

The Crisis of Governance in South Asia

SD Muni

THE chaos and conflict hidden atmosphere that prevails in South Asia is, in a very important way, a symptom of the deepening crisis of governance in almost every country of the region. The degree and extent of this crisis may differ from country to country but there are remarkable similarities in the ways in which the State and the society are interacting with each other in these countries. At a broader level, the State in South Asia seems to be incapable of coping with all the varied and multiple pressures of growing popular expectations and aspirations at home and the rapid and unprecedented transformations taking place in the strategic, economic and ideological dimensions of international relations. More specifically, democratic upsurge and its consequent unleashing of ethnic, religious and sectarian extremities in the region, the process of institutional and ideological deconstruction and reconstruction, the dilemmas of defining and executing a developmental agenda, the recurring crises of survival confronting the ruling regimes and the serious erosion in the law enforcing machineries have all combined to make South Asia look like a place overrun by unending turbulence.

It is both an intellectual and a policy challenge to understand this crisis of governance in one of the world's most populous regions, and to conceive the ways and means to respond to this crisis so as to resolve, or at least manage it. These volumes, supported by a Ford Foundation grant, make a bold and courageous attempt towards meeting this challenge. There are four different areas of governance that these volumes focus attention on: namely, political changes and their consequences for the institutions of governance; questions of economic growth and development;

rise of ethnic, religious and sectarian identities and the resulting spectre of violence and insurgencies; and foreign policy.

In the realm of political changes, the most significant recent development in South Asia has been the reemergence of democracy in Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan. Baral and Sobhan discuss transition to democracy respectively in Nepal and Bangladesh. Both of them clinically analyse the degeneration of previous systems and the rise of the forces of change which succeeded due to spontaneous mass movements and the appropriate international support in both the cases. In the internal dynamics of political changes in Nepal and Bangladesh, a critical role was played by the professional groups of the rising middle classes and the hitherto contenders and rivals in the struggle for power, the political parties. While the professional groups asserted a powerful influence for political change and mobilised the masses on their own, even without going through the party structures, the rival political parties, the Nepali Congress and the United Marxist Leninist in Nepal and the Awami League and the Bangladesh National Party in Bangladesh, joined hands on the single issue of throwing the discredited authoritarian political system out. Both Baral and Sobhan have taken note of these two factors which could be analysed in greater depth and details. Further, in case of Bangladesh, it was indeed unique, as Sobhan mentions, that the army withdrew its support from the Ershad regime at the critical moment when political pressure had built up against him but we are not told as to why this happened. Did Ershad do anything to alienate the army, its most powerful constituency of support, or did the army find it prudent to stay away from the internal struggle for power, which was not the expected course? In Nepal's case, the King became panicky with the rise of

revolt but emerged eventually as a better tactician and bargainer than Ershad in Bangladesh. How could that become possible? The King in Nepal was also caught in the rival pressures within the Royal Palace and the associated vested interests which Baral skips in his narrative.

A proper understanding of the party alliances and the nature of the collapse of the authoritarian regimes in Nepal and Bangladesh is necessary because these issues have become relevant once again, soon after the victory of the democratic struggle. The alliance between the mainstream parties forged during the final phase of the struggle for democracy has fallen apart in both the countries. In Nepal, the conflict between the opposition UML and the ruling Nepali Congress has sharpened so much as to embolden the protagonists of the discredited and overthrown panchayat system. As a result the monarchy as an institution and the King as a political force have gained a good deal of the lost ground, leading to the apprehensions that there may be an attempt on the King's part to stage a comeback. In Bangladesh, the army continues to wield quiet but powerful political influence and the real intentions of the army still remain unclear as to what political role it envisages for itself. The problem is that the political parties and individual leaders and aspirants, in their respective struggles for power, do not hesitate to seek the support of the discredited forces.

