

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

# MADRAS

## MUSINGS

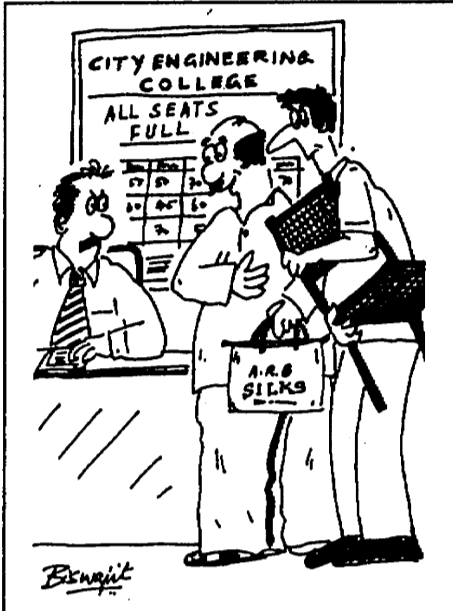
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FREE ISSUE

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No seats? That's no problem, Sir. My son can bring his own seat!

### Seat Scramble

Chennai experienced a particularly powerful dose of Dog Days this summer, a special version of which is on the loose right now, menacing a certain section of society.

Parents whose children recently leapt across the Great Divide between school and college.

This sorely-trying bunch scurry between colleges, forms in hand, heads reeling under tension and the weight of too much information.

What to do; where to apply; and the biggie – How Much?

You receive contradictory information about "the best places" for particular courses. You are advised to apply everywhere – just in case. You are told of someone who knows someone who lives next door to the main Someone... and you try everything, unwilling to miss a chance.

Then the nightmare – getting a call from one college, before you hear from the Preferred One. Old adages about birds in hand begin to drum in your head.

You cannot afford the luxury of having the hysterical fit of a lifetime, because you have to be the adult, and diffuse the growing worry on your child's face. "It'll all work out," you chant, and your child sympathetically pretends to believe you.

The steps you take will decide which of your child's dreams will come true – is that responsibility or what?

No wonder there is a strong rumour going around that the city is running out of hair-dye.

Ranjitha Ashok

## Attacks on activists

### NGOs network – and express concern

(By A Special Correspondent)

The Catalyst Trust, which has been trying for the last three years to bring the various voluntary organisations together, has succeeded in forming the Citizens' Action Network (CAN). The Network recently convened a meeting to

discuss the menace of frequent attacks on NGO activists by anti-social elements. A public meeting is now to be held this month to highlight this issue and sensitise society, the police and the judiciary on the need for quick remedial action to stop these attacks on social activists.

CAN's overall action plan includes the following:

— Voluntary organisations and activists joining hands, helping each other at the State, District and local levels to solve the common problems of people and face opposition, if any, in a sustained manner. While doing so, they need not lose their separate identities.

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### Stamp your presence

(By A Special Correspondent)

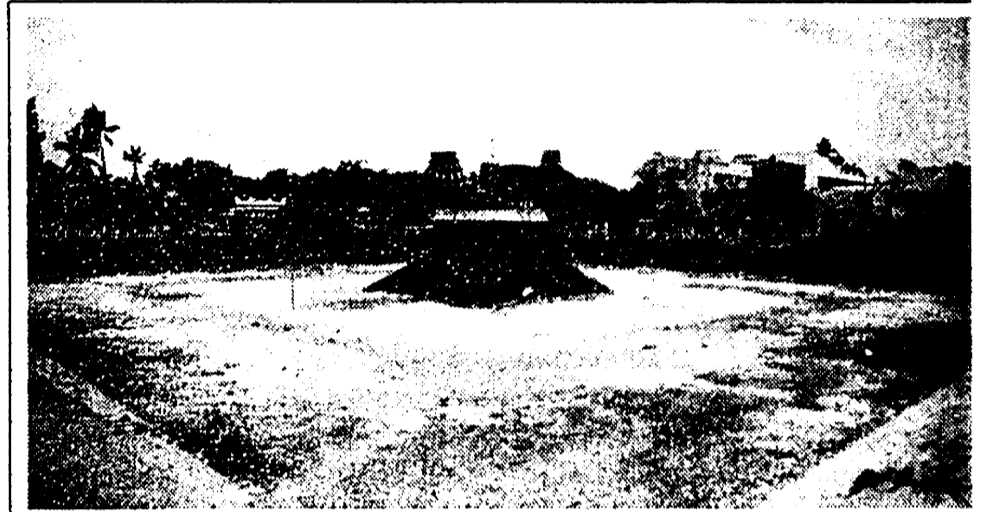
Postage stamps, often referred to as a medium through which nations speak, are prestigious cultural ambassadors and tools of education, says the Department of Posts in inviting YOU to suggest subjects for issue of stamps during 2004. The Department normally issues about 50 commemorative stamps in a year.

