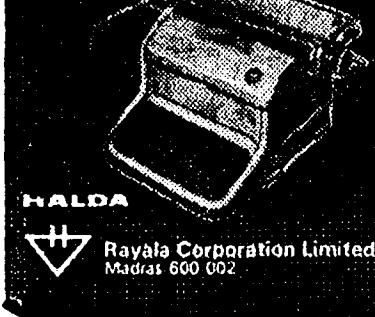


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THE TIMES OF INDIA

A Thought for Today

With a good conscience our only sure reward, with history, the final judge of deeds, let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking His blessing and His help, but knowing that here on earth God's work must truly be our own.

—John F. Kennedy

AFTER THE FLOOD

At his meeting in New Delhi with the West Bengal chief minister, Mr. Jyoti Basu, and the state finance minister, Mr. Ashok Mitra, the Prime Minister struck the right note by telling them that at a time of such catastrophic suffering in West Bengal, there could be no differences over the overriding need to alleviate mass misery. This year the floods have devastated the country in a wide swathe right across the north and the east, but they have been particularly fierce in West Bengal. Even now, hundreds of villages remain cut off. The immediate need, as the floods recede, is to ward off epidemics like cholera. In the long term, washed-out roads will have to be restored, huts rebuilt, bridges, culverts, dams and barrages repaired or constructed afresh, elementary medical and other essential services provided (post offices, for example, are still not functioning in many places even though the flood waters have receded), and waterlogged land reclaimed and drained so that farming can be resumed. A lot of money will be needed to put the state on an even keel again. Excluding the loss caused by the interruption of agricultural and industrial production, which is speculatively put at anywhere between Rs. 1,000 crores and Rs. 1,500 crores, material damage is estimated by the West Bengal government itself at around Rs. 600 crores.

Of this amount, the state administration is seeking Rs. 478 crores—Rs. 350 crores in two annual grants and the balance, Rs. 128 crores, by way of concessional credit—from financial institutions. A Central evaluation team has been touring the 12 flood-hit districts (the state has 16 in all) and, following the meeting between Mr. Desai and Mr. Basu in New Delhi, the Prime Minister is going to West Bengal to see things for himself. Unfortunately, the issue of flood relief funds has become somewhat thorny, thanks to the Reserve Bank's directive, issued a fortnight or so ago, advising the state government that it had surpassed its overdraft limit. At the same time, Mr. Ashok Mitra claims that the Indian finance minister, Mr. H. M. Patel, had told him in New Delhi to "go on spending money on relief. Accounting can take place later." Mr. Mitra's own abrasiveness in dealing with Central agencies, however, is not calculated to smoothen ruffled feelings. But whatever may have happened so far, the crucial thing now is to end the suffering. The Centre has a responsibility to help the West Bengal government—indeed, all state governments whose hands are more than full dealing with the aftermath of the floods. In all of them, development plans will suffer a setback as money earmarked for these will have to be spent on relief and rehabilitation. All of them have a good moral and financial case for getting central grants and concessional credit.

Why Harrier

Because the announcement of the government's decision to acquire Sea Harrier "jump jet" aircraft for INS Vikrant, the Navy's only aircraft-carrier, has come quick in the wake of the Jaguar deal, an erroneous impression has been created that the former is an

offshoot of the latter. The truth is that more than a year ago, Mr. Jagjivan Ram had categorically told Parliament's consultative committee on defence that new vertical and short take off and landing (V/STOL) aircraft to replace the Vikrant's Sea Hawks and Alizes were being bought and that the carrier itself was being thoroughly overhauled, improved and fitted with a superior weapons system and control equipment. If he did not then mention the Harriers by name and the deal was not clinched immediately, the reason was that the manufacturers of the aircraft were themselves busy making comprehensive changes in the naval version of the Harrier and were in no position to commit themselves on precise prices and delivery schedules.

