

MY WORLD

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In some ways, the price of affluence, combined with unbridled consumerism, can be devastating for a country's socio-economic life, especially in such capitals as Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok, two victims of poorly-planned urbanisation.

Having known these two and other cities in Southeast Asia for the past three decades, I treat my recent visits to this region with a mixture of astonishment, fascination and mild shocks. This time, these feelings were particularly strong during our short stay in the capitals of Malaysia and Thailand. While I let my wife, Nancy, sample — gulp would be a more appropriate word — anything between 12 to 15 varieties of local food, often in open-air eating places, I spent a good deal of my time (when I was not tied up with the seminar in Kuala Lumpur) in my hotel room looking out through the window at horrendous traffic jams, the lights from the slow-moving vehicles on the streets below, new high-rise buildings under construction and, then in the Malaysian capital, at the usual sudden evening downpour that, over the years, has not changed its schedule.

It is the change in Kuala Lumpur, rather than one in Bangkok, that takes a recent visitor to Malaysia by surprise, with the loss of a calm serenity being something of a shock to old-time residents. There was a time when South Korea was described in travel books as "The Land of the Morning Calm". We started using the expression for Malaysia, when Seoul lost the distinction in the midst of what a Korean scholar once called, the "ordeal of development".

While many of the state capitals in Malaysia still retain the old flavour, Kuala Lumpur is going the way of Bangkok, almost with a vengeance.

Consumerism thrives on this kind of development, with changes in lifestyles.

If the state of Selangor where Kuala Lumpur is located has been setting up some 40-plus golf courses for the rich and mighty, the sale of car phones and walkie talkies keeps going up by thousands every month. The next thing the Malaysian capital will do is to catch up with the Thai metropolis in the use of mini-TV sets fixed in cars, to fight traffic jams and boredom, the two worst enemies of modern urban life.

When did we last see someone caught in a traffic jam in Kuala Lumpur

reading a book?" asked Anwar Fazal of Malaysia, a long-time fighter against consumerism and now a consultant with the UN Development Programme (UNDP) during a coffee break at the KL seminar.

Finally, we can only guess how much of this "development" has started reaching the lower income groups even in capital cities.

During a traffic jam we were caught in, a taxi driver in Kuala Lumpur gave me a breakdown of his monthly income and expenses, while in another case, a small shop-keeper offered me an idea as to how much more he made every day in 1993 as compared to his earning last year. No, they were far from doing better than in the late eighties, even if they did not feel part of the marginalised section that had been left behind, like the people living in near-slim dwelling places in the suburb of the capital. It will be absurd to take too critical a view of the development in Kuala Lumpur. However, many Malaysians would be happier if it followed the more carefully-planned pattern of Singapore rather than of Bangkok.

What's happening in Thailand, under the cover of development, is undoubtedly much more serious, almost frightening, in such fields as drug trafficking, the spread of Aids, prostitution and corruption.

A UN-sponsored meeting held in Bangkok last week, dealt mainly with growing violence against women throughout the region. Judging by press reports, the new Executive Secretary of ESCAP, Raficuddin Ahmed had much to say about what is specifically currently happening in Thailand. That sociologists are just as concerned, if not more, over the situation as foreign experts and UN officials.

A book in Thai which figures prominently on the best-sellers list is titled, to use its English translation, "Woman, Go and Sell Thyself", a devastating in-

dictment of the government's failure to deal with crimes against women — or, as I would put it, crimes against humanity.

BEFORE leaving for Malaysia, I had mourned the deaths, in this column, of two of my good friends, Paul De Maseener, a Belgian broadcaster, and Dileep Mukerjee, a noted Indian journalist, both of whom had a wide circle of admirers in Kuala Lumpur where they worked, in different fields, for many years.

It was gratifying to know that Malaysian friends of the two did not forget them either. The Asian Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD) where Paul worked from the late seventies to early eighties held a memorial meeting and sent a message of condolence to the Belgian colleague's wife, Carla.