Akmal and Mushahid do not present a systematic analysis of transition to democracy from military rule, maybe because a real transition has not yet taken place. The army continues to occupy the central position in the core of the power structure, which has democratised only to the extent that the army has allowed it to do so. The coming to power of the elected governments, first of Benazir and then of Nawaz Sharif

Pakistan: Problems of Governance

by Akmal Hussain and Mushahid Hussain
pp. 166, Rs. 175.00

Bangladesh: Problems of Governance

by Rehman Sobhan
pp. 295, Rs. 300.00

Nepal: Problems of Governance

by Lok Raj Baral
pp. 241, Rs. 250.00

Sri Lanka: Problems of Governance

by K M de Silva
pp. 425, Rs. 400.00

Konark Publishers, Delhi, 1993, under the auspices of Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi

By arrangement with *The Book Review*

were the examples of the co-optation of the political parties into the power structure by the army. As such this co-optation was on the terms dictated by the army and the parties remained in power only, at the pleasure of the army. The authors of the Pakistan volume rightly underline this aspect of transition (p. 51, p. 69, p. 100, p. 102). However, the fact that Pakistan has also undergone a democratic upsurge cannot be denied. The popular enthusiasm kicked up by Benazir's return to Pakistan in 1987-88, and by the elections that followed General Zia's accidental death, which brought Benazir to power were very significant manifestations of change in Pakistan's political landscape. That is why the military dominated establishment had to accept Benazir even as a "temporary intruder into the corridors of power" (p. 96). During the recent changes, it is true that the army forced both the President and the Prime Minister to resign and

installed a handpicked caretaker regime to see through the elections of October 93, ignoring completely the prevailing constitutional provisions, but one must not overlook that the army could not itself take over power as on earlier occasions. Democratic legitimacy of governance has been accepted by the army, perhaps forced on it, and that is a very big change in itself. It remains to be seen as to how the outcome of the October 1993 elections, being held under the patronage and watchful eyes of the military will redefine power equations between the army and the popular representatives. The authors, however, assert that the new realities will not permit total transfer of power to the civilian rule (p. 51).

The authors of the Pakistan volume have done well to devote considerable attention to the army which has ruled Pakistan directly for more than twenty-four years since its birth in 1947. They have ably analysed its corpo-

rate character, its strong American connection, its self-image as an indigenous Islamic force, its changing equations with the civil service, its meddling in party affairs to sustain itself in power and inhibit the growth of a healthy party system and its aspirations for a constitutional role à la the Turkish model. One wonders as to what stopped them from analysing the changing social bases of the officer core and the rank and file in the Pakistani military. It would have added to the comparative value of the volume if there was a similar insightful discussion of the army in Bangladesh which not only drew its legacy from the Pakistani heritage but also played a dominant and decisive role in ruling Bangladesh and setting the parameters of its future governance.

Among the institutions of governance, the CPR volumes provide a detailed and analytical discussion on political parties in all the four countries covered. There is a considerable and justified lament on the weak, eroded and ideologically disoriented party structures in South Asia. While in Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan, the parties were not allowed to grow naturally and build up their respective democratic traditions, in the case of Sri Lanka, Professor de Silva blames the fragmentation and degeneration of the party structure on the rise of the vernacular power elites that generated incompatibility with the Westminster and pluralist institutions and values. There is an undercurrent of harsher judgement against the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) for this in the author's presentation, but one cannot spare the United

National Party (UNP) which not only resorted to communal and ethnic mobilisation but also innovated authoritarian and undemocratic processes and institutions to perpetuate themselves in power. Radhika's restrained but insightful contributions (chapters 5 and 6) on the evolution and functioning of Sri Lanka's constitution bring this out clearly. Her balanced critique of the Executive Presidency and proportional representation system, both introduced by the UNP, which is shared by the editor of the volume, clearly underline how authoritarian the ruling executive and the party bosses in Sri Lanka have been (pp. 136-140). The constitutional system has not been dealt with in similar details in other volumes. Baral mentions the process of drafting of the new Constitution but a projection of how it will influence the evolution of democratic traditions in Nepal was also in order.