On the merits of buying the admittedly expensive Harriers there can surely be two opinions. But the critics, who oppose the decision merely on the ground that another war with Pakistan is unlikely, take far too narrow a view of the problem, although they need to be reminded that the offensive capacity that the Pakistani Navy has built up since 1971—it has acquired more submarines, latest frigates and, above all, Atlantic reconnaissance and anti-submarine aircraft—is not something to be scoffed at. The plans for the modernisation and expansion of the Navy have to be prepared not on the basis of the anticipated threats from Pakistan alone but in the wider context of the growing importance of the sea power in the calculations of every country today. For, the seas, because of their military importance and mind-boggling under-water wealth, are increasingly becoming both a source of conflict and the medium for it. In the case of this country, the situation is complicated by the big power rivalry in the Indian Ocean on the one hand and the rise of highly modern, sophisticated and punch-packed navies in its immediate environment on the other. In the circumstances, a small coastal navy simply will not do. A blue-water fleet is called for and this cannot amount to much in the absence of tactical air support at sea. The cost-effectiveness of such support would, of course, have been open to serious doubt if this country did not already possess an aircraft-carrier. As it happens, however, the Vikrant has an effective life of at least ten more years. And to continue to operate it with its present totally obsolete aircraft would be worse than sending it to the junkyard right away. By the time the carrier has to be de-commissioned, the Indian Navy will have entered the era of through-deck cruisers which will have use for both aircraft like the Harriers and helicopters like the Sea King, which are already in service.

Calling Houdini

Come November, friends and admirers of Harry Houdini, the greatest magician and illusionist this world has ever known, will hold a daytime seance and call in his ghost. Dead these 52 years but never once forgotten (that man could get out of any pair of handcuffs the best smith could devise), American professional magicians would like to know how things are going with him. Houdini was no prince of darkness; in fact, he was its arch foe. Hence the departure from the usual procedure. He could duplicate in bright light any trick which any medium could do in the dark. Such was his astonishing genius. How are things up there? They will ask him, after his spirit has come to the seance hall. (Or down there, as the case may be; one never can tell in matters spiritual.) Still performing and teaching them a thing or two by way of amusement? There will also be two items of choice food kept for him when he arrives to keep his appointment. They don't expect him to consume it, but, as a Michigan magician puts it, "he might jiggle or tip the plate as a sign of his presence. Who knows?" Who indeed. He might, to make a shrewd guess, rattle a pair of rusty iron just to show them that magic is beyond time and has many faces. Houdini's real name was Erich Weiss and he might live up to it by playing a ghostly trick or two at the seance, the wise guy that he was. All this is fun, of course. That is what magic is all about. These are times when the occult is riding high, with Geller bending forks and saucers flying bright. But there is no fun, no sense of play, left; people tend to take these things too seriously. If Houdini does arrive and upset a plate or tilt a table, the pure joy of magic will be restored. For the sake of that at least, let us hope the great performer will stage a brief comeback.

Mr. Vajpayee's Visit To China

II—India Has Already Lost First Round

By GIRILAL JAIN

THE prospect of normalisation of relations between India and China would doubtless be better if Peking were finally to accept that peace in South Asia and the relative freedom of the countries in the region from external interference are contingent on recognition by it and others of India's preeminence. But is that so? I, for one, am not persuaded that it is. Indeed, I am not even persuaded that Peking has finally given up the policy of promoting insurrections in this country, especially in the north-eastern parts, I, therefore, regard it as quite extraordinary that hardly any Indian commentator raises the issue of Peking's policy towards Pakistan, though the Chinese have felt more than free to castigate this country's policy of friendship towards the Soviet Union. Some myopia this!

Thanks to the cold war, the massive Western propaganda and, ironically enough, the equally massive Soviet-communist propaganda, Indo-Soviet friendship has been viewed almost universally, even in our own country, in the context of the East-West competition for influence in the third world. But while in reality it has prevented this country from having reasonably close relations with the West—it has been a member of the British Commonwealth; it has received a large amount of Western aid; it has freely imported Western technology; and it has extensive trading links with the West. This friendship has helped New Delhi cope with the Pakistani and Chinese challenges which, without the assurance of Soviet support, could have proved much more dangerous than they in fact have.