Well-deserved tributes to Dileep came from noted Malaysian journalists. There was a moving piece written on his former boss by Kadir Jasin, now the Group Editor of the New Straits Times, and another by Hardev Kaur, currently the Editor of the Business Times, perhaps the only woman to run a daily financial publication in Southeast Asia. These two were Dileep's favourite and trusted colleagues while he was the Advisory Editor of the Business Times.

Now, on our return to Dhaka, we get more sad news.

Mazhar Ali Khan, the former editor of *The Pakistan Times* of Lahore, one who needs no introduction to the international journalist fraternity, is no more. Suffering from old age ailments, Mazhar Sahib, as we called him, passed away in Lahore only a few weeks ago, according to a letter from M J Zahedi, one of our guest columnists, who knew the Pakistani editor as well as anyone else.

Years ago, I wrote profiles of three distinguished editors I had worked with. Abdus Salam, Altaf Hossain and

Faiz Ahmed Faiz. It was a case of oversight that I did not come round to writing on the fourth one, Mazhar Ali Khan who as the deputy of Faiz, hired me for *The Pakistan Times*, a couple of years before Ayub imposed martial law on Pakistan and, almost as the first move against media, took over the Lahore publication. Both Faiz and Mazhar thus lost their jobs. *The Pakistan Times* much of its prestige and credibility and several journalists, old and young, the professional excitement of working with two of the best writers, the champions of liberalism and humanism, of South Asia.

Mazhar Sahib — and his wife, Tahera — had made their mark on the Indian political scene very early in their lives. I vaguely recall Mahatma Gandhi mentioning about the couple visiting him for a discussion, perhaps in his correspondence with Mohammad Ali Jinnah, in complimentary terms. Decades later, another member of the family came into limelight, Tariq Ali, the British left-wing activist, the son of Mazhar Ali Khan.

It is as my editor that I remember him most, with fondness and respect, a tall imposing figure whose confidence and commitments set the pace of his journalistic career, from the time he made *The Pakistan Times* the best daily in the strife-torn country to the publication of his weekly, *The Viewpoint*, which he founded some three decades later. As far as I know, Mazhar Sahib continued to bring it out almost right until the end.

In some ways, a pioneer in the opinion-making weekly journalism in Pakistan was *Outlook* which was launched from Karachi in the fifties, the brain-child of I H Burney, a highly professional journalist. A soft-spoken, idealistic writer but a lousy businessman, Burney could have easily got a daily paper to edit. Instead, he found his niche in weekly journalism, with a pronounced anti-establishment position that he, like Mazhar Sahib, maintained right until the end, not to mention during the 1971 crackdown on Bangladesh.

It is again Zahedi who gives me the sad news: Burney just died in his sleep at his home in Karachi.

I know, my readers will join me in paying tributes to these two great journalists of Pakistan — two good friends of Bangladesh — Mian Mazhar Ali Khan and I H Burney. May they rest in peace.

Jeanne Moreau, Winner of a "Golden Lion" in Venice

by Pierre Lambert

The Mostra di Venice 92 recently awarded the actress Jeanne Moreau a "Golden Lion" for the whole of her career. It is a fine homage and the first of this kind awarded by the Biennale.



IN Europe she is known as the "Jeanne". In Hollywood, she is "the Voice". This star of the 60s, who played the venomous and superb "Eva" in Losey's film, today accepts the wrinkles of a 60 year old to devote herself, body and soul, to her profession.

Very early on, this daughter of a restaurant owner and a dancer at the "Folies Bergere" revolted against her milieu: "I could not bear the society that I discovered through my adolescent's eyes," she evokes. Her parents wanted her to become a civil servant. But she only dreamt of the theatre and cinema.

At the age of 18, she signed on for drama lessons at the Conservatoire. She found a furnished flat in a building inhabited by prostitute: "I saw brutal, venal passions going on around me. I have memories of grief, tears and violence. At the Conservatoire, I was surrounded by superb girls who had breasts (I myself didn't have any) and who wore silk stockings (I didn't have any)".