Other institutions of governance have generally been ignored in the CPR Volumes, with the exception of bureaucracy. While the Sri Lanka study devotes a full chapter to bureaucracy, Sobhan confines his observations to the developmental role of the bureaucracy, which he rightly thinks has been negative, and Akmal and Mushahid map out the changing power equations between the army and the bureaucracy wherein the latter had lost much of its influence and clout to the former after the initial few years of independence. Professor de Silva has highlighted the manner in which the British bureaucratic system inherited by Sri Lanka was distorted by the politicisation and shifting ethnic composition of the civil ser-

vice. Bureaucratic recruitments and promotions became a prerogative of the politicians and the members of parliament who also increasingly intervened in the developmental decisions at the district and village levels that were to be handled otherwise by the civil servants. In turn the civil servants divided their loyalties between the contending political parties and the influential party bosses (pp. 88-94).

The question of politicisation of bureaucracy is relevant in all other countries in South Asia and should have been dealt with in each of the volumes. Similarly, the role of judiciary and public opinion/media that find a brief mention in the Pakistan volume should also have been covered in case of other countries since these are important institutions in governance and democratic sustenance in modern societies.

In the field of development, the tragedy of the State in South Asia is that it has been privatized. The rulers (politicians, military generals and officers and the civil servants) have shamelessly used the state apparatus and their privileges and patronage to build personal and family fortunes. As a result, development of the society and the well-being of the common man have suffered in all the countries of the region. The major thrust of Sobhan's study of Bangladesh is on this aspect, and he has done so consciously, because for him, governance basically is a "reflection of the role of the state in giving direction to the development of the country..." (p. 1).

To be continued

Foccart Parle

Introducing a Book on the Activities of French Secret Service in Africa

Professor M Maniruzzaman Miah

FROM time to time the world has come to know the inside stories of the CIA. The insiders of the Agency themselves have revealed the thrilling tales of coups in the developing countries during the cold-war era. That is perhaps the beauty of a democratic society. In sharp contrast to that we have very little intelligence from the men in the secret service of the other superpower of that era, France, an important colonial power till the fifties, had its own secret service too active enough during the colonial period and also after that. From published memoirs of important personalities in politics and bureaucracy one comes to know about this aspect of French colonial administration and also of this country's disposition towards her former colonies after decolonization. One such book "In the Secrets of Princes" in the narration of Alexandre de Mar-enches, one-time French secret-service chief revealed many espionage secrets. The last one in the series is "Foccart Parle" or Foccart speaks. This gentleman actively took part in the French resistance movement during the war, became a member of de Gaulle's political party right from its inception in 1947, was one of the general's close aids during his political ascendancy, accompanied him on several of his voyages abroad and earned his confidence to become the Secretary General of the Presidency for African and Madagascar affairs, an euphemism for Secret Service Chief of aid and reporting to the President. Foccart held the office for two decades during the Presidency of General de Gaulle and Pompidou. The book, Foccart Parle, is a vivid account of events leading to decolonization in the French African colonies and how France changed the actors in the political stage of her former colonies from time to time. My intention here is to give a summarised version as far as possible of this 500-page volume without any comment or value-judgment as such, for our intelligentia who, because of language

problem, won't have easy access to this otherwise revealing publication. The first chapter of the book is an account of Foccart himself, his role in the resistance movement and his association with de Gaulle's newly-created party, RPF. The second is about the general's party and his close associates during the early years. Then comes de Gaulle's odyssey through Africa and colonies elsewhere and making contacts with important personalities in the empire. The fourth one is about political crisis in France and de Gaulle's ascendancy and assumption of office as President of the Administrative Council. But all these are public knowledge.

For outsiders, more interesting facts, anecdotes or hitherto unknown stories start coming from the second third of the book. Here we find de Gaulle touring African colonies to assess local leaders' opinion as to what would be the best possible link between metropolitan France and her overseas possessions after decolonization. Much to our surprise we find that the African elite imbued though they were with nationalist fervour, were not psychologically prepared to sever their umbilical chord with Paris. Thus we find Senegal's Senghor propounding his idea of federation of independent states of Africa finally confederated with France. Cote d'Ivoire's Houphouet Boigny holds on to his belief about independent states each one directly confederated with the colonizing country. Boigny's confederation plan not having been accepted we find him bemoaning much to his chagrin. "I waited for my fiancée with a bouquet in my hand but she didn't keep the tryst. The flowers wilted." We also come across Leon Mba of Gabon wondering why at all independence was necessary and whether Gabon could not remain as a district (department) of France. When he was told that it was not to be it came as a big whack for him. And he set himself concocting a national flag with the French tri-color studded on one of