PERSPECTIVE

In this context, it may also be pertinent to make another point. In spite of its involvement in the not-aligned movement from the very beginning, India was one of the initiators of the Belgrade conference in 1961—since the mid-fifties, India's horizon, for all effective purposes, has been limited to the surrounding region—South Asia plus Iran and Afghanistan. In 1961, it sent a contingent to join the UN force in Zaïre to prevent the secession of Katanga. But that was an aberration. This policy has been the product of a variety of factors, the most important being the enmity of problems at home and the lack of hostility towards the two super-powers. The Chinese, too, have faced heart-breaking problems at home. But they have been hostile to one super-power or the other for some years. As such their perspective has been different. Mr. Nehru deliberately tried to blur this distinction between Indian and Chinese policies in the fifties. But he succeeded in confusing his own countrymen.

Our failure to present our policy in a proper and realistic perspective has cost us dearly all these years in that it has led to avoidable misunderstanding both at home and abroad. But so far it has been a cost we could live with. Now the cost is threatening to become too heavy. Nothing can illustrate it better than the fact that in our own country the advocates of a cautious approach towards China have been put on the defensive because hardly anyone is willing to recall the Chinese support to Pakistan in 1965 and

1971, the Chinese attack in 1962, the Chinese support to Naga and Mizo rebels all these years and the massive expenditure we have had to incur on these counts to the grave detriment of our economic growth. In the propaganda war, Peking has already won the first round. For, it has already managed to create the impression that while it wants friendly relations with India, New Delhi is dragging its feet and that, too, only because the latter does not wish to offend those "impossible" Russians who have already "grabbed" Afghanistan and are out to "grab" Iran.

MIXED UP

Mr. Vajpayee has reason to be defensive in certain respects. As India's Minister for External Affairs, he clearly cannot, for instance, defend his previous position on "Akhanda Bharat" or on the Arab-Israeli dispute. But he does not need to be apologetic on China. China has hurt India pretty badly which, by the worst reckoning, India has not done to China if only because the geographical factor has been against it.

Moreover, the Chinese have mixed up cause and effect. They did not become hostile to India because it had leaned too heavily towards the Soviet Union. On the contrary, it did so because they had turned unduly hostile, perhaps under the baneful influence of the "Gang of Four" and their chief who was no other than the "Great helmsman" himself, as they very well know. It is, therefore, for them to reverse their policy before they can legitimately expect a change in India's. And such a reversal must, in sum, involve acceptance of India's preeminence in South Asia and all that implies.

Though not in the narrow sense, it is also pertinent to pose the question whether the present Chinese leadership can sustain its anti-Soviet and modernisation drives. While it is highly premature to attempt to answer this question, I am inclined to take a rather sceptical view. To put it most succinctly, indeed dangerously succinctly, I am inclined to believe that while anti-Sovietism is consistent with the Maoist emphasis on the development of agriculture and rural industry, it is not with modernisation on the proposed scale.

Though the Chinese modernisation plan is not as lopsided as Russia's was under Stalin, it will call for discipline and order of a similar kind and lead to a sharp reduction in differences between the Chinese and Soviet models of development. And, as modernisation proceeds, the Chinese will find themselves facing problems very similar to the ones other communist societies have faced. They then must move either towards Soviet-type centralised planning and controls or towards a market-guided economy and they, too, are likely to opt for the latter alternative because the latter involves a steady decrease in power and influence of the Communist cadres which cannot be acceptable in a communist society. Such a development must revive the debate over foreign policy between pro-Soviet and anti-Soviet elements in the leadership. Such a debate clearly took place in Peking, from 1956, when Mao initiated the "Great Leap Forward" campaign to 1965 when he managed to "throw the head of state, Mr. Liu Shao-chi.