On the other hand, Jeanne did have talent. So, after a few small parts in Jean Vilar's "Theater National Populaire", at the age of 20 she was accepted in the Comedie Francaise. Then she worked in boulevard theatre where her name got bigger on the bills. In 1950, she made her screen debut next to personalities such as Fernandel and Gabin. She appeared quite at ease in light comedy and confirmed the impact of her undeniable eroticism.

Fascinating

1957 was her great year. Louis Malle made her the star of "Ascenseur pour l'Echafaud" and especially of "Amants", whose boldness led to a pretty scandal. She thus became a star. The public discovered a fascinating, sensual Jeanne Moreau who made the parts she played ring true, a phenomenon as yet unknown in French cinema.

From then on, she shot to fame, giving the best of herself in difficult parts. She left her mark on films such as "Liaisons Dangereuses" by Vadim (1959), the delightful "Jules et Jim" by Truffaut (1962), and "Viva Maria" by Louis Malle (1965) where she fought for top billing with Brigitte Bardot. In "La mariee etait en noir" (the bride wore black) (Truffaut 1968) she put on a marvellous performance in a poetic and somber role.

For foreign film-makers, and some of the greater too, she acted, in Rome, in "La Notte" by Antonioni (1961), then, in Falstaff (1966) by Orson Welles, and "The last tycoon" by Kazan (1967). She was also the heroine in Bunuel's "Journal d'une Femme de Chambre" (Diary of a chambermaid). Fassbinder's "Querelle" (1982) and Losey's "La Truite" the same year.

They were splendid years for the star who made 3 to 4

films a year, with Rolls-Royces, furs, grand couturiers and love affairs, Jeanne Moreau was beautiful and adulated and she enjoyed life to the full: "It was my nature to live intensely and to always go towards what is new", while always maintaining her freedom, a key word for Jeanne who only allowed herself to be guided by her pleasure.

In 1975, a new Jeanne Moreau appeared, this time as a director. Her film, "Light", tells a story about women and resembles her: elegant, true and full of contained emotion. It was a successful experience which made her want to have another go.

A Dazzling Come-back
Then there came a gap in her career, until her dazzling come-back in the late 80s. She portrayed Jose Pinheiro's "La Femme Fardée", an ageing singer who treats herself to very young men.

Then in 1991, she was once again present at the Cannes Film Festival with two films in which she acted: "Anna Karamazov", shot in Leningrad by a young Uzbek director, Ruzhan Khamdamov, and "Le pas suspendu de la cigogne" by Theo Angelopoulos. These two works gained her laudatory reviews.

She then played a part full of humour and tenderness, that of the "Old lady who walked in the sea" by Laurent

Lucyennan and a very austere part in "Absence", the film directed by Peter Handke, presented in Venice in 1992.

But Jeanne Moreau has, above all, triumphed on stage in the last few years, first of all in "Le recit de la servante Zerline" (the tale of the maid Zerline), based on the work by Herman Broch, which she played everywhere even as far as Japan, and then in "La Celestine", an old proccress thought up by Fernando de Rojas.

At the age of 64, wise serene, Jeanne Moreau has masses of projects. In 1993, she is to play next to Aler Guinness in a British film, "The Veterans". Then she will take the part of a former dancer who has lost the use of her legs in the war, in a Belgian production. She will also portray Brecht's Mother Courage, in a version by Georges Wilson.