its corners. All this was music to the general's ears. However, there was also Sekou Toure of Guinea. This Marxist leader with his flowing African boubou on strutted majestically in the hall of Conakry and in the course of his speech said, "We want full independence... We prefer poverty in freedom to affluence without dignity." While the great assembly hall roared into thunderous applause from his Guinean followers it came as a bolt from the blue for General de Gaulle whose immediate reaction was "I won't dine with that bloke." The general was so furious that the next morning Sekou Toure, who was earlier scheduled to accompany him in his plane to Dakar was left behind. And to a suggestion from Foccart's interviewer the spook-master admits that later there were attempts at "destabilization in Guinea".

That apart, vivid accounts of coups and related events abound in the book which make it fascinating coming as they are from one who remote-controlled some of these. Thus in 1963 after Abbe Youlou, Francophile President of Congo was overthrown by a coup while Foccart was away on a fishing trip General de Gaulle was angry that in the absence of the spy-chief he could not get a correct picture of the situation there and therefore the French could not intervene. Youlou was however helped to flee the country to safety by a French mercenary. One also learns about the role of the French parachute brigade restoring Gabonese President M'ba, the blue-eyed boy of the French, to power after being overthrown by one Aubame in 1964. Before the intervention however the Gabonese ambassador in Paris was made to write a request as if coming from M'ba for French military intervention thus justifying the French action in the diamond and uranium rich central African Republic of France. David Dacko, the third man in the regime was installed to power by the French after the mysterious death of Abbe Boganda in the plane crash (1959) bypassing

the second man in the regime. After a series of coup-d-etats Dacko was reinstated with the help of the French army a second time in 1979. We also learn about Felix Moumie of Cameroon, whose party demanded immediate independence from French rule, being executed while in exile in Geneva by an agent of French Secret Service although Foccart remains reticent as to under whose orders or according to whose decision. Also the Secretary General of Moumie's party Ruben Um Nyobe was killed by French troops. Sylvanus Olympio an LSE-trained economist elected by a large majority of Togolese, who led his country to independence and became its President was the first head of state to have been overthrown and killed by a military coup and replaced by one Nicolas Grunitsky, who returned from his exile in Paris to take over the reign of government. Foccart mentions however that the whole episode resulted from a mutiny by a section of the army and nothing was premeditated by anybody and much less so by the French. He admits though that Olympio was never as cordial with him as Grunitsky, that he (Olympio) refused to integrate the armed forces men coming from the original French army and that he (Foccart) used his influence to convince General de Gaulle and the French Prime Minister that France should support Grunitsky.

No less interesting are the various anecdotes which Foccart recounts. Among them we may choose a few. Bokassa, a corporal in the French army during the colonial days, came on an official visit to France as President of Central African Republic. While talking to de Gaulle he was addressing the French President as "Father". Flabbergasted the general told him that he should address him either as "Mr. President" or as "My General" since he was in the French army. Having said this the general rather as a reflex asked whether he understood it. Bokassa promptly

replied, "yes, my father". General de Gaulle was amused. M'Bao who could never reconcile with the fact that after independence his country would no longer remain a part of France or that he would have to have a separate flag also distinct from the tri-colour used to ask for counsel in almost every matter from the French ambassador. The ambassador, who was a career diplomat knew where to draw the line and would therefore stop short of interfering with the internal affairs of Gabon. In great desperation the Gabonese President asked Foccart to replace the ambassador by someone who would be a "colonial". Needless to mention the ambassador was recalled. One is also amused to find how momentous decisions which may make or mar the life of the people of a country are taken rather frivolously by politicians.

