principle apply only to the Supreme Court Justices? Should not the same principle hold for members of other branches of the Government?

The American political tradition has been such that of the three branches of the Government, the Presidency and the Supreme Court are treated with a harsher standard of morality than the Congress. Congressmen wield enormous power in Washington and are supposed to function as watchdogs. Who watches over the watchdogs?

The conservative answer would be, "the people." But, the people, the so-called average American voters, are too busy with their everyday life, occupation, family and pleasure-seeking weekends to dig deeply into the financial wheeling-dealings of their Congressman so long as he manages to take care of the parochial interests of the majority of his constituency without rocking the boat too much. Meanwhile, he can merrily serve special interests.

### Sealed Envelopes

In presenting the financial profile of

Senators, Jack Anderson, an associate of Drew Pearson, recently wrote that, "Kept under lock are 100 sealed envelopes which can be opened only on orders of the U.S. Senate. Each envelope was sealed by a Senator, and inside, presumably, is an accurate accounting of his personal holdings.... The sealed envelopes would show that, on the national income scale, most Senators belong to the top one per cent.... The envelopes, if they could be opened, would reveal a direct relationship between the holdings of some Senators and their voting records. In less sophisticated terms, the titans of industry who paid to get their stooges elected to the Senate, actually owned them."

This should not be taken as a blanket criticism of all Senators or Congressmen. Some of them are rich on their own right; others have resisted or spurned the pressure from what Anderson describes as "the titans of industry." But many have close, often shady relationships with the business world, and most of them do this through links with law firms. To understand the peculiarity of political corruption in the United States which has tainted the highest legislative body in the nation, one must understand two unique features of American society: the role of law-firms in the industrial world, and the financing of American elections.

First, let us look at the world of American law and its relationship with Congressmen. Martin Mayer in his classic study, *The Lawyers*, presents these interesting facts of the law profession in the United States:

There are 300,000 lawyers in the U.S.—one for every 250 of the labour force. No other nation has anything like so many lawyers, either in absolute numbers or in proportion to population. Of the lawyers who have made substantial money during their practice, about 75% did so strictly outside their law work. Either they dabbled in real estate, stocks, some business venture of an impecunious client who subsequently made good, or in a defunct corporation subsequently reorganized or revived by some cli-

ent's business genius. The other quarter of the active lawyers are employed, two-fifths of them, by private interests, in positions ranging from president of a company to claims investigator, three-fifths by government. The fastest growing category of lawyer is the corporate house counsel.

The growth of specialists in corporate law has paralleled the growth of corporations. Galbraith in his 1967 best-seller, *The Industrial State*, pointed out two facts of modern American economy, which are relevant to this discussion. Five hundred largest corporations in the U.S. produce close to half of all the goods and services that are available annually in the United States. Secondly, the relation of the State to the economy has changed; the services of Federal, State and local governments now account for between a fifth and a quarter of all economic activity as against only about eight per cent in 1929. The growth of corporate lawyers must be seen in the context of the increasing concentration of Big Business and extension of the power of governmental bureaucracy. A large number of successful lawyers emerged as agents or front men for Big Business dealing with the governmental bureaucracy.

#### Case Against Congress

If you are a Congressman with a law degree and with some previous connection with a law firm, you can be well on your way to becoming a millionaire. The facts on the relationship between the Congressmen and law firms are astounding. Drew Pearson and Jack Anderson co-authored a book last year with the revealing title *The Case Against Congress: A compelling indictment of corruption on Capitol Hill*. A chapter of the book is entitled, "Crossing the Bar: Lawyers in Congress." Pearson and his associate estimated that of the 535 members of Congress, more than 300 are attorneys. Some carry on active law practices; others keep a tenuous relationship with law firms. A minority never actively practised law before coming to Congress but now

draw income from flourishing legal business.

They made a study of 50 typical law firms with partners serving in Congress and discovered that these have a remarkable similarity of clients. "They represent the vested interest of America: the banks, the insurance companies, gas and oil interests, great corporations."

Another mode of political corruption in America is the funding of campaign chests. Campaigning for political office in America is costly business, and the costs are going up every year. It is estimated that about \$250 million were spent in last year's Federal, State and local elections. The amount is staggering, if you convert dollars into Indian currency. Of this total, upwards of \$60 million are estimated to have been spent by three Presidential candidates. By all accounts, Nixon was the biggest spender of them all. Possibly, he spent at least \$30 million. The Senatorial campaigns have also become costly; at least a million dollars in campaign fund are needed to run effectively for Senate from a large State such as California. Where does all this money come from?

Contributions from rich businessmen form the bulk of campaign funds. True, there are charity performances by celebrities favouring a candidate, (such as Frank Sinatra hosting a benefit performance for Humphrey), and the routine \$100 to \$1,000 a plate dinners to raise funds. But, these visible methods of raising campaign fund are not enough; the candidate has to tap less visible means of support.

The question here is: Why should a businessman or a Corporation executive contribute, say, \$10,000 or more to a candidate's campaign fund unless he expects something in return? There are pay-offs, some of which are openly accepted as part of the American way of life. You are supposed to reward your financial backers with offers, such as ambassadorial jobs. Sometimes, these pay-offs create scandals; Eisenhower's appointee as the ambassador to Ceylon could not remember the name of

the Prime Minister of Ceylon under Congressional questioning. But, by and large there seems to be a tacit agreement that the party in power has the right to start a gravy train. Powerful Congressmen and their proteges, often, have their share in the spoils.

What is more serious is that the voting of Congressmen is likely to be influenced by the campaign contributors. This is a question, among others, that Drew Pearson and Jack Anderson, in the best muck-raking tradition in American journalism, have raised in their book. But this is not the first time that the corrupting influence of campaign contributions has been criticised openly. About sixty years ago, in a book the title of which foreshadowed Pearson's *Treason of the Senate*, another writer, David Graham Phillips, raged against the fiction of the American legislators' freedom and independence. "Who pays the big election expenses of your Congressman," he asked. "The bulk of the money for the 'political trust' comes from the 'interests'. Do you imagine those who foot those huge bills are fools? Don't you know that they make sure of getting their money back, with interest, compound upon compound?" This cry of moral outrage, mind you, was raised in an era when mass media had not yet come upon the scene.

The corruption in American public life enters through the very process of election. "We force the able man entering public life" as the late publisher of the *Washington Post* moaned, to launch his career with an initial act of blatant hypocrisy, and to endure this indignity every time he runs again. "Even putting the best possible face on the situation, it can be described only as morally squalid, ethically shocking and spiritually revolting."

To the Congressmen who were indignant at the so-called 'indiscretion' of Justice Fortas and the members of the Executive branch who must have engineered Fortas' downfall from behind the scene, the advice of a dispassionate observer of the American political scene should be: Physician, heal thyself.

## The Russians Are Coming ?

FROM A POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

**E**VEN the Left Establishment needs a patron saint. Be it Mr Bhupesh Gupta of the CPI Secretariat or Mr V. K. Krishna Menon, Hon'ble Member from Midnapore, anyone from the Establishment has to get a brief from the Prime Minister before a visit to Moscow. Mr Krishna Menon's sole argument against those who branded him a "crypto-communist" was that he had never been to the Soviet Union—and proud of it. But his visit to Moscow for the first time, and with a brief from Mrs Indira Gandhi who in 1967, would not so much as help him get a teeny-weeny Congress ticket for the North-East Bombay seat, was perhaps in deference to the wishes of the Midnapore electorate. The flurry of visits to Moscow by its numerous unofficial envoys notwithstanding, New Delhi is feigning ignorance of the Soviet plan for a regional security pact covering countries on China's southern perimeter.