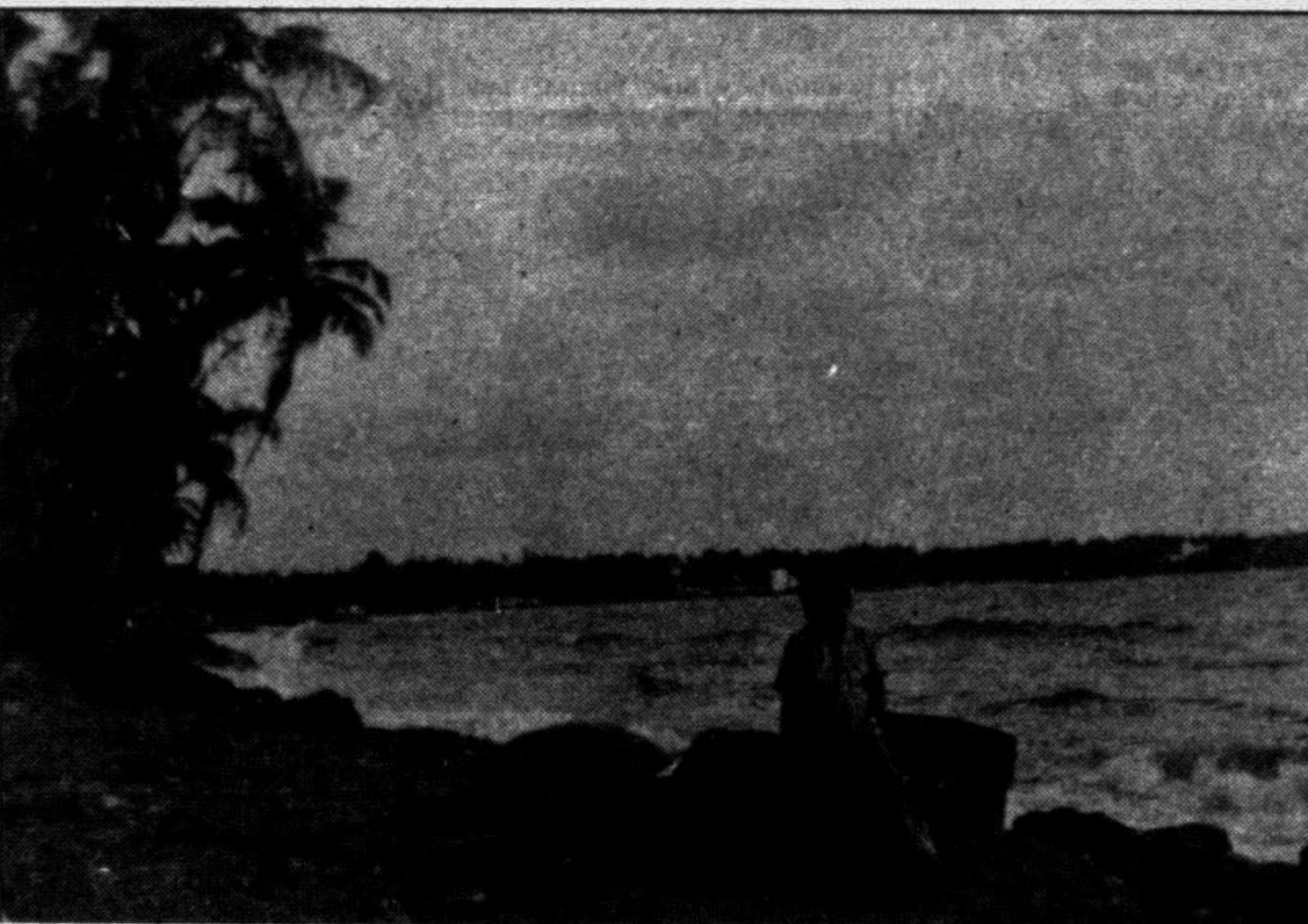
Between films, she will be recording famous texts on cassettes, in that peerless voice of hers. She is also preparing a record of songs, for she sings as well and very prettily at that. It is enough to recall the ballad in "Jules et Jim".

Last but not least, in 1993, the star is once more to go behind the camera to direct her second film. It will tell an intimate story, of the kind that she is fond of, and it will be called "A l'amitie" (to friendship).

Will Eco-tourism Trample Sri Lanka's Remote Landscapes?

Mallika Wanigasundara writes from Colombo

Sri Lanka expects 614,000 tourists in 1993 and 850,000 by 1995. Because infrastructure will bulge and probably burst, environmentalists do not like it at all.



TOURISM, in the dumps since the 1983 racial riots, has started to perk up.