It is evident that the West can-

not buy China's policy towards the Soviet Union. For it must deal with the Kremlin if it is to avoid a dangerous escalation in the nuclear arms race and prevent the proliferation of armed conflict; the Soviet market is too attractive for the European members of NATO, especially for West Germany, and the Soviet Union is too rich in mineral resources to be ignored as a trading partner. Moreover, serious problems are certain to arise between the West and China as the latter pushes ahead with modernisation. Already some persons in the West are raising warning signals. Perhaps it is in response to such signals that *The Economist*, London, ran an editorial "A friend in need" in its August 19, 1978, issue.

It wrote: "Do we really want to help create a modern, industrialised China of maybe 1-1.2 billion people, quite a lot of them modern, industrious soldiers, sailors and missionaries, by the year 2000? ... the thought of China even at Britain's current level of economic development, but 25 times as big, raises all the predictable eyebrows ... At whose cost would this industrial monster find its raw materials? What is to prevent the new giant, reared as a counterweight to Russia, turning on its rearers? Might a marriage of Chinese diligence and Japanese technology produce, son of the Yellow Peril, a new version of the 'co-prosperity sphere' that really would, this time, dominate the world?"

WESTERN AID

The Economist answers the question regarding the desirability of Western help to China in the affirmative but on the assumption that, in the final analysis, China will fail to join the ranks of great industrial powers. The relevant paragraphs deserve to be quoted: "The idea that the turn of the century industrial monster find its raw materials? What is to prevent the new giant, reared as a counterweight to Russia, turning on its rearers? Might a marriage of Chinese diligence and Japanese technology produce, son of the Yellow Peril, a new version of the 'co-prosperity sphere' that really would, this time, dominate the world?"

Even on the kindest assumptions, including a fair amount of Western aid, the realistic prospect for China by the year 2000 is not a Britain-times-25, or even a Poland-times-40, but a still unwieldy and largely rural country of far too many people which has nevertheless managed to build up a reasonably competent, if neither huge nor hyper-efficient, industrial sector. The world can probably live with that prospect. And so can India. But friendly ties are a different proposition. They call for a community of interests which is hardly perceptible at least right now.

(Concluded)

Sleepy Town Of Chikmagalur

By SHAILENDRA GHORPADE

WITH the genesis of Indian coffee for a headboard and the crumbling ruins of two temple towns for a footstool, the sleepy town of Chikmagalur is twice blessed.

Gazing northwards from the main street, one sees a crowded, noisy bazaar with the pungent aroma of roasted coffee beans stealing into every nook and corner. On the horizon the mist-shrouded peaks of the captivating Baba Budan girls—named after the Arab traveller who first brought coffee to the area and perhaps to the whole country—a couple of centuries ago—rise heavenwards.

Thick Canopy

Today, the lower slopes of this delightful range, a spur of the Western Ghats, are covered with an immense carpet of coffee plants. Remnant species of the original flora, interspersed with orange trees introduced much later, protect the shade-loving coffee

shrubs. Their foliage weaves a thick canopy in subtle variations of green. Miles of ripening paddy sway lazily in the winding valleys below, chequered with small squares of areca palms.

Roadside Shrines

The upper reaches of the Baba Budans, carpeted in verdant grassy downs with touches of purple heather and a patchwork quilt of forested *sholas*, are left to nature and the gods, resident in innumerable roadside shrines found lurking on almost every curve of the treacherous macadam track. A degree of patience is exercised to ward off the sight of a harem of Sambhar hinds stop to drink.

The inhabitants of the area include coffee-planters, some with a touch of the Anglophile with pet names like Bob, Bill or Dolly, and their 'native' labourers who form the majority.

Evenings are spent at the club chalking a billiard cue, playing rummy or merely sipping Plant-

er's Punch—a vicious potion of rum laced with orange juice. The 'natives', on the other hand, exercise their backs in the hot sun manuring, watering, spraying or picking the ripening red coffee berries. The cool hours after sunset are reserved for gossip washed down with the potent local brew. Sunday here is the famous twin temple towns of Halebidu and Bejjur, but they are in the neighbouring Hassan district. The celebrated *mutt* or monastery of Sringeri is a two-hour drive north-west across the Baba Budans.