Mr Brezhnev announced this openly and formally at the Moscow summit of the communist parties but it was common knowledge that the logical extension of the Soviet diplomatic offensive to quarantine China would be a plan for such a pact. Mr Kosygin is reported to have thrown a broad hint about the coming plan when he was in New Delhi early May. New Delhi is still waiting details of the Brezhnev address and is sure to find itself in an awkward situation when the details are available. India has been playing the dangerous super-Power game to quarantine China, and too willingly. All that the Russians are doing now is stretching the logic to its end. Maybe India's formal objection to military bases will remain but she would soon accept the logic in all its implications. And perhaps the Russians would not insist too strongly

on India's participation in a military arrangement and let it hover on the periphery. India's dissociation from the pact might be formal and Soviet military aid to contain Chinese "expansionism" would flow to India directly and not through the pact arrangement. As long as the Soviets would provide the co-ordinating link between India and the proposed military pact, there is nothing for them to worry about. India will have very little manoeuvrability in relation to other countries of the pact and what lies ahead is a new phase in Soviet domination of the southern tier and a new plan for a continuing Asian confrontation in the name of containing certain "hegemonic forces" in Asia, complete with Soviet naval presence in the Indian Ocean. India would have to overcome the initial discomfiture over the plan if she wants the massive Soviet economic and military aid to continue. Communist publicists will soon get cracking down to the job of selling the Soviet plan to the Indian people and make it look most innocuous and altruistic, all designed to save us from a permanent enemy across the Himalayas.

### Telengana

New Delhi's preoccupation is still with Telengana, which it had forgotten for most part of the six months it has been in the news. The converging attacks on the Chief Minister, Mr Brahmananda Reddy, by the Right Communists and Marwari Big Business make one suspect the bonafides of the demand for his ouster. As Mr Chavan reported to the Prime Minister after his visit to Hyderabad, no all-India party is supporting the separate Telengana demand. But all the parties are campaigning either for the replacement of Mr Brahmananda Reddy or for President's rule in the State.

The movement for a separate State is genuine but the leadership has passed into the hands of political charlatans. After all the Communist Party of India, playing the game of a particular Congress faction, demanded President's rule months ago to set the pace for the current campaign by Mr Brahmananda Reddy's factional rivals in the Congress. Three months ago, the agitation in Telengana was over secondary issues and the demand was not for a separate State. The Centre's failure to intervene to find a solution and the State Government's arrogant handling of the situation has resulted in a deadlock. Mr Chavan found his mission caught in a vicious circle. There has to be a normal situation before any dialogue on the demand is begun. But the agitation leaders wanted President's Rule as the pre-condition for suspending the agitation.

There is no convincing argument yet against the demand for a separate State. All that is being pointed out in reply is that it would lead to similar sub-regional demands in Maharashtra (for a Nag Vidarbha State), in Gujarat (for a Saurashtra State), in West Bengal (for Darjeeling as a separate State) and the like. Any argument about the viability or otherwise of a small State would be specious because nobody talks about viability when the handkerchief-size Haryana State was formed to create

---

At your service

for

Interior Decoration,

Furniture Making,

General Order Supplies

**ANWAR HOSSAIN**

13, Marsden Street,  
Calcutta-16.

Phone : 44-6122

---

one more Hindi-speaking State with long-term political motives. And come to think of it, even India, with all its bigness is not viable because it is being underwritten by the aid-givers.

But what should cause concern are some of the sinister facets of the agitation. In Hyderabad, and Telengana in general, the Andhra from the coastal areas has to go in fear of his life and property but not any outsider. The Marwari and Gujarati vested interests who resent and fear the growing Andhra participation in the economy of the Telengana region, and Hyderabad city in particular, have been financing the goonda attacks on Andhra property to bring down their values. Secondly, the Home Ministry has reason to believe that American elements, operating through the American Studies and other departments of Osmania University, have had a hand in the violent agitation in Hyderabad city and its vicinity.

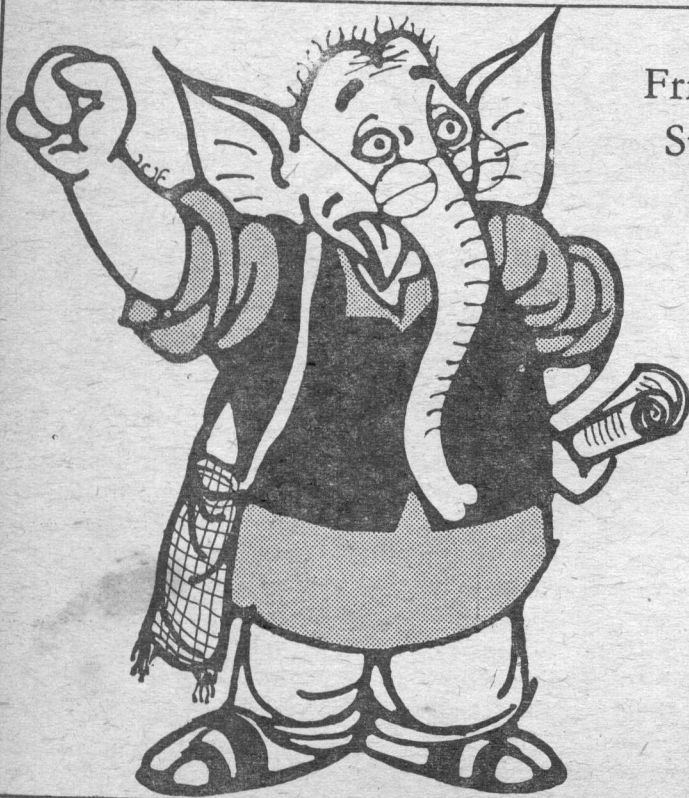
There is little doubt that the Centre allowed itself to be misled by the State Government on the developing situation in Telengana. Theoretically now, the Centre has all the options open, including a separate State for Telengana, but hopes it would be possible to wear down the agitation leaders through negotiations into settling for something less than a separate State.

The Prime Minister has more time for Afghanistan, Japan and Indonesia than she has for Telengana but the issue cannot be postponed indefinitely. But the manipulations over the Presidential election seem to be consuming the energies of the High Command members. When Mr V. V. Giri's choice as the Congress candidate looked certain, the Syndicate thought of Mr Sanjiva Reddy as their "cover man". A party strongman like Mr Sanjiva Reddy is what the Syndicate wants as President in 1972 when the Congress is most certain to lose its majority in

the Lok Sabha. But Mrs Gandhi has lined up both the communist parties, the DMK and the Akali Dal behind Mr Giri's candidature and the Syndicate will find it hard to force Mr Sanjiva Reddy to the fore. The Prime Minister is already on the look out for the next VicePresident because she has taken Mr Giri's election as President for granted.

The failure of the Opposition to think of an agreed candidate (in contrast to the rare opportunistic unity it displayed in 1967 by backing Mr K. Subba Rao) underlines the death of anti-Congressism in parliamentary politics and the increasing Congress manoeuvrability with communist help. The Opposition has not been able to think of a candidate of stature and Mr Jaya Prakash Narayan will not be acceptable to several Opposition groups. So the Presidential election is turning out to be a tame affair this time.