Thus we read that at the time when future course of things was still being discussed between African regional entities, Maurice Yameogo, head of government of upper Volta (now Burkina Faso) as an instant reaction to damaging the stand of his car pennant, which he thought was done by the French military men said "If it is like this, I demand immediate independence" which set off a chain reaction in other countries. That was the beginning of the end of French colonial rule. Foccart also tells us that Omar Bongo had to pass a test at an interview with General de Gaulle before the dying President of Gabon M'Bao and Foccart decided on his succession after M'Bao's death. These and other stories add a lot of savor to the otherwise absorbing book. The readability of the book has been enhanced more by its conversational style of presentation between Philippe Gaillard, a journalist and Foccart himself. No wonder it has remained on the best sellers list since its publication by Fayard early this year.

The writer is a former vice-chancellor of Dhaka University and Bangladesh Ambassador to Senegal.

fitness royale
with rani padamsee

TENSION is something that we have all experienced at some time or another, and it can manifest itself in all sorts of ways. We can become physically run down; prone to headaches and stomach upsets, become easily fatigued, and either over- or under-eat. We also tend to get short-tempered, nervous and irritable when we are tense and fly off the handle for the least little thing. Our brain too becomes less efficient and unable to cope with normal day-to-day problems, causing us to act impulsively rather than rationally.

There are varying degrees of tension but they all have detrimental effect on both mind and body. By exercising regularly, you will eliminate that tension and also the symptoms that go with it.

One usually feels tension most acutely in the neck, and at the top of the back between the shoulder blades. Rolling your neck, circling the shoulders during warm-ups would help a lot. You can easily do these in between your works when you really need it.

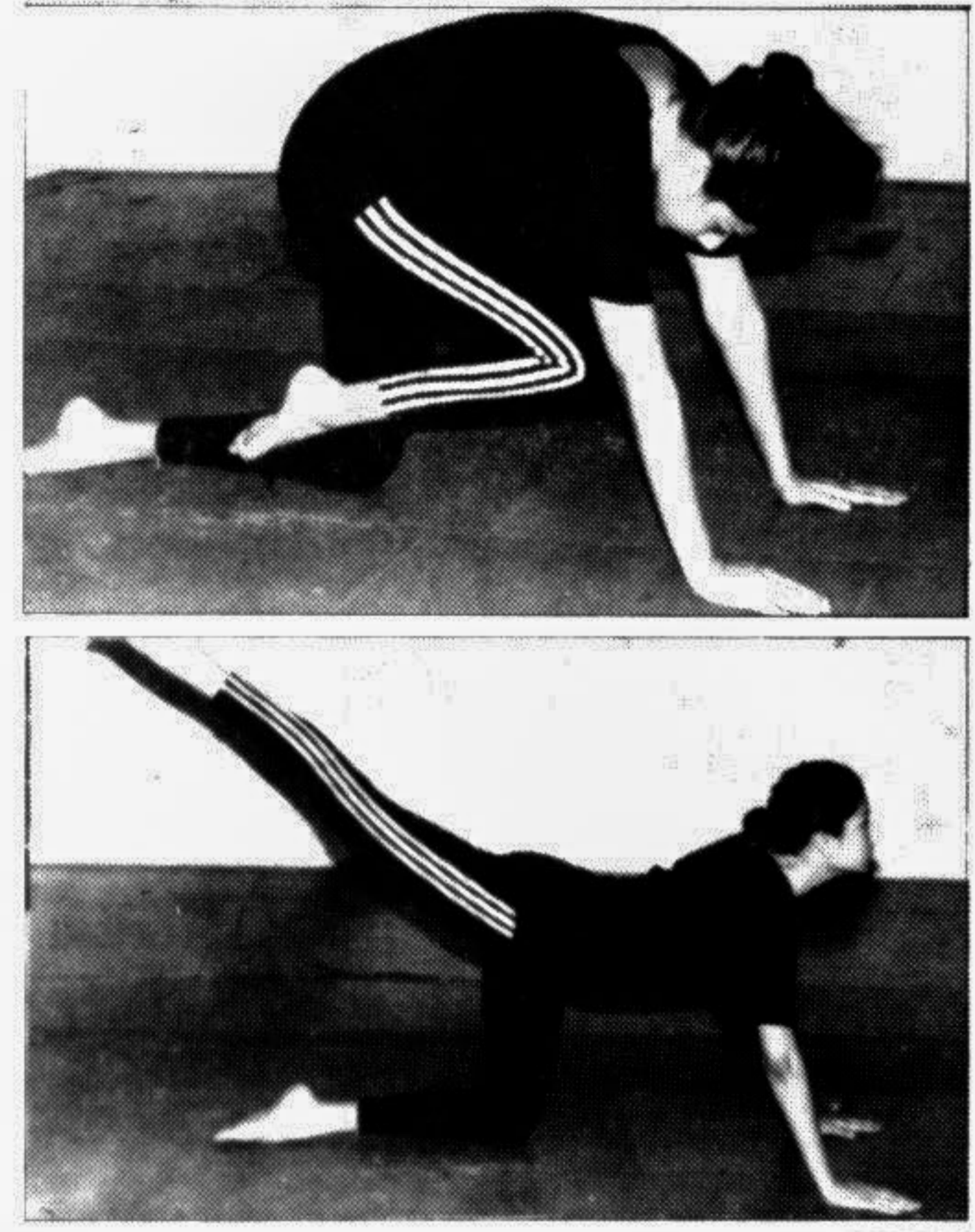
Avoid coffee, tea, cigarettes and sweets. These things give an instant boost but eventually you get addicted to them. The affect lasts only for a short time and you need to keep having them just like a drug addict, for feeling good. Natural high is the best, keeping good