Twice-blessed

Chikmagalur has always been a quiet, satisfied town, the only other cause for excitement in recent years having been the massive Kudremukh iron ore project, a few kilometres away into the hills. Now, suddenly, these peace-loving people are the cynosure of all eyes. Whatever the outcome of the election, life will never be the same again for this twice-blessed town. Politics, like liquor, has a habit of going to the head.

Worthy Example

China's Admission

find jobs for 16 million uprooted youths in the entire country.

Prolonged Study

A new type of virus has hit Delhi. Doctors are puzzled.

—News Item.

When a boy sneezes
Or a girl whoozes
The doctors get down to work,
Tackling the breezes
With their own tweezers
To see what awful germs lurk.
They stand on their toes
To see what germ grows
And what other germs drop dead.
Their yesses and noes
Puncture our woes
And then they go home to bed.
But early or late
They will isolate
The virus that stalks the land
Though a wretched fate
Has the virus abate
Before the cure comes to hand.

V. D. T.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Third World News

Sir,—Mr. Girilal Jain's article "The Non-aligned News Pool" is timely. Whatever be the merits of the Western news agencies from the viewpoint of efficiency and resources these have failed to project the third world objectively at critical moments. Col. Gaddafi has been portrayed as a cynic and a tyrant. Those struggling against the Shah of Iran have been painted as religious fanatics, and the revolution in Afghanistan, we were told, is a "Soviet inspired" coup. National liberation struggles on the whole do not get a sympathetic press. Third world countries, agree, sometimes act in a clumsy way in order to meet the situation. But that is on account of their helplessness before the powerful imperialism.

Mr. Jain is not correct in saying that our interest in foreign affairs has been and remains superficial and "we are not curious about other peoples". An average educated Indian who reads newspapers is more informed about foreign countries than about his own country. This is one reason for the popularity of *The Times of India* as it has a better coverage of foreign news than other newspapers. We know more about Shakespeare, Shaw, Ibsen and Sartre than about Vallathol, Krishan Chander, Karanth and Yashpal etc.

An average Indian prefers to buy a radio set having a short wave band. In the USA less than one per cent of radio sets have the short wave band allowing reception of information from abroad. The foreign programmes shown by US television and cinema constitute one to three per cent of their fare and one hundredth of what is exported to all countries by American film and television producers.

KABIR ANSARI
Bombay, October 19.

Deadly Chemicals

Sir,—In a recent press interview, Mr. Ram S. Hamsagar, managing director of Hindustan Insecticides, waxed eloquent on ambitious plans for the manufacture of a variety of pesticides and fungicides. He also made much of the indigenous development of the technology for the manufacture of DDT.

But have the authorities taken duly into account the likely damage that all these deadly chemicals will cause to the environment? Have the chemicals been tested for time cycles long enough in relation to their rate of biodegradation in nature? If so, where have the results been published? One would like to know the particular whether the tests have disproved the massive evidence of the short and long term dangers of the petrochemicals so ably brought out by Rachel Carson in her famous book "Silent Spring."

The fact is that there are other ways of meeting the threat of pests; biological control, for instance, is one of them. The effects of these methods are spectacular but certainly more enduring. Will we have the courage to review the plans for large-scale manufacture of pesticides even at this stage and to give a fair trial to other antidotes?

JAL N. BHARUCHA
Bombay, October 16.

Communal Riots

Sir,—Your editorial "And Now Aligarh" (October 10/11) skirts around some of the more shameful and alarming features of communal killings. First and foremost, communal riots do not stop because the will to stop them is lacking. Politicians find in them an excellent opportunity to cultivate the minorities by posing as their only protectors. Secondly, over the year communal riots have become less of a fight between two groups and more of a punitive action, with no holds barred, by the forces of law and order against those whom they consider their enemy. It is no secret that arson, looting, rape, kidnapping and killing often take place after a curfew has been clamped and the police and magistracy are in control with orders to shoot at sight.