The race riots were followed by the continuing ethnic conflict in the northeast, bomb blasts in Colombo, the Janata Vimukthi Peramuna rebellion, the Gulf War, not to mention recession in the West.

But the Tourist Board, tourist operators, the hotel industry, Air Lanka and a range of dealers in gems and jewellery, batiks, garments, handicrafts — are having their fingers crossed since the upturn in 1990.

Some 100,000 persons are employed in the industry. When tourism goes into the doldrums it means so many jobs idled.

At the moment it looks like a good winter season with heavy hotel bookings. The "snow birds" are flying in mainly on Air Lanka, a bonus for the national carrier. The tourist trade, in fact, classifies the present season as buoyant.

From the dismal drop of arrivals since 1983, figures picked up to 297,000 in 1990. In 1992, over 400,000 visitors were expected, perhaps topping the record 407,230 tourist arrivals in 1982.

Earnings from tourism topped 6,400 million rupees (US\$155 million) in 1991. Germans like to holiday in Sri Lanka and form 21 per cent of arrivals; France 11 per cent; United Kingdom, 8 per cent; Japan 8 per cent, and the Netherlands, 4 per cent.

There has been bad publicity for Sri Lanka but visitors continue to come. Rainer Krack, who is one of them is here on a working holiday. He writes travel guides and thinks it worthwhile writing a guide on Sri Lanka for Germans. He has already written 11 other guides, mostly on Asian countries like Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia and Nepal.

Was he not afraid of bombs, which still go off occasionally even in Colombo? No, he said.

Bombs go off in other parts of the world, too, — in London, Manila, Rome, in airports and airplanes. If you bothered about bombs all the time, you would have to stay at home, said Mr Krack. The south is quiet, and it is a lazy cheap holiday. The hotels and restaurants are good and transportation is practical, he added.

Joern Dreckman and his mother Alice, also from Germany, were in Sri Lanka for two weeks in October. Mrs Dreckman was not affected by the war in the north. You hear a lot of exaggerated stories back home, said Joern, but when you come here it is quite different. You hear of the brutalities of the neo-Nazis in

Germany, but they form only a minuscule number. All Germans are not like that, he explained. So, why bother?

Dickmann Rainer and his Mexican wife Consuelo had heard the stories, but came, saw and were conquered by the sea, sand, sunshine and the friendly people.

The Ceylon Tourist Board projections expect around 614,000 tourists in 1993, and 850,000 by 1995. Other things being equal of course. This means that infrastructure will bulge at the seams and probably burst.

The present 9,103 hotel rooms could accommodate half a million tourists, but if half a million more are expected by

2000, then the number of rooms would have to be upped to 25,000.

Local entrepreneurs would hardly be able to carry this massive investment of 20 billion rupees. Collaboration with foreign businessmen is essential, reminds the Minister of Tourism and Rural Industrial Development, S. Thondaman. If we do not make the investments, he says, tourists will gravitate towards other destinations in Asia.

Nihal Perera, Chairman of the Travel Agents Association, says that diverse resorts have to be provided and this should include golf courses, water sports, the upgrading of existing hotels and the building of new ones.

About 50 new hotel projects are in the pipeline, but many of the older hotels have to be renovated and refurbished. During the recent gloomy spell, none of this could be undertaken by the hotel industry which faced grave financial problems.

The Ceylon Tourist Board has drawn up a master plan for the expansion of the industry. It envisages new developments such as the setting up of beach marines, facilities for cultural and nature visits, jungle jaunts and specialised holidays.

An international airport is to be built at Hingurakgoda in the north. The marine attractions of Trincomalee and the lagoon of Negombo are to be developed. So also Galle with its seaside spots, the old Dutch fort and buildings.

Environmentalists do not like it at all, particularly the proposal to develop little known areas which are said to be underexploited. This could mean an invasion of untouched, tranquil areas by the

stamp of tourism and the commercialism that goes with it.

Says Thilo Hoffmann, a former President of the Wild Life and Nature Protection Society: "Unless tourism is developed in an orderly and regulated manner, great damage can be done. Great stress would be placed on the environment and the landscape could suffer."

