

All eyes on India

WHILE the turbulent giant that is India rests after the elections, its neighbour East Pakistan is in flames and Ceylon faces an insurgency by Che Guevara terrorists. The cities of East Pakistan are being bombed by the Pakistan Air Force while the Ceylon Air Force is bombing buildings where terrorists have gathered with arms and ammunition. One has to be grateful that India with its many problems has not gone to such lengths.

We may not realise it but the disturbances around India are focusing the attention of the world on us. Will India be a stabilising force in South Asia and will it bring peace and stability to the areas around it? Whether India will be stable or not depends substantially on whether Mrs Gandhi's war against poverty within a democratic framework succeeds or not. The impression one gets from New Delhi is that she is settling down to tune up the administration and to initiate fresh legislation.

Mrs Gandhi's prime problem is unemployment. She will need the co-operation of industrialists to provide employment and the employers will need Mrs Gandhi and a strong Centre to create conditions of law and order without which industry and trade cannot flourish. Industrialists who at their annual meetings of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry invariably clashed with the Prime Minister and the Government's industrial policies, have decided to declare

a truce and have called upon their members for a "social motivation beyond profits". This is a commendable move.

To prevent youth from taking to the path of violence, HIMMAT understands that the new Minister for Education, Mr Siddhartha Shankar Ray, has interesting schemes that he will shortly make public.

There is reason to believe that the new Government is keen to deal with some of the outstanding problems including those of India's North-East. In the hills of Assam trouble was foreseen three years ago, but thanks to the statesmanship of Mrs Gandhi, Mr Chavan and the leaders of the Plains and the Hill peoples, an orderly process gave birth to Meghalaya. Today the borders of Meghalaya skirt a very large area of East Pakistan. With the eruption of East Bengal it could have been India's Achilles' heel. Instead it is an anchor for India. A new wind is also meant to blow over Mizo Hills, Nagaland and West Bengal in the coming months.

It is in the interest of the super-powers and the western nations to give every assistance possible for the Indian democratic experiment to succeed.

The responsibility for creating a stable and progressive India is a challenge for us all. The world expects it not only for India's sake but for that of her neighbours whose present sufferings cause anguish to the entire world.

Calley court martial

THE COURT MARTIAL of William Calley emblazons the strength and weakness of America to the world. America's strength is that at the height of a bloody war, officers and sergeants accused of atrocities are brought to public trial. Would Pakistan do this? Would Israel or Egypt or any other nation engaged in a life and death struggle?

The weakness of America is shown by the killings of themselves and by the shout that has risen in the country against the life sentence given Calley by the military court. Leaving aside the pros and cons of the Calley verdict the turmoil into which it has thrown a nation of 200 million people is most disturbing.

If America could now steady herself, ensure that justice is done in the case of the My Lai killings and then go on to face what is missing in her conduct of the Vietnam operations—she could rise a stronger nation. Something is missing in America—a venture to safeguard Vietnam's liberty has become an operation

which apparently has scant respect for Vietnamese lives and is dehumanising young Americans.

But the overriding weakness of America was her confident entry into a war, relying on armed strength alone, against forces who not only had armed power but were also sustained by an ideological passion. That passion did not die with Ho Chi Minh. It is alive in Indochina, and in the Middle East, Latin America, Africa and Europe. America herself is in need of an alternative ideology and once Americans realise this and move towards it, affairs inside their country and their affairs overseas could take a radical turn for the better.

Imprinted on the American dollar is the expression: "In God we trust". Every Sunday millions pray, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven." Made real in the gritty details of political and social life these could turn America from being, as one general put it, "a dead knight in armour" into a friend and comrade alive to the nations of the world.

Refreshing

AT A TIME when holding on to office seems a major preoccupation with many, the reasons behind the resignation of Swatantra President Minoo Masani are refreshing. While others are busy finding scapegoats he has squarely taken the blame for his party's failure.

In his letter of resignation to party colleagues he says, "It is a sound principle when a disaster overtakes a country, army or organisation, the man at the helm of affairs should take responsibility for the debacle and

hand over office to someone who may bring fresh ideas to the task." One wonders how many willing feet will follow in his steps. The fact that he has not resigned his party membership is indicative of his desire to work for his beliefs.

Mrs Gandhi's ambitious plans to solve India's manifold problems may come nearer to success with the help of able men like Masani and some others in the opposition.