Also, how do you expect a district magistrate to nip communal trouble in the bud when no politician will let him function in the manner he should?

M. Y. KAZI
Aligarh, October 13.

Graying Of Bombay

Sir,—We wholeheartedly endorse the visit of Curran Tores, (October 21/23) on the the busy cinema city of fathers to permit a cinema theatre in the Jijamata Udyan.

Yet another proposal hastily passed by them on the same day was the one permitting business activity comprising xeroxing, printing, blue-prints etc. in a purely residential building at 167 B, Poona-Wadi, Hindu colony, Dadar TT, in flagrant violation of all the rules and regulations and in the face of stiff opposition from all the tenants of the building as also many social workers of the area including Mrs. Ahilya Rangekar, MP and Mr. Sohansingh Kohli, MLA.

This cynical disregard for the peace and tranquillity of a residential area calls for urgent intervention and remedial action by the state government.

Prof. V. M. PALEKAR and others.
Bombay, October 23.

Advanced Technology

Sir,—Your recent editorial on the need for accelerating the progress for uranium enrichment clearly recognises that the acquisition of advanced technology is the only way for us to safeguard our independence. I would however add more vital areas of technology to your list, these being lasers, submarine technology and possibly fusion. I would also emphasise the emerging strategic situation in Asia which could provide opportunities as well as grave risks for India. Among these are the pro-Soviet regime in Afghanistan, the turmoil in Iran and Pakistan and the push by China to attain true super-power status with the active assistance of the West.

ARVIND VIRMANI
New Delhi, October 12.

"DRACONIAN" DRY LAW

IN TAMIL NADU

Vehement Protest

By V. G. PRASAD RAO

MADRAS. been vehemently raised notably that of the leader of the opposition, Mr. M. Karunanidhi. While supporting prohibition, Mr. Karunanidhi has flatly stated that the new ordinance is an instrument of vengeance and terror to be used against members of the opposition parties falling foul of the ruling AIADMK as well as to whip into line truculent members of the ruling party itself. Mr. Karunanidhi has pointed out that the chief minister had earlier indicated his intention not to spare even ministers but the ordinance conveniently omits any mention of ministers. This is a pertinent point because at least five members of the state cabinet are known boozers and it is unlikely that they have turned teetotalers overnight.

"Public servant"

Secondly it is yet to be established in a court of law if the term "public servant" includes a minister. The DMK chairman has alleged that some persons behind the widespread illicit distillation racket are closely associated with the chief minister. Even Mr. R. R. Dalavai, a Gandhian and executive secretary of the Addict-free Society considers the measure "premature and not in tune with democratic principles."

A trade union leader says workers who normally drink and pay up fines of Rs. 50 or so when caught will now have to go in for fear of being "framed" through anonymous letters to the police. A social worker has expressed the fear that children might now be increasingly used for bootlegging; he only hopes that they will not be clamped in jail. Contrary to facile government assumptions, women may turn hostile to the measure which puts their bread-winners in jail for indulging in a habit of long standing. This is a pertinent point because at least five members of the state cabinet are known boozers and it is unlikely that they have turned teetotalers overnight.

All equal before law

In a country where all citizens are supposed to be equal before the law, the ordinance promulgated by the governor with the consent of the President, discriminates between ordinary citizens and "public servants". A public servant is liable to double the punishment awarded to an ordinary person for the same offence.

Under the old act, a conviction for drinking invited a maximum punishment of up to six months in jail or Rs. 1,000 fine, or both. More often than not, offenders in this category could get away by coughing up the fine. But with the new amendment, anybody convicted of consuming liquor has to undergo rigorous imprisonment for three months and pay a fine of Rs. 1,000 (for a first offence). The punishment for "a public servant" for first offence is six months in jail and Rs. 1,000 fine. For a second offence, it is six months' jail and Rs. 2,000 fine for anyone other than a public servant. A public servant gets a year in jail. The maximum sentence is rigorous imprisonment and Rs. 3,000 fine.