He says this has already happened in Nuwara Eliya, a salubrious hill resort, where unplanned development, tourist activities and entrepreneurial projects have blemished a once beautiful town.

The "eco-tourism" buzzword, favoured even by the World Bank, could be the bane of Sri Lanka, with tourists invading pristine, undisturbed and remote landscapes, stamping on the grass, disturbing animals and tourist buses polluting the air.

Idyllic spots could become a thing of the past with entrepreneurs cutting down

WRITE TO MITA

Recently I have been getting many queries from young couples who seem to be very confused. They cannot understand how, in such a short span of time, their marriage has become so complicated. Each couple, depending on their personalities, are coping with it in different ways. Some with anger, some with understanding and some with a lot of pain. One such couple has approached me for advice. I would like to share their problem with my readers so that we can all reflect on it. Rima and Rafique have been married for three years, the first year of which was spent abroad. It was a love marriage in which the parents of both sides gave their consent. Both are young, highly educated with very promising careers. They live with the husband's family in a joint family system. They come from very well off families.

The Problem

RAFIQUE'S SIDE: My wife is too attached to her family. She insists that we spend at least three nights a week at her parents' place. It is not only her immediate family, but also her uncles, aunts, cousins etc. Even though she wants me to be a part of the family, she expects me to be always at my best behavior. I am ready to live separately and have our own home if that means we will be able to be together.

Major Complaint: We don't have time for each other. We are always getting involved in some social obligation or the other. She is not sensitive to my needs.

RINA'S SIDE: He still has not accepted my family as a part of his family. He resents that I am so close to my parents. He fails to understand that with a career like mine, I cannot run a household on my own given my busy schedule. The only reason I can manage to accomplish everything is because of the support I get from my family as well as his. I grew up in a very close family system which included the aunts, uncles and cousins. He should understand that just because I am married I should not have to give everybody up. My parents will be hurt if I don't spend time with them but my husband does not understand this.

Major Complaint: He is not understanding about my commitments to my family and friends.

Advice: First, these are not very serious issues by themselves. However they can get serious if allowed to. Disproportionate family obligations have ruined many marriages and have brought havoc in the lives of countless others. Unlike the above example, the usual case is that the son is too attached to his parents which creates problems and the wife protests. In our culture, it is always the girl who is expected to adjust with her in-laws and become a little distant from her parents. However, among modern, young couples there is no need to do either. Both must learn to strike a balance between what is considered family obligations and personal time. One can be very attached to the family without jeopardizing the primary relationship; which is the

relationship between husband and wife. The priorities should be very straight and right, there should be no compromise on this issue.

The first phase of marriage after the initial honeymoon period, is spent in adjusting to one another, the family, new job etc etc. This is the time to build the relationship on a very solid and firm foundation. Couples need to feel reassured about the commitment they have for each other. Therefore, this is the time when couples need a lot of time together.

Rafique is advised to treat Rima's attachment to her parents and her extended family with more sensitivity. You might be complying with the wishes of your wife by spending three nights a week at her parents house. But perhaps something in your attitude might be upsetting her. Try not to make her feel guilty for wanting to be with her family but at the same time make her understand the need for you both to spend more time together.

Rima is advised to get her priorities right. Please remember that ultimately no one matters more than your own family, that means your husband and your children. Parents are the most dearest and most precious people in the world but even they have to take a back seat to your nuclear family. Another thing is, having a separate home is a part of growing up, part of adulthood. You will always be busy with your work, career, family friends etc, but being independent and on your own will have to form a part of that schedule. There will never be a time when you will be able to say to yourself, "Ah, I have organised everything, now I can have a home of my own." Think about it, there is no need to rush for.

To Both: Please discuss this among yourself. Don't shut each other out. Communication is the only way you can solve this. You have a wonderful life in front of you, please don't spoil it by being stubborn and inflexible.

— Shaheen Anam

AT THE RECITAL



Sketch by Jeremy Trayner