

THE HONOR OF A WOMAN

by Alistair Lyon

Peering at the world through a bluecloth mesh is a new experience for educated Kabul women, but few venture out without wrapping themselves in a *burqua* for fear of offending their new rulers.

Many women once strolled Kabul streets in bright dresses or jeans, with a loose headscarf their only concession to modesty, but now if they fail to cover up completely they risk abuse or even a public beating from young, black-turbaned Taliban warriors moving around the city in pickup trucks.

The Taliban moved swiftly to stamp their puritan interpretation of Islam on Kabul, ordering men to grow beards and stopping traffic five times daily for prayers. They have banned television, cinema and music and decreed that sexes should be segregated outside the home.

Women government employees have been told to stay at home, with a promise that they will be kept on full pay until Taliban leaders figure out how they can return to work without coming into contact with men.

The edict has hit hardest at Kabul's estimated 25,000 war widows, many of whom were employed in government jobs or involved in food-for-work programmes run by relief agencies. They are now left with virtually no means of support for themselves or their children, short of begging on the streets.

Source: *Dawn* 4, October 1996

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organizers of child-sex tours through a bill which makes it illegal for Britons to organise pedophile holidays abroad, with convicted offenders looking at life imprisonment. The bill also makes it an offense to conspire with or incite people to have sex with children abroad. This move comes after much persuasion from human rights campaigners who were rightly worried about sex tourists from the richer countries preying on children in the Third World.

Australia and Germany already have laws under which their nationals can be prosecuted for offenses committed abroad.

The British government also hopes to soon pass laws to prosecute sex tourists when they return home. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) estimates that there are at least one million child prostitutes in Asia alone, with the greatest numbers in India, Thailand, Taiwan and the Philippines.

The first such offender to be indicted was a travel agent who was sentenced to 16 years in prison for having organized child-sex tours in the Philippines. Judge Fatima Asdala also ordered that he be deported after having served his sentence and that he be banned from the Philippines. "This act," she said in her decision, "promising sex with the young...in the guise of promoting tourism is considered in this court to be debasing of Filipino women and children."

But the most alarming case of child prostitution and abuse was uncovered with the crackdown on a pedophile ring operating from an

orphanage in South Goa headed by Freddy Albert Peat. He is currently serving a life term for sexually abusing, and trafficking in, young boys kept in his charge. In July 1996, the CBI charge-sheeted an Australian, a Swede and a New Zealander for being a part of this notorious pedophile ring. However, no arrests have been made so far, and all these known pedophiles continue to visit Goa, indicating a high level of laxity on the part of the local authorities.

Source: *Contours*, Vol.7, No.8, December 1996

DISCRIMINATORY BILL PROPOSED AGAINST MARRIED WOMEN

Women rights groups in The Ivory Coast have begun a campaign against a proposed bill on adultery that sets different penalties for women and men. The bill, proposed by Justice Minister Faustian Kouame, states a woman who has an extramarital relation will be liable to up to one year imprisonment or a fine of the U.S.\$630 to U.S.\$2,100. However, "men shall be allowed to have sexual relations with other women provided they have the consent of their spouses and pay them compensation of one million CFA Francs (U.S.\$2,100)."

Furthermore, the bill would grant a man the right to divorce on grounds of adultery with little more provocation than finding his wife engaged in seemingly intimate conversation with another man. For women to obtain divorce on grounds of adultery, their husbands would have to be caught in a sexual act at the couple's home with the same woman more than once.

BRITAIN BANS CHILD-SEX TOURS

Britain has decided to ban