June 15, 1969



Friends, face the future without fear  
Start saving, open a new frontier.

Saving is surprisingly easy at  
National and Grindlays.  
You need only Rs. 5/- for a start.

**NATIONAL AND  
GRINDLAYS BANK LIMITED**

(Incorporated in the United Kingdom.  
Liability of Members is Limited)



NGB-29/68

## Kelappan On The Warpath

RAMJI

IT is an irony of politics in this country that Shri K. Kelappan, one of the foremost disciples of Gandhiji and veteran freedom fighter, could turn a rank Hindu communalist of the Sankaracharya of Puri brand, and mount a crusade against Muslims. The aged veteran, who has been a Sarvodayite for some time now, has been silent on all popular issues, including gross exploitation and downright physical assaults on Harijan agricultural and other labourers, but he suddenly came into the limelight some time back when he unearthed, literally, a derelict temple in a thickly populated Muslim area in Perintalmanna and used the temple and Siva, the deity inside, to mount a double-pronged communal crusade against the United Front Government on the one hand and against the Muslim population of the State on the other. Since Hindu-Muslim animosity is difficult to whip up in Kerala, the Sarvodayite turned a communalist, could not make much headway in his reactionary campaign, though he had the full support of the para-military RSS and the Jana Sangh.

Now, Kelappan has jumped into the fray once again with do-or-die declarations, duly echoed by the Jana Sangh and the RSS, to fight against what he calls the formation of "Moplasthan" in Kerala, which, to the uncommitted person, is only the formation of an administrative district embracing backward areas which happen to have a Muslim majority. Kelappan has nothing to say against the formation of another district, Malnad, in which there would be a Christian majority. And, naturally enough, he has no comments to make on several existing districts which have a Hindu major-

ity. He has gone to the fantastic length of dubbing the Muslims and the Muslim League anti-national and has given out stories stating that the Muslim womenfolk in the Malappuram area are now gleefully stating that they are going to have a country of their own.

Kelappan wants to make this an all-India question and has issued press statements from Delhi, Madras and other centres. He knows full well that he would not get any sizable following in Kerala, except of course the handful of RSS volunteers and the still more attenuated Jana Sangh cadres, to launch a campaign to paralyse the Government. His aim, it would seem, is to recruit volunteers from the cow-cum-Hindi belt in U.P. and M.P. There are indications of a favourable response from these followers of the Puri Acharya.

Maybe it is not curious, but it certainly is characteristic that Mr Chavan with his intuition for spotting lawlessness even in the thought processes of certain sections of the people, has turned a blind eye to the flagrant incitement to communal violence which the Sarvodayite has launched.

As strange as the communal stance of this Gandhi disciple is the fact that the breakaway Marxist MLA, Mr K. P. R. Gopalan, who styles himself a Naxalite, has also declared his intention to fight the so-called "Moplasthan." As is to be expected, the respectable press has been dressing-up this district issue as if it were the grant of sovereign status to a small Muslim majority enclave in Kerala. Some members of the CPI(M) are also opposed to the creation of the new district.

### Attack on Peasants

Very much reminiscent of the gruesome incident at Kizhevenmani in Tamilnadu, in which scores of agricultural labourers were bottled up inside a house and burnt to death, is the recent Chathankara incident in Kerala. United Front Government or no, the landlords have the final say in their own fashion when it comes to a tussle with agricultural

labour. This was seen last month-end in Chathankara, near Thiruvalla, in Central Travancore, when the armed goondas of landlords, including a Congress MLA, raided the hutments of agricultural labour, set them on fire, destroyed household chattel, beat up men, women and children, gouged out the eyes of a thirteen-year-old girl and performed other acts of valour on hapless Harijans who had been guilty of organising themselves and of "asking for more". This atrocity comes in the wake of an unprovoked attack on agricultural workers in Kuttanad, the rice bowl of Kerala, this time by the police, with the Inspector General's blessings, when a big mass of Harijan workers who had come for parleys were set upon and beaten up mercilessly. The United Front Government, with its avowed regard for the underdog, has been unable to curb the organised armed might of the landlords of Kuttanad, who have traditionally been accustomed to play the autocrat. It is also significant that among the partners of the United Front, the CPI under the lead of Mr M. N. Govindan Nair, Minister for Agriculture, has taken a pro-landlord stance in the name of implementing a green revolution.

### Cochin Corporation

The election of the first Mayor of the Corporation of Cochin was invested with suspense and a surprise ending. The United Front, with a single-member majority, was expected to push its Marxist candidate through. The prospective Marxist Mayor even held a press conference on the eve of the election. But the election proved that the UF had counted its chicks before they were hatched. One member of the UF defected and the votes for the Marxist candidate and the Congress nominee tied. Lots were drawn and the Congress candidate won. The Marxists had taken infinite precautions to prevent defections from the ranks of the UF councillors. For three days prior to the election the UF councillors were virtually held

'prisoners' in a hotel, where they were fed and clothed and were denied all contact with the outside world.

The UF councillors marched in a body from the hotel to the Council hall to vote. Significantly enough, they were escorted, as if they were prisoners, by a strong guard of Marxist volunteers. And different coloured pens were allotted to different parties of the UF in order to spot out defections, if any, even though the election was by secret ballot. Yet one councillor defected.

The hunt is now on to detect him. But the trail has been camouflaged by the Congress councillors, some of whom used identical colour pencils to vote for the Congress candidate. There is much gloom among the Marxists and quite a lot of rhetoric about 'rape of democracy' etc., all the while ignoring the patent fact that the UF had got its majority by winning over one unattached independent to its side. The Congress has, in this instance, shown that it can play this sort of game better.

dentship of Mr Konda Laxman Bapuji. The formation of a rival Congress organisation in one State was said to have had the blessings of Morarji Desai.

Dr Chenna and Brahmananda Reddy accuse each other of aiding and abetting goondas. The fact is, goondas of both the parties hold sway throughout the twin cities. During the four days of rioting in early June the police fired nearly fifty times killing as many as thirty people, the majority being innocent passers-by. The police could never control the situation. Their methods of quelling riots are obsolete and ineffective. So they fired brutally and aimlessly. In one incident, a family of four sipping tea in a room were hit by bullets through the windows and were killed; in another a sixteen-year-old boy studying in an upstairs room was killed by a bullet. Curfew was imposed but with little effect. There was large-scale defiance of curfew, and arson and looting continued. On the fifth day the situation improved a bit coinciding with the unscheduled arrival of the Prime Minister on the previous night. There were 120 cases of arson during six days of the first week of June. Ten schools, 19 private vehicles, 12 houses, 14 shops, 10 government buses, 19 post offices, 17 electric sub-stations, 16 milk booths, one railway station, 9 government vehicles and 7 police stations were the targets of arsonists. Heavy barricades were set up throughout the twin cities. Neither the police nor the army could enter certain areas for 72 hours because of the barricades.

