

Business Briefs

Development

ASEAN nations, Japan meet on fund

Senior officials from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Japan began a two-day meeting on March 4 to discuss the allocation of a \$2 billion aid package, part of Tokyo's pledge to recycle its surplus fund to promote regional development.

The \$2 billion will be divided among Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. The fund, it was announced, would be spread over three years and will be operational by the middle of 1988.

The fund also provides for "two-step loans" with more favorable terms and conditions than are currently channeled through the Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund and the Export-Import Bank of Japan to various ASEAN financial institutions.

Dope, Inc.

More heroin coming from Southeast Asia

There has been a sharp increase in the amount of heroin entering the United States from Southeast Asia, Drug Enforcement Administration head John Lawn told a conference of 80 anti-drug officials from 12 U.S. embassies in Asia. The conference began March 15 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

The amount coming from the Golden Triangle has risen from 18% one year ago, to 30% now. Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir called for a "total war" against narcotics, and said drug addiction is the most serious problem facing Malaysia, even worse than Communist insurgency.

A huge heroin seizure in Bangkok, Thailand recently showed that the United States has underestimated the amount of heroin shipped from Southeast Asia, senior U.S. official Joseph Winder told reporters a

day earlier. The minister-counselor of the U.S. embassy told reporters that the 1,280 kilograms (1.4 tons) of 95% pure No. 4 heroin seized, were destined for the United States. This exceeds Washington's estimate of an average of 1.2 tons flowing annually into the United States from the region.

"Now, the U.S. has to rethink the amount of heroin coming from this part of the world," he said. Winder said U.S. officials have discussed with Thai officials the possibility of beginning a program of asset seizure exchange. The cooperation would allow the United States to give a certain amount of seized drug money to Thai authorities who helped provide the information leading to the seizure and arrests. Thai authorities are considering legislation empowering the state to seize assets of convicted traffickers.

According to a source in Bangkok, the United States had asked Thai authorities to hush up the news of the seizure. He said that Washington wanted the news kept quiet during the election year, because it involved exposing an important mafia ring with strong political connections.

AIDS

Heterosexual victims on rise in Brazil

The latest survey of the Brazilian health ministry shows AIDS increasing among heterosexuals, drug addicts, and people who have gotten transfusions, in about the same proportion as it is decreasing among homosexuals and bisexuals.

The official count of active cases since 1982 is 2,766, but the interim director of the national AIDS program, Pedro Chagas, estimates that there are actually 4,600 with symptoms and 225,000 to 500,000 carriers.

The statistics are from February during which the official total went from 2,651 to 2,766, or 20.67 per million people. President José Sarney asked congress to approve AIDS victims eligibility for retirement benefits, pensions, and care, and for AIDS medication and test kits to be imported tax free.

Emilio Ribas Hospital in Sao Paulo is having a wing renovated to increase its beds for AIDS patients from a present 60 to 210. There are now a total of 171 AIDS beds in the state. Most private and many state hospitals are refusing to treat AIDS victims.

Law and Euthanasia

Judge quashes subpoena for name of 'mercy-killer'

A Cook County Circuit Court judge ruled March 18 to dismiss a grand jury subpoena that would have forced the *Journal of the American Medical Association* to reveal the name of a gynecology resident who admitted to murdering his patient in an article titled "It's Over, Debbie" in its Jan. 8 issue. *JAMA* has defended its publication of the article, under the excuse that euthanasia is an ethical topic that needs to be debated.

Cook County State's Attorney Richard M. Daley, whose Chicago office had issued the subpoena, told reporters that *JAMA* was "protecting the identify of a killer who may kill again—indeed who may have already killed again." The article "appears to be a confession to murder. . . . Even more disturbing, it is an unrepentant confession by one who justifies the murder of another human being."

The right to murder and defend the practice is being hailed as a gain for First Amendment rights by journalists and the right-to-die lobby.

Poverty

Administration gets brutal with elderly

The Reagan administration has decided that too many of the nation's elderly and disabled have been living the life of Riley.

A new rule, which will go into effect April 8, will require increased payments from