Greater corruption

The ordinance may also lead to greater corruption in the police force, the enforcing agency. Official witnesses, including police officers, had told the Sadasivam committee last year of widespread collusion between police personnel and prohibition offenders all along the line. The inspector-general of police, Mr. E. L. Stracey, had told the committee that "by diverting the police of prohibition enforcement duty, we can make the police free for other duties and we can eliminate a prolific source of corruption."

The 44,000-strong police force of Tamil Nadu, including armed reserve police, can now be hardly expected to spare time and energy to enforce other equally important laws like those dealing with adulteration of food and drugs, immoral traffic in women and girls, enforcement of weights and measures, and motor vehicles — apart from their primary duty to maintain law and order.

A century ago, Abraham Lincoln said: "Prohibition will work great injury to the cause of temperance. It is a species of intemperance within the bounds of reason, and it attempts to control a man's appetite by legislation and makes a crime out of things that are not crimes."

The first victim of the new law was 58-year-old Penmal of Kodambakkam who was picked up by a police inspector on October 3 while drinking liquor in — of all the places — a cemetery in Triplicane.

He was given three months' rigorous imprisonment by a city magistrate and fined Rs. 100 (instead of the Rs. 1,000 laid down by the ordinance). Penmal will have to put in two more weeks in jail if he fails to pay the fine.

290 m. People Do Not Earn Even Rs. 60 Per Month

NEW DELHI, October 24 (PTI).

Forty-six per cent of the population live below the poverty line in 1977-78, the latest estimates say.

The proportion has been put at 48 per cent for rural areas and 41 per cent for the urban areas.

Citing the figures in address to the national defence college here today, Mr. H. M. Patel, Union finance minister, said it meant that an estimated 290 million people did not get a monthly income of even Rs. 60 at current prices.

Each year, nearly five million people were added to the growing multitude of the poor, he said.

Pointing out that people were poor because they had either no jobs or the jobs they were doing did not pay enough, the finance minister remarked: "We have made striking progress in industrialisation in the past few years. The credit needs of small and marginal farmers would receive priority attention, he promised. Their share of institutional credit — currently one-third of the total — would be raised substantially.

Discussing the new plan and the added role of the public sector, Mr. Patel said this would need vigorous efforts to curb the growth of non-development expenditure, a streamlined system of direct and indirect taxes and a more rational pricing structure for the products of the public sector, including such utilities as power, irrigation and transport.

In spite of such a large resource mobilisation effort, a minimum amount of Rs. 8,000 crores would be required, he said, to meet the requirements to draw down foreign exchange reserves by Rs. 1180 crores. The net inflow of external resources, including the use of reserves, would be less than five per cent of the plan outlay.

PRICE STABILITY

Mr. Patel reported that the results of the policies of short-term management pursued over the last 18 months have been quite encouraging.

"There is a great deal of stability in the price level," he noted. "Agricultural production has done very well and industrial production is also looking up."

Also, there are adequate stocks of most of the essential commodities. The increasing foreign exchange reserves provide the economy with the necessary ability to import those not available within the country.

"The circumstances, therefore, are most propitious to launch a frontal attack on the problems of poverty, unemployment and under-employment," he said.

A Hundred Years Ago

From The Times of India
Friday, October 25, 1878

THE Pioneer says:—A recent number of Truth contained a libel on an Indian officer which will cost it an humble apology, or an action at law in default. Captain Nisbet, the Deputy Commissioner of Simla, was therein gibbeted as having sentenced an elderly Mahomedan to 18 months' imprisonment with hard labor, for posting on the wall of a mosque, a printed copy of a prophecy announcing that the world would come to an end the following year. As a matter of fact, no such case ever occurred, or any case resembling it. Happily Captain Nisbet is a man who is likely to prove equal to his threat.