A significant point in the agitation is the ever-enthusiasm of non Telugus like Gujaratis and Marwaris for the creation of a separate Telengana. Most of the leaders who are spearheading the agitation are non-Telugus. Mr. B. Pitti, an SSP leader, is among the leaders who want a separate Telengana. The moneylending business of his Mawari community has succeeded a lot because of the rapid growth of the banking industry in the Telengana region after the formation of Andhra Pradesh. Ten out of the 19 prominent citizens who submitted a memo-

## Telengana : Another Aspect

Elkay

THERE have been strikes and other forms of agitation during the past 15 years in Andhra Pradesh but the present riots are different. They are aimed against Andhras, and are meant to strike terror in their hearts so that they feel they cannot live in Hyderabad. In spite of the considerable Muslim population in the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad there never was any serious communal trouble. These riots are the result of blind hatred against the Andhras, made scapegoats for all the ills of Telengana and the so-called injustices done to that region. The houses of Andhras are burnt, their property looted and they are assaulted, murdered in some cases and their women molested. Many cases of arson take place under the very nose of the local police whose department now has also been infected by Andhra-Telengana feelings. Many Andhras have become refugees in their own State of 'Andhra Pradesh'. For the past five months—since the beginning of the Telengana agitation—there has been practically no Government nor administration. Ministers do not dare come out without police protection. Schools and colleges have remained closed since the beginning of the year.

Different deadlines were set for

achieving a separate State of Telengana. There were 'bandhs' on March 3, April 15 and May 1 to 3. Finally, the leaders of the Telengana Praja Samithi elected Dr Chenna Reddy as the Chairman of the Samithi. Then started violence, coercion, incitement and threats of a blood bath and anarchy if a separate Telengana were not formed before June 15. There were inflammatory speeches by the leaders at every meeting but the Government looked on like a passive spectator. Its decision to conduct the public examinations from June 3 added fuel to the fire.

The Praja Samathi gave a call for boycotting the examination. But, significantly, some of the leaders of the Samithi sent their children to appear for the examination elsewhere in the Andhra area. The army was called in to protect those who desired to appear, perhaps the first time in the history of India after independence that army help was sought to conduct public examinations. Those who dared to appear were assaulted by Praja Samithi volunteers. The decision to conduct the examination had become a prestige issue for the Government but it failed to conduct the examination completely. Meanwhile on June 1, a separate Telengana Congress Committee was formed under the presi-

random to the State Governor and the Union Home Minister urging the creation of a separate Telengana were non-Telugus. The Maharashtra Assembly's Deputy Speaker, Mr. Vasudev Naik, speaking at a Maharashtra unity meeting recently, stressed the need for 'united Maharashtra' and opposed any division of Maharashtra, but the same gentleman wants the Telugu speaking people to divide. He spoke by phone from Bombay with Mr Chavan when the latter was here, and impressed the need for a separate Telengana. This kind of people have been leading the agitation from the beginning. One of the leaders of the Samithi described the recent cyclone havoc in the coastal districts as nature's curse against Andhras.

The visits of the Prime Minister and the Home Minister were more or less useless as they could not arrive at any political solution. The Chief Minister thinks that he is being made a scapegoat for all the ills done by his predecessors and refuses to resign. It is the arrogant attitude of the Chief Minister that has brought the situation in the State to the boiling point. He is neither capable of controlling the situation nor is he ready to step down from office. The Central Government seems to be showing an attitude of appeasement towards the Telengana agitation, playing upon the alleged injustices done to that region. None is able to spell out in clear terms the so-called injustices done to Telengana. It is in fact the Andhra region including Rayalaseema, that has suffered much from the lack of developmental programmes. In the united Madras State, all the industries were set up in Madras while other surrounding areas of the present Tamilnadu and the Andhra region were completely neglected. Ever since the formation of Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad has been developed and almost all the Central aided industries were set up in and around Hyderabad. Hundreds of crores of capital have been invested for the development of Hyderabad neglecting the other towns in the Andhra area like Vijayawada, Visakhapatnam etc. If a separate Telengana is formed and Hyderabad is included in it, the Andhra

area will be left without any industry or any major, developed town.

Bal Thakre struck with his Shiv Sena in Bombay a few months back. Now Dr Chenna Reddy with his Praja Samithi is doing the same thing.

## Bihar

# Over A Bridge

N. K. SINGH

**M**LA's and MLC's from North Bihar have raised their voice against the construction of the proposed Ganga bridge at the Sabalpur site in Patna. They want a bridge instead at Mahendraghat in Patna proper and this demand is being supported by many politicians. The State Government is against it, as the scheme for the Sabalpur bridge was made after detailed investigations and on the recommendations of the Central Water and Power Research Station, Poona, and foreign consultants.

The Ganga river divides Bihar into two parts—South and North. North Bihar, about 20,000 square miles broad, has a population of 21,800,000. But due to transport difficulties it remains unconnected with other parts of the State. Thousands of people come daily to Patna, the capital. To some extent the difficulty was solved after the construction of the Rajendra bridge at Mokameh but an area of 265 miles between Banaras and Mokameh remains blank—without any bridge. So between Banaras and Mokameh the south and north side of the Ganga is unconnected and transport facilities are much less. Only boats and steamers are available, which take more time and money and are uncertain.

The demand for a Ganga bridge at Patna is very old. In March, 1913 a proposal was made in the Legislative Council of Orissa and Bihar but it was turned down by the East India Railway Company.

While U.P.'s 600-mile-long Ganga

The danger of right reaction to the country has been on the increase, say the programmes of the two communist parties in the country. But they do nothing to mobilise public opinion against this danger.

area has got six bridges, the 300-mile-long Ganga area of Bihar has only one.

According to the National Council of Applied Economic Research, the construction cost of the bridge will be Rs 25 crores and other things will cost Rs 937,500.

A bridge on the Ganga will connect Patna not only with North Bihar but also with Kathmandu via Motihari and Raxaul. It will also connect South Bihar with the Paradip seaport in Orissa and trade will increase.

At present the only line of road transport in North Bihar is via the Mokameh bridge, which is full of traffic—about 275,553 tonnes of goods is transported every year across it.

A bridge at Patna will help the transport of about 20,99,787 tonnes of goods a year. About 284 more buses will be able to run daily from Patna to various places in North Bihar and about 15,000 passengers will be facilitated. The bridge will cut the distance by about 63 k.m. Thus about 16,535,799 k.m. will be saved which will result in a net saving of about Rs 14,055,429 (transport rate of trucks—85 p. per k.m.) On the other hand a bridge at Sabalpur will create more problems than it will solve by linking the two parts of the State. The 37-mile detour, across the bridge will mean more money and time than the present steamer service. Even a fast direct bus service will take at least

150 minutes to Sonapur by road against 20 minutes taken by steamer and train together. Only private vehicle-owners would be the gainers.

While the politicians say that a bridge on the Ganga in Patna proper would be more useful, architects point out that the Sabalpur site is better.

## Land Revenue : A Suggestion

N. KRISHNAJI and N. K. CHANDRA

THE net area sown in West Bengal was 5.2 million hectares in 1956-57 and 5.4 million hectares in 1960-61, according to the land utilization statistics published by the Ministry of Food and Agriculture. We assume that now it is of the order of 5.8 million hectares (or 14.33 Mn. acres). The land revenue calculated in 1965-66 amounted to about Rs 70 million. The budget estimate for 1967-68 was Rs 66.8 million. Thus, the average effective rate of land revenue, ignoring fertility and other differences, is of the order of Rs 11.50 per hectare or Rs 4.65 per acre.

From the 1961 census, we have the following distribution of land in the different size groups. This distribution of land has been estimated on the basis of a 20% sample and should be a fairly accurate description of the entire land.

