

temptation to report what one's political master wishes to hear.

**India impressions**

If Pakistan is rich in imagery and color, India is a veritable assault on the senses. From the elephant passing the front gate on respectable Aurangzeb Road to the monkeys eating fruit in front of Parliament to the bear on a chain ambling through the park together with Sunday strollers, India provides a rapidly rotating kaleidoscope of impressions. One is repelled: the repugnant smells, the

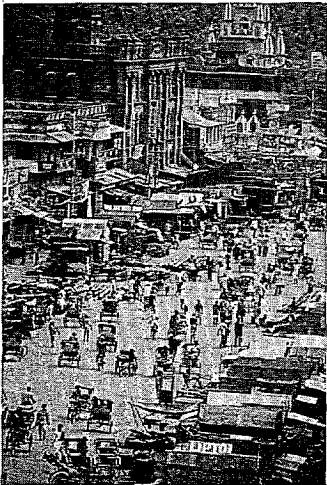
voluntary welfare organizations, evidently a product of the Hindu ethos; the joy of life and bright festivals; the similarly miraculous ability of democracy, even if flawed, to survive in this churning cauldron of Third World humanity.

India has many affinities to Pakistan. But they tend to be historical in nature, to stem from common traditions. Today the observer is more likely to be struck by the differences than by the similarities. To the extent that militant Islam increases its hold, the paths are likely to diverge more sharply with each passing year.

**Comparing the two**

In most comparisons made by Western diplomatic observers, Pakistan is bound to suffer. India's females are making steady if painfully slow strides ahead while in Pakistan their role has been severely circumscribed. Not only is India a country where a woman could reign as elected head, but also a place where Phoolan Devi could capture the nation's imagination as bandit queen, as she did in the early Eighties. At the same time, intriguing in this context are the emergence on the scene of Benazir Bhutto in Pakistan and the implications of her rise for the fundamentalists on the one hand and Pakistani womanhood on the other. In economic terms, one is struck by the depth of home-grown Indian industry as compared to Pakistan's

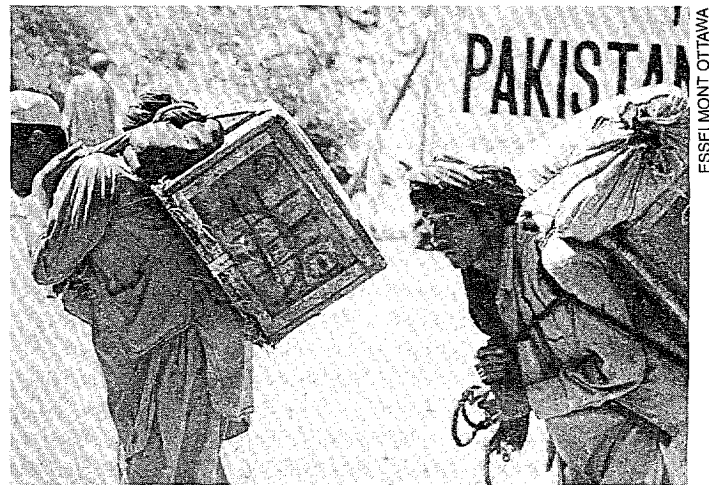
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India scenes

bone dropped by a passing vulture and representing the earthly remains of goodness knows what creature, the morning newspaper whose front page tales of riot and mayhem suggest that Armageddon has come, the torching of brides in Delhi at the rate of one-a-day, the decomposing body stranded on a sandbar in the river Ganges, the sudden brutal violence in which an unwary passerby is bludgeoned to death by the mob.

But one is also attracted: the near miraculous harmony among widely differing racial, religious and ethnic groups which, even if unremarked in the international media, is truly remarkable nonetheless; the plethora of



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Pakistan scenes