News in Brief
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Damming of the Narmada river has been halted, for now. The Save Narmada Campaign says work on the massive construction project was halted by Environment Minister Kamal Nath. The World Bank also favored halting the project because of environmental and health concerns and the failure to resettle tribals who were to have been flooded out of their homeland by the Sardar Sarovar Project.

Yoga teachers in the Czech Republic of Europe are required to pass rigorous governmental certification and are evaluated on yoga practice, explanations, conception of lessons and speaking ability. "For getting the Class 2 certificate one had to have minimal six years of experience as a yoga teacher," writes Savitri Devi in Yoga Life.

Nine life terms-in fact 281 years in prison. That is the sentence handed down to 19-year-old Jonathan Doody for the murder of six Buddhist monks, an elderly nun and two male followers at a Buddhist temple west of Phoenix, Arizona. Doody must serve at least 25 years for each of the nine 1991 killings made during a robbery. The long-unsolved case caused a sensation in Thailand, home of the sect.

Mauritius' first Indian immigrant, Sooroop Sirdar, and 35 other indentured laborers were honored by the governments of both Mauritius and India at the site of their landing, Apravasi Ghat in Port Louis, 159 years after the fact. "Let us pay homage to the 450,000 men, women and children who transited at this very place over 90 years. Let us remember their gratitude, their determination, endurance and resilience," said Minister for Arts and Culture, the Honorable Mukeshwar Choonee.

Television's toll on India's youth includes an increase in absenteeism from schools and a decrease in test scores. "All the programs they watched had to do with

entertainment rather than education or general knowledge," said Sister Ida of a New Delhi convent after studying her class-8 students. S.L. Jain of Mahavir Senior Model School and secretary of the Forum of Public School, said of TV, "It is causing passivity among children, and thereby physical and mental retardation."

The People of India project, a monumental 43-volume national series, is expected to be completed by the end of 1994. Launched in 1985, PIO "was to generate a brief, descriptive anthropological profile of all the communities of India, studying the impact on them of change and the development process, and the linkages that bring them together." Contact: Vedams Books International, 12A/11 W.E. Area, Post Box 2674, New Delhi 110 005, India.

computer translation of Kannada to Hindi is being accomplished through new linguistic software called "Anusarak." Developed at the Indian Institute of Technology in Kanpur, Anusarak is a marriage of high-technology and the principles of the Sanskrit grammarian Panini, which produces translation based on 30,000 root words, a mapping of word groups and their grammatical features. Plans include programs for translating Tamil, Telegu and Malayalam into Hindi.

Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth of England, listened to the concerns of-and paid high honors to-British Hindus at a Buckingham Palace luncheon with Hasmukh Velji Shah of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad. Reports say Her Majesty the Queen specifically mentioned Hindu parental love, family respect and character building, noting that the crime rate among Hindu youth was Britain's lowest.

Venerable Vinayaka, the elephant-faced Lord of Obstacles and Guardian of Dharma, is venerated in China, too, and has been since at least 531ce. A low-relief image of Ganesh carved in stone at the temple Kung-hsien shows Him seated cross-legged with the inscription "Spirit King of Elephants."

Worship of Lord Jagannath and tourism are being forced to mix on the Orissa seacoast. A seven-day festival was held to promote the beaches of Puri for domestic and foreign tourists. Lord Jagannath is said to visit the sea every fortnight. Pilgrims therefore consider the ocean an extension of the temple. The faithful charge that commercialization of the area is a sacrilege. Environmentalists fear the exploitation of a forest reserve and sanctuary. The Orissa government says tourism is the

economic stimulant the state needs for employment and growth.

AIDS in India is doubling-the question is, how quickly? 242 cases in 1992; 522 cases in 1993. The World Health Organization estimates there are now 1.6-million HIV-positive people in India, nearly all of whom will eventually develop the fatal disease. The National AIDS Control Organization believes that actually seven million Indian people between ages 18-40 carry HIV. Ishwar Gillada, founder of NACO, estimates that if infection rates continue unabated, 30 to 50 million HIV cases by the year 2000 will make India the world's most infected nation. Others estimate five million by the turn of the century. Seventy percent of HIV transmission is through heterosexual contact, yet AIDS education is opposed by conservative school teachers uncomfortable with frank and explicit sex-related information.

Muslims in India appear to be voting as their own interests dictate, not their religious leadership. Assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh produced a significant vote not only against the BJP, but against their own Shah Imam of Delhi's Jama Masjid, Syed Abdullah Bukhari. Analysts say this indicates a rejection of the politics of confrontation and is part of a general trend of Hindus and Muslims in India to re-establish peaceful relations between the communities. "The main concern of the Muslims is security. And they realize that the best way to ensure that is to become part of the secular mainstream," said Tariq Anwar of the Congress(I) Minorities Cell.

The Confederation of Indian Organizations says a single-visa system, allowing travel throughout the emerging European Union by June of 1996, could impact Indians living in Britain on Indian passports. "They could become officially second class citizens in Europe," said CIO's Tara Mukherjee. India had sought easier access to the EU, but Germany and France, facing rising opposition to foreigners, are pushing stricter immigration rules. "It's basically bad news," said immigrant advocate Claude Moraes.

Hindu treasures attracted thousands to the British Museum in London for an exhibition entitled "Deities & Devotion: the Arts of Hinduism." Among the displays, a 40-foot 17th-century woven silk from Assam depicting scenes from the life of Krishna and incarnations of Vishnu, as well as statues of the 63 Nayamnars, or saints, of Saivism.

The only known copy of the quintessential astrological scripture Bhrigu Samhita, written 5,000 years ago by the sage Bhrigu, is a delicate and closely-guarded 500-year-old manuscript owned by the Bhrigus of Hoshiarpur, Punjab. It was discovered in 1923 by Des Raj, grandfather of the current generation of Bhrigu Shastris. The astrological treatise, though incomplete, was authenticated by Pandit Pali Ram of Amritsar. Other scholars doubt its authenticity. Nonetheless, the Bhrigus have 500 to 1,000 horoscopes pending at any given moment, and have built a family empire from the manuscript.

E-mailing to India? Check out aXcess. Business India Magazine launched the E-mail service and offers software, training and telephone support. Only Bombay and Delhi are served now, but expansion is planned into Calcutta and Bangalore. Contact: Poonam Kaul, Business India Information Technology Limited, Post Bag #25, Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi, 110029, India.

Nicotine may be declared an addicting drug by the US Food and Drug Administration. This extraodinary change of policy could result on a ban on cigarettes in America. The FDA has cited evidence that tabacco companies intend for people to become addicted to nitotine, and in some cases increase the amount of nicotine for that purpose, according to FDA commissioner David Kessler. The Associated Press states, "That addictive quality, and the intent, could put nicotine under the legal definition of a drug that the FDA is required to regulate."