Size Group	%Area
Less than 1 acre	1.90
10—2.5 acres	12.24
2.5—5.0 acres	23.57
5.0—7.5	21.07
7.5—10.0	9.78
10—12.5	9.65
12.5—15	4.38
150—30.0	14.15
30.0—50.0	2.10
Above 50.	1.16
	100.00

We suggest the following system of land revenue :

For farms of size

- (i) less than 5 acres—no land revenue
- (ii) between 5—10 acres—Rs 5 per acre

(iii) between 10-20 acres—Rs 10 per acre

(iv) above 20 acres—Rs 20 per acre

The rates envisage higher taxes only for those owning 10 acres or more ; for those having between 5 and 10 acres the tax-rates are the same as now. Further, these rates are averages for each size group. Differences for regions of different fertility can be introduced in the usual way. Assuming that the size-distribution given in the 1961 census is still valid we have worked out the total acreage in the different size groups and the estimated yield of revenue at the suggested rates, as follow :

Size Group	%	Land (Mn. acres)	Acreage in each group
Below 5 acres	38	5.4	
5—10 acres	30	4.3	
10—20 acres	18	2.6	
Above 20 acres	14	2.0	
		100	14.3
Suggested rate of land revenue (Rs/acre)	Expected Yield (Rs Million)		
0	—		
5	21.5		
10	26.0		
20	40.0		
	87.5		

The progression in the suggested rates is mild and can be made steeper by (a) increases across the board and/or (b) introducing more size-groups, particularly by breaking up the last group i.e., above 20 acres. Ours is basically an exercise indicating alternative possibilities.

The cost of collection is very high for land revenue, amounting to Rs. 4.7 crores in 1965-66 and Rs. 5.1 crores in the Budget estimates for 1967-68. We may assume for the sake of simplicity that the collecting costs are the same for each household or farm ; perhaps this is not true and some further adjustments have to be made. Anyway on this simplifying assumption, collecting costs should be reduced by 73% if all farms up to 5 acres are exempted or by 46% if farms up to 2.5 acres are exempted. These percentages are derived from 1961 census figures in the distribution of agricultural households by the size of holdings.

The net revenue position according to our proposals could then improve by nearly Rs. 6 crores as against the 1967-68 budget estimates. Total revenue would be Rs. 8.8 crores and collection costs Rs. 1.3 crores while these were respectively Rs. 6.7 crores and Rs. 5.1 crores in 1967-68 estimates.

PLACE A REGULAR ORDER FOR YOUR

**FRONTIER**

*Subscription Rates*

INLAND

Six Months	..	Rs. 8.25
One year	..	Rs. 16.50
Five Years	..	Rs. 75.00
Seven years	..	Rs. 100.00

Foreign AIR MAIL Rates (One Year)

Europe: Rs. 120 or 15 dollars

Asia: Rs. 88 or 11 dollars

America: Rs. 168 or 21 dollars

By Surface Mail

All countries: Rs. 40 or 5 dollars

Long-term Subscriptions will help the weekly

# Calcutta Diary

GYAN KAPUR

IT may be just the heat or some deeper cause—but a sort of stagnation seems to be the order of the day in and around Calcutta, Durgapur and its aftermath notwithstanding. One looks in vain for any bold change or even any plan or attempt to effect such a change. There are only words, words, and still more words, which is what passes for action in this country. Om Brahma, say the ancient scriptures. Good revolutionaries, therefore, who are not less but more devout Hindus, genuinely believe all they have to do is to pass the word and a better order will automatically come about. And the gulf between the rulers and the ruled starts widening again.

Of late, the Education Minister, Mr Satya Priya Roy, has been much in the news. The pious resolve to make education free up to Class VIII is, of course, welcome though no one takes it seriously. The Minister himself set a not very clear date and was not explicit how the money was to be found, apart from the vague proposal to tax those earning above a thousand rupees. As to how people could be made to pay what would amount to a State income tax in addition to the one levied by the Centre, Mr Roy did not consider it necessary to elaborate. Nor apparently does he know what amount could be raised by this method which predictably will run into difficulties if an attempt is made to implement it.

Mr Roy has also been ventilating what I hope are his personal opinions and not the decision of the Cabinet on the status of English in West Bengal. So far West Bengal has been singularly free from any bias against English while at the same time being proud of Bengali. There are certain diseases which are contagious and the anti-English allergy is one of them. Its latest victim is the West Bengal Education Minister. As reported, he has even caught the jargon of the Hindi belt and wants to make

English, horrid thought, a 'library language. As understood in Aryavarta, this phrase means you need not take the language seriously and just a smattering would do. This would mean a complete and fundamental change in the approach to the study of English. If implemented it might also mean a lesser share for West Bengal's youth in coming years in the all-India employment field in the professions. It is also doubtful if any one wants it. At least not the classes that provide the bulk of students for higher education. And I was told on good authority by one who should know, that even rich peasants want their children to learn English as well as possible.

Another proposal of the Education Minister is to distribute to all students of Classes I and II free copies of the Bengali text-book which is Tagore's *Sahaj Path*, Book I and II. Perhaps this is prompted by the doubts the Minister has about his ability to make education free and this gimmick is being thought of to prove that something is really being done. Personally I do not think it is going to make any difference to any one, however poor, while to the State it is going to cost a few lakhs annually. These books are at present standard text-books in practically all schools and even non-Bengali students in Calcutta read them. For those who cannot afford the rupee or so it is never difficult to get hold of a copy with millions going round every year.

Negotiations will be set afoot with the trustees of Visva-Bharati who publish these books apparently with a view to getting the publication rights at a cheap price. Even if a bargain is struck, it is going to be a costly one. Trustees are the same everywhere. That apart, there is too much rigidity of thinking on the subject.

At the risk of offending many devotees of Tagore I must say that there is need for reviewing the subject afresh

and coming to a decision as to whether these books are the best. This does not mean any disrespect to Tagore. After all Vidyasagar's primers were standard reading for Bengali boys and girls for ages but where are they now? With the introduction of new methods of teaching, Tagore's *Sahaj Path* with its dull drawings does appear to have become outdated as much as Vidyasagar's primers. If the West Bengal Government is to foot the bill for Bengali primers why can they not get the books from some modern writer, buy them for good and produce a low-cost, colourful primer in keeping with present trends? The name of Sukhalata Rao comes easily to mind in this connection. There may be others who could do an equally fine job.

The love-hate relationship that has developed between West Bengal and the Centre is highlighted by the curious case of the proposed Saxby Farmer take-over which goes dragging on. Time limits have all expired but still the firms exists. There are of course good reasons for wanting direct Central participation in Saxby Farmer but if it had been such a good thing, the West Bengal Government would not have funkled the take-over so long. Plainly it is afraid of losing face in case it is found necessary to close it down after the take-over. But frequent appeals to the Centre for participation in such a venture accord ill with postures threatening confrontation on other issues, though much less is heard about it now.

\* \* \*

The ultimate in gherao may have taken place at Dum Dum on the railway platform when angry passengers stopped some trains leaving and wanted another train to go up to the station of their choice. The reason for their doing so was delightfully different. They had come by another train and on reaching the station found to their dismay that the connecting train they wanted to catch had left on time. There was of course a strange logic in their behaviour. Since trains are rarely on time they can be excused if they had hoped to catch the particular one

they wanted. Perhaps the train by which they came was late, perhaps not. The report is silent on the point. It does not really matter. The effect is the same in any case.