health, exercising regularly will keep the smile on your face forever.

[1] Get in position on the hands and knees. (Pic 1) Still kneeling arch back up bring on knee towards the forehead while breathing out. Now kick and lift it back and out straight while breathing

in. Repeat 10 times initially and increase as you progress.

[2] As in picture 2 from here you can do another version of exercise. Keeping leg stretched out behind, toes pointed raise it up ten times. Repeat, 10 times with toes flexed. Repeat sequence other side.



CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS**
- 1 Retiree one
 - 5 Ararat's org
 - 8 Padlocked lastener
 - 12 Start from scratch
 - 13 Cubs libre ingredient
 - 14 Aware of
 - 15 Bane
 - 17 Picnic hamper
 - 18 Rowdy disorder
 - 19 Esurient
 - 21 Lanka
 - 22 Copycat
 - 23 Mad money hiding place
 - 26 Excellent, in today's lingo
 - 28 Fixed gaze
 - 31 Strike hard
 - 33 Knock
 - 35 Gloating
 - 36 Don
 - 38 Financier Charles Henry
 - 40 Portion abbr.
 - 41 Bovine youngster
 - 43 Calendar pp.
 - 45 Unbroken mustang
 - 47 Vets' association base
 - 51 Fontanne's partner
 - 52 Assayed
 - 54 Shoppe description
 - 55 "Hiroshima - Amour"
 - 56 Enticement
 - 57 Rosary
 - 58 Box-office letters
 - 59 Harpy's dera' rivals
 - 61 Small liquor
 - 1 Prepare for
 - tomorrow's 16 Kine group exam
 - 2 Singer Home
 - 3 "An apple
 - 4 Butterflies cousins
 - 5 Head of state
 - 6 Abner's partner on old radio
 - 7 Nebraska city
 - 8 Nest occupants
 - 9 Word game
 - 10 Recipe word
 - 11 Small liquor
 - 16 Kine group exam
 - 20 Boom times
 - 23 Small shot
 - 24 Arise
 - 25 South American boa
 - 27 Craze
 - 29 Regret
 - 30 Easter emblem
 - 32 Given
 - 34 - Beach, Fla.
 - 37 RN's dispensation
 - 39 Contents of three bags
 - 42 Becomes frothy
 - 44 Elsa Klensch's subject
 - 45 Monster in a McQueen movie
 - 46 Hold the scepter
 - 48 Blue (Sp.)
 - 49 Actress Garr
 - 50 Poetic Inbutes
 - 53 Postal Creed word

CRYPTOQUIP

LZFE JRRS BR BAYATWDE

T F H B W D W H X Y A S W
J W X F ? E Z W L W B W H ' X
B A T W X E

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: BIG SIGN ON MUSIC STORE READS "COME IN, CHOOSE A DRUM, THEN BEAT IT"

Today's Cryptoquip clue: B equals D

The Cryptoquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.