It is time somebody told these train demonstrators that they are overdoing it. The reaction is much too strong against the provocation offered. No doubt there is official bungling occasionally but with a popular government in power some other methods should be found to ventilate minor grievances. Moreover, there is no reason to think why the railway officials should be worried to keep the trains moving when those who use them stop the services off and on. Lastly, the frequent clashes between passenger demonstrators and railway workmen are leading to estrangement between them which is not healthy for a democratic movement.

The electric train services are by and large not very irregular or unreliable. But there will always be mechanical or other defects leading to delays. Overhead wires are also frequently stolen, leading to serious difficulties which hardworking railway staff does its best to get over. To hold them responsible for all this is at least unkind. If any gherao has to be done for late running of trains, then it should be against offending officials who may be responsible and not against trains as such which only leads to more chaos and is based on the Gandhian concept that if only you punish yourself enough, even your enemy will start feeling sorry for you. There should also be some fellow-feeling for passengers of other trains and the railway workers. As at present most if not all such train demonstrations are by those who care less than the proverbial tuppence for others and would not mind their fellows suffering so long as they get what they want. They should be made to realise by a little plain speaking that they are not

participating in a democratic movement but just indulging in a little bit of anarchy which helps no one and in fact puts intolerable pressure on the railway workers who have to bring order out of the chaos even if we do not consider the other passengers affected. There should be some sense of proportion in such things. Workers and employees fighting for their jobs or rights is one thing. Passengers bringing everything to a halt because their train is late is quite another. If in their offices or factories they face difficulties due to late arrival of trains, they should have the courage to fight it out there and not make others suffer for no fault of theirs.

\*

\*

Early reports to the contrary, the mayoral election was not such a flower-less occasion as it was feared. Showering of rose petals on the new Mayor and Deputy Mayor was stopped but otherwise it was very much like old times with flowers and garlands all round. The only difference was that for a Corporation meeting there was singularly little show of bad manners.

In other ways of course it was the same as usual. True to tradition the new Mayor, Mr Prasanta Sur, referred to slum clearance which has featured in the opening speech of all mayors during the past three or four decades. There was a lot of talk, as many as 20 councillors speaking. Already the main reason which stands in the way of the Corporation has been found out. The Municipal Act must be amended. The hankering for more power is not Mr Chavan's alone. No doubt the Act requires a change, but so does the whole Corporation too. It has done precious little with the powers it already has.

The whole atmosphere of a school committee requires a change. Promptly after the election the next day was declared a holiday as it happens after a school sports or prize distribution. But then it was a sort of prize distribution in which the UF partners were recipients and not mere on-lookers after long, long years.

## The Press

### Visit To Kabul

KAJAL SEN

INDIAN Prime Ministers have always enjoyed more than adequate Press coverage during their trips abroad. Nehru in his Missions of Peace and Goodwill never missed the front page of leading dailies, even long after Bandung when the missions had become mere courtesy calls and Asian peace had become the responsibility of others. Lal Bahadur at Tashkent also did extremely well in this regard; he was rather fortunate in that he did not even have to face any criticism on his return. And judging from the outcome of her trip to Afghanistan, Mrs Indira Gandhi also has had more than her full measure of publicity.

What surprises one most is the almost superior attitude which the Indian Press takes where smaller nations are concerned. The attitude remains even while their country may be doing what it is doing at the beck and call of others. Some people have found Moscow's hand in Mrs Gandhi's accepting an invitation which had been lying on the Prime Minister's desk since the time of Mr Shastri. That may or may not be true. But the fact remains that her five-day tour over, the Prime Minister had nothing more to say but to advocate regional co-operation, thus almost echoing the words of Comrade Alexei Kosygin. It is he who is eager to have closer USSR-Afghanistan-India-Pakistan relations and it does seem that Mrs Gandhi played to the tune. Not that friendlier relations with neighbouring countries should not be fostered; what is disquieting is that the Government of India must still need people to guide it even in such matters. Newspapers have of course tried to see as much into the trip as possible and Mrs Gandhi has featured prominently in pictures with various known and unknown people, not excluding the now almost proverbial child. Yet one just could not help

#### NOTICE

Articles cannot be returned unless accompanied by return postage.

Business Manager  
Frontier

feeling that somebody had been there before.

*The Times of India* says the trip marks a new stage in the development of Indo-Afghan friendship, by giving the much needed fillip to plans of economic co-operation between the two countries. India which has acquired over the years considerable experience in the fields of irrigation, agriculture, power and small-scale industries is in a position to help Afghanistan develop her resources; that the two Governments are keen to explore avenues of trade and development is manifest in the agreement to set up an inter-ministerial commission for the purpose. India can also offer more facilities for higher education and technical training to Afghan students.

To start with the Indian offer of assistance can supplement the aid which Afghanistan is receiving from the Soviet Union and the United States. India, herself a poor country, does not wish to compete with them but may meet a portion of Afghanistan's need for technical know-how and experts. It should be remembered that like India, Afghanistan also cherishes her freedom and needs to reduce her dependence on the great powers. However, it must be noted that Indo-Afghan friendship does not stem from their common hatred of a third country. New Delhi has never sought to exploit Kabul's sense of grievance against Islamabad. It is entirely to the Afghan Government's credit that it has not made friendship with this country contingent on its support on the Pakhtoonistan issue. In fact despite their differences with Pakistan both would like to co-operate with her in the economic field. Unfortunately Islamabad which has been unhelpful so far is unlikely to change its policy at present.

The five-day visit has also been found useful by *The Hindusthan Times*. The agreement to have a joint ministerial commission is in keeping with the new emphasis in India's foreign policy of developing bilateral economic relations as a base for a sound political relationship. The emphasis, in the joint communiqué

issued after the visit, on Indian assistance for infrastructural schemes has also been appropriate.

#### Overland Trade

The paper which looks back on Indo-Afghan trade since 1952 finds that in that year the trade was valued at Rs 5 crores. A 1957 agreement attempted to further increase the scope for trade and in 1967 while imports from Afghanistan were valued at nearly Rs 9.5 crores exports to that country were just under Rs 7 crores. A major obstacle to increased trade has been the strained relationship of the two countries with Pakistan which has impeded transit trade. A landlocked country, Afghanistan is particularly embarrassed by the movement restrictions imposed on her trade through Pakistan. The Afghan road network has, however, improved in recent years, with the Salang tunnel through the Hindu Kush expected to provide a flourishing overland trade between the Central Asian Republics of the Soviet Union and the Indian sub-continent via Afghanistan. This would in turn suggest regional co-operation between India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and the USSR which should not be ruled out despite the present political situation. And once transit trade develops both. India and Pakistan would find it to their advantage to apply similar principles to their own bilateral trade.

*The Indian Express* strikes a different note. Mr Kosigin who had preceded Mrs Gandhi to Kabul set the ball rolling with his proposal for regional co-operation and was followed by Mr Brezhnev who preferred the idea of collective security for Asian countries. New Delhi which had till now been allergic to such schemes is all attention as these have emanated from Moscow. Neither of the two ideas have been brusquely brushed aside as they would have been if they had come from "less sacred sources".

India and Pakistan had been brought to perform in Tashkent under the ringmaster's eye. Is this ring now to be extended to accommodate another performer, Afghanistan?

And what sort of collective security does Mr Brezhnev visualise, he, who had masterminded Czechoslovakia? India is an amateur in the game of diplomacy and international politics and as such finds herself lined up against the wall. It is only right that India should draw closer to Afghanistan but at the same time she should not be dictated by a foreign power. New Delhi must realize that in the process it is not India's sphere of influence that is being enlarged but Moscow's. She along with Pakistan and Afghanistan are only pawns in the Russian game.

#### The Westinghouse Affair

Since 1967 the principal criticism against the West Bengal United Front Ministry in the industrial field has been that it encouraged gheraos, or at least did not take the necessary steps to counter this form of trade union movement. The Press raised a tremendous hullabaloo about the "industrial crisis" in the State and, in 1967 particularly, stories were heard almost everyday of this and that company shifting its establishment elsewhere. Flight of capital it was called.

Gheraos continue and so do the criticisms. But meanwhile a new situation has cropped up. The "destroyer" of industries is now actually trying to save a firm. Mr Jyoti Basu has taken it upon himself to prevent the Westinghouse Saxby Farmer from being shut down by its parent body in London. He has made repeated requests to the Union Government to participate along with the State Government in the firm's management. Right now things are in a somewhat confused state as the Union Railway Ministry is divided on the subject.

All this has not found favour with *The Hindusthan Times*. The paper which has all along been raising a scare about gheraos has now attacked Mr Jyoti Basu for trying to save a firm. It finds Mr Basu's attitude as enigma. While he is concerned with the prospect of WSF being closed down, has he ever shown the same zeal in restoring normal conditions of work and productivity in the Durgapur

Steel Plant which continues to suffer from indiscipline, gheraos and a general atmosphere of agitation? A single day's production at the DSP would be equivalent in value to many weeks of production of Westinghouse Saxby Farmer. But Mr Basu's tears are reserved for that company only.

It is a strange piece of writing and, one suspects, not based on any correct appreciation of the situation. It is futile to attempt any comparison of the value of the two organizations' products. Westinghouse Saxby Farmer produces only railway equipment and is the only unit of its nature in India. Its closure would mean imports worth quite a few crores every year. That, however, does not seem to bother *The Hindustan Times*. Maybe it wants WSF

to close down so that its owners can enter this field of production also, perhaps with foreign collaboration. And if 1700 people, not 3000 as the paper writes) lose their jobs what does the paper care.

#### Rabindra Sarobar

Another example of the objectivity of the Indian Press: While all the major outstation papers went wild over the reported happenings at Rabindra Sarobar (women, one thought, were no longer safe in Calcutta) very few have shown much interest in reporting the Ghosh Commission proceedings. One wonders if this is because no evidence has so far been recorded of women being molested that night.

## Romeo And Juliet

PRABODH KUMAR MAITRA

FRANCO Zeffirelli's screen adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet*, after his earlier *The Taming of the Shrew*, shows that he is capable of summoning up the confidence to use even Shakespeare as raw material, to be changed and adapted entirely according to the artistic requirements of the cinema. Right from the beginning of film history, in the silent era Shakespeare's plays, particularly *Romeo and Juliet*, offered potential material to film-makers. In most cases the story itself was condensed for a ten-minute treatment. In some other cases the depiction of an episode from a play was the purpose. Titles and subjects from Shakespeare were freely adopted or adapted for even non-Shakespearean films. The need for respectability for the new medium, when it was an infant phenomenon, must have prompted the early practitioners to resort to this practice.

In case of *Romeo and Juliet* these film-makers often used other names even when the story was based on Shakespeare. As Robert Hamilton Ball observes in his recent work on the

subject, sometimes the heroine's name was not Juliet, as in Ethel's *Romeo* a Mantha's *Romeo*. The first was a one-reel farce and the second a boardinghouse comedy in which an actor assumes Romeo's garb and climbs to a window to woo a cook. A plethora of other names were used for other films: *Her Rustic Romeo*, *A Seashore Romeo*, *A Roaming Romeo*, *A Reckless Romeo* and *Roping Her Romeo*. The story was pilfered and even parodied a number of times in the silent era. In one such Chaplin appeared as Romeo and gave a demonstration of his famous walk. Juliet was played by Mary Pickford who gave her smile to a dotting audience.

When sound arrived dialogue introduced all sorts of new complications in filming Shakespeare. In fact Shakespeare appeared late on the scene after movies learned to talk. Fidelity to the text became the most important thing to the purists who thought that cinema might remain a recording medium for the bard. But the more creative among the film-makers resolutely refused to remain within such constraints.

But trepidation on the part of George Cukor, who made the first *Romeo and Juliet* in sound in 1935, must have led him to film the text carefully and advertise "every word from Shakespeare". The fact of the matter was that additional dialogue needed for the film was borrowed from other works of Shakespeare. Norma Shearer and Leslie Howard as the aged pair of lovers might not be everybody's idea of Romeo and Juliet on screen. A later version of the play by Renato Castellani seemed a disaster.

To come back to Zeffirelli's version. This is a film and not a play and should be judged on its own terms. While making it the director described his intention to make the play as a "cinemaverite documentary". This leads him to liberate the story from the text and give it a different treatment. An element of burlesque is noticeable in the street scenes. The teenagers forming the two groups of Capulets and Montagues exude a flamboyance and one not very dissimilar from their counterparts of the contemporary period. Their boisterous effervescence is also characteristic of the present generation. They are introduced in the very first scene, in the market place, as prepared to have a bout as a hilarious exercise. Zeffirelli spurns solemnity and even treats the starcrossed baptism of love in a rather lightheaded manner. He keeps both of them teenagers, a tribute more to the contemporary generation "under love's heavy burden" than to his obligation to be faithful to the bard's narrative. The temper of irreverence is noticeable when the nurse has a rough time with Romeo's friends. Or when the lovers go to the church for marriage and even the holy precincts are not spared—there is a passionate outburst of love.

Zeffirelli's sense of humour stands him in good stead. When Juliet's age is being guessed by the nurse and hastened to be corrected by the mother we see the latter taking a look at her face in the mirror to check her make-up.

For creating visual splendour the director has few equals. The dance

# **ASSAM BENGAL RIVER SERVICE PVT. LTD.**

**POWER BOAT BUILDERS & ENGINEERS**

**26A, EZRA MANSIONS**

**10 GOVT. PLACE EAST,  
CALCUTTA.1**

at Capulet's place is a glorious piece. The streets and the marketplace add an aura of their own. The director also makes fascinating use of topshots. Limpid colour photography and music combine to heighten the effects. Acting honours are also even for all the players. All in all, an unorthodox treatment of a familiar theme.

## Letters

### Durgapur

While the Home Minister, referring to the Durgapur incident, said that a 'section' of the police had gone out of control, the Government Press Note issued under instructions from him, not only tried to find an excuse for the ghastly act of the police, but put the entire blame upon the students. As a measure to counter this conspiracy of reactionaries and CIA agents to discredit the UF Government Mr Basu ordered the transfer of some police personnel and the appointment of a judicial commission to inquire into the matter.

Strange is the attitude of the Home Minister. Whether it is Rabindra Sarobar or Durgapur, he is anxious to defend the police. Have they become saints overnight? Or are they now docile servants dedicated to the service of the people? Lenin, in his 'Fundamental Question of Revolution' says that in bourgeois parliamentary countries the changing of a ministry is of little significance, because the real administration is carried on by a huge bureaucratic-military machine which is entirely anti-people, anti-democratic and anti-radical, and it is entirely controlled and dependent upon the big landlords and reactionary bourgeoisie.

Next comes the question of the bogey of CIA and 'reactionary' elements. On the eve of the elections, I remember, the CPI(M) justified its participation on the grounds that it would help point out to the masses the inadequacies and shortcomings of the parliamentary form of government. But as incidents like Durga-

pur develop, instead of interpreting them as such—as a real Marxist party should,—it simply explains away such developments as the conspiracy of 'reactionary' and CIA agents. It is clear that all this flamboyance is meant to preserve ministership at any cost, including the subordination of the greater interest of the masses.

SUMIT BISWAS  
Calcutta

### Poetry, East Bengal

While replying to Arjun Bandyopadhyay, Mr Rathindra Chattopadhyay (May 31) has sidetracked the real issue. Who denies that lots of people today are thinking seriously of the trends in East Bengal poetry, that many of the East Bengali poets are as much part of the Bengali literary tradition as those on this side of the border? But that does not mean that it is Rabindranath (and therefore Jibanananda) who has influenced East Bengali poetry. What does this signify? Are Rabindranath and Jibanananda poets of the same boat? What is Rabindranath? He is a composer of lyrical poems. His voyage both to Almighty and woman was unhesitating and victorious except in the works of his later life. But what is Jibanananda? He defines, "Simile is the poem." After exploring human history and fighting a tough battle he is tired (Ami Klanta Pran Ek, Charidike Jibaner Samudra Safen) and could find peace sometimes in women (Amare dudanda shanti diechhilo Natorer Banalata Sen) and sometimes in nature (e.g. River Dhan-siri). But he could not make a permanent settlement of peace in any. Neither could he sit down for a prayer to God off and on like Rabindranath. His is a tune of utter pessimism.

No doubt that the poets of East Bengal are influenced by poets on this side of the border. Do Rabindranath and Nazrul or Jibanananda and Bishnu De influence them more? Well, it is impossible to make an overall judgment as all the books on that side of the border are not avail-

able here. But whenever I read Samsur Rahaman and Al Mahmood they seem to me the ghostly echos of Jibanananda. Julfikar, Enamul Huq and Aaur Rahman present the healthy optimism of Bishnu Dey.

N. K. PAUL  
Midnapore

Mr Arjun Bandyopadhyay's description (June 7) of Mr Rathin Chattopadhyay's article on East Bengal poetry (May 10) as 'pointless' is objectionable. I carefully read Mr Chattopadhyay's article and not only enjoyed it, I found it tantalisingly short. I could not detect a single word in the whole essay purporting to claim that he was the first commentator. Mr Bandyopadhyay's ire on this score is pointless. If Mr Bishnu De in his radio talks commented on East Bengal poetry, it is well that he did so. But the written word has longer life, and range (odd as it may seem) than talks on AIR. If Mr Ashim Roy wrote in some papers, we outside Bengal are unaware. Mr Chattopadhyay through the medium of *Frontier* has done East Bengal poetry and literary enthusiasts in this land a good turn.

As to who between Jibanananda and Bishnu De 'is the most significant poet at present' may be a matter of opinion or even debate. Again, subtleties have relevance only in a state of opulence or abundance. The invisible hair-splitting as to what quantum of which West Bengal poet, past or present, is present in the various East Bengal poets seems irrelevant when we are not even aware of the literary activity and its depth and dimensions there.

This makes me recall Mr Soumyen Bandyopadhyay's description (May 31) of Charan Gupta's Calcutta Diary (May 17) as 'very boring'. For one, I found Mr Gupta's article immensely readable and less of a gimmick, if one, than Mr Bandyopadhyay's own comments which were a limping imitation of Mr Gupta's pattern of style. And how incoherent.

INDUKANTA SHUKLA  
Varanasi



## FLY ACROSS THE CENTURIES

*Some airlines fly across continents. Some across countries.  
Some even aspire to fly faster than sound.*

*We don't. We fly across centuries.*

*From present day Delhi to the 16th century Taj at Agra.*

*The 10th century temples of Khajuraho.*

*The timelessness of the holy river Ganges at Banaras.*

*And back to the present in industrial Calcutta.*

*And we return the same way,  
the same day, across the centuries.*

Indian Airlines



mcm/ia/85

# G.E.C. and India's Developing Economy

Electricity is indispensable to industrialisation. A better example of this can hardly be found than the developments in India over the past decade and a half.

Since 1951, when our great cycle of five year plans was launched, electricity generated in India has grown from 1.8 million KW in 1951 to about 11 million KW in 1965—a 600 per cent increase. As the pace of our industrialization quickens and its scale enlarged, the figure is estimated to touch 40 million KW by 1975.

Since 1911, when India's first steel plant went into production marking our entry into the modern industrial age, G.E.C. has been playing a key role in providing integrated electrification service to our vital nation building projects. An instance of G.E.C.'s integrated electrification service is seen in the Indian Copper Corporation's establishment at Ghatsila. G.E.C. service covered every aspect of electrification...from the study of the specific nature of the job, the making of the blue prints, the designing of the varied and complicated electrical equipment, to their installation and switching on.

During the past few years, because of its vast know-how and experience of Indian conditions and its world-wide resources, G.E.C. has been called upon to provide integrated electrification service to vital and gigantic projects that are helping to change the face of India...projects that include the Bhakra-Nangal Dam in the Punjab and the Hirakud Dam in Orissa, the Steel Works at Durgapur and Defence establishments such as the Shell and Forge Plant at Kanpur.

Integrated electrification service is one example of how G.E.C. is playing its role in the development of the country's economy.

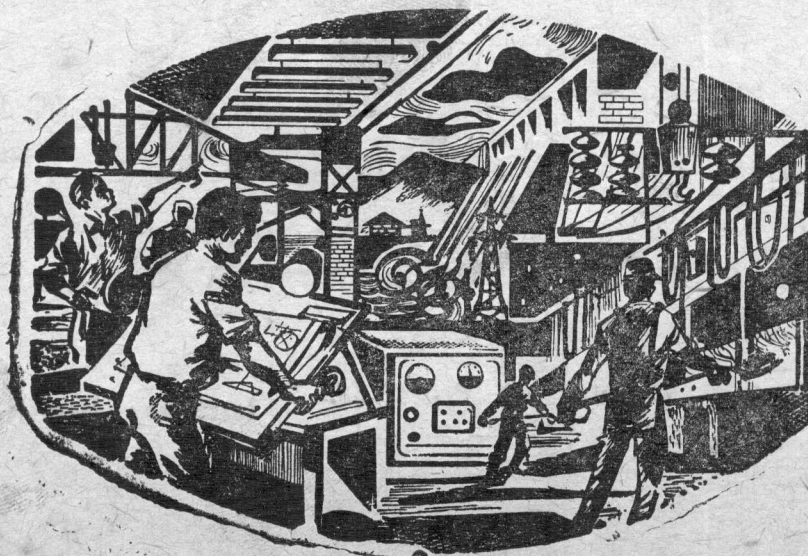


YOUR GUARANTEE

## THE GENERAL ELECTRIC CO. OF INDIA LIMITED

CALCUTTA · SAUNATI · BHUBANESHWAR · PATNA · KANPUR · NEW DELHI · CHANDIGARH · JAIPUR · BOMBAY · AHMEDABAD  
MAGPUR · JABALPUR · MADRAS · COIMBATORE · BANGALORE · SECUNDERABAD · ERNAKULAM.

TRADE MARK GEC PERMITTED USER—THE GENERAL ELECTRIC COMPANY OF INDIA LIMITED



CHANDIGARH/PR/8/66