Proposals on subjects relating to heritage and culture of the country, flora and fauna, important events, art, music, painting, sculptures etc. may be submitted.

Each proposal should carry suggestion on one subject with a brief on it not exceeding 150 words. The proposal should be written/typed/printed legibly on white paper and submitted before 31.7.2003 to: The Chief Postmaster General (Philately Section) Tamil Nadu Circle Chennai 600 002.

All proposals for issue of commemorative postage stamps are considered by the Philatelic Advisory Committee (PAC), provided they are on the basis of specific guidelines laid down by it.

The subjects proposed should be relating to heritage and culture of the country. If appropriate designs/pictures are available for the proposal given, this may be indicated in the proposal, but material should not be sent at this stage.



The Marundeeswarar Temple Tank, Tiruvanmiyur, is now being kept clean (above) on a regular basis with the Corporation and the community teaming together. Now, only water is needed to fill it – and, below, Metrowater is laying pipelines along West Tank Road to lead the run-off from the East Coast Road and neighbouring areas into the tank. (Also see Page 4.)



## Teamwork to restore Tiruvanmiyur tanks

Restoration work on the centuries-old Arulmigu Marundeeswarar Temple tank and its neighbour, the smaller Chittrakulam Tank, has started in right earnest. What is heartening is the joint effort being made to get water back into the tanks by harvesting rainwater, with the community, the temple authorities and the HR & CE Department, the Chennai Corporation, Chennai Water Supply and Sewage Board, the Highways Department, the Archaeological Survey of India and the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage, Tamil Nadu Chapter, all teaming together.

The last time Tiruvanmiyur residents saw water in the tank was in 1995 when the Rotary Club of Madras (Main) restored the tank, but with that effort subsequently not being sus-

tained locally, and with population growth and unrestricted development in and around Tiruvanmiyur, the groundwater level receded and the tank went dry – and has remained so.

"The present water level in the tank is 15 feet below the tank bed level. That is more than 30 feet below normal ground level. Even if our experiment with rainwater harvesting (RWH) succeeds, whatever water comes in will only recharge the groundwater table, as the soil is very sandy. We will need to wait for at least two consecutive good monsoons to see water in the tank again," warns P.T. Krishnan, Convener, INTACH-TN.

The Marundeeswarar Temple is perhaps a good example of how, when water in the temple tank dries up, the activity around the tank, especially dur-

ing festivals, grinds to a halt; the tank turns into a no-man's land instead of becoming the centre of temple and community activity. The objective now of all involved is two-fold – to see water in the tank, purely as visual proof of RWH being a success, and to retain water in the tank for as long as possible.

"The idea is not to have stagnant water that might become a breeding ground for mosquitoes. We will be trying to restore the ecology using natural processes," Krishnan points out. Geo-technical consultants appointed for the purpose have suggested laying hessian (closely-woven jute) on the tank bed surface and laying a layer of soil over it. This will delay the percolation and help to retain water in the tank for a while. However, hessian dis-

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# “What a waste of talent in advertising!”

— DAVID OGILVY

There is a famous anecdote about R.K. Swamy related by S.R. Mani Ayer (former managing director Ogilvy & Mather). It was in 1983 and Swamy had hosted a reception in Madras for David Ogilvy, the founder of Ogilvy & Mather. After the two talked to each other for some time, this was what one icon (Ogilvy) had to say about the other (Swamy), “What a waste of talent in advertising!” Those who had the privilege of knowing Swamy will understand what Ogilvy meant. He was not only an advertising guru who broke many barriers and set many standards, but was also a truly multifaceted scholar. He was a management leader, an educationist, a quiet philanthropist, a thinker and a philosopher. He was a deeply spiritual man. He was also a major influence in two advertising agencies, one he worked for and the other he founded.

Swamy's career in advertising is what truly legends are

units to advertising. Under him, JWT was the unquestioned leader in the South. JWT South contributed over 50 per cent of the company's profits between 1960 and 72 and, in some years, even 60 per cent.

By this time he was also a director of JWT and a core member of the national management team. His contribution during this period, especially dealing with the Government of India on tax on advertising and the role of foreign advertising agencies was invaluable to the entire industry. In 1972 came the turning point in his career. When JWT bypassed him for the job of CEO and brought in an outsider, who was not an advertising professional, he decided to put in his papers and launch out on his own. He was 50.

This decision really required courage and confidence. He was daring to start an advertising agency based in the South. He wasn't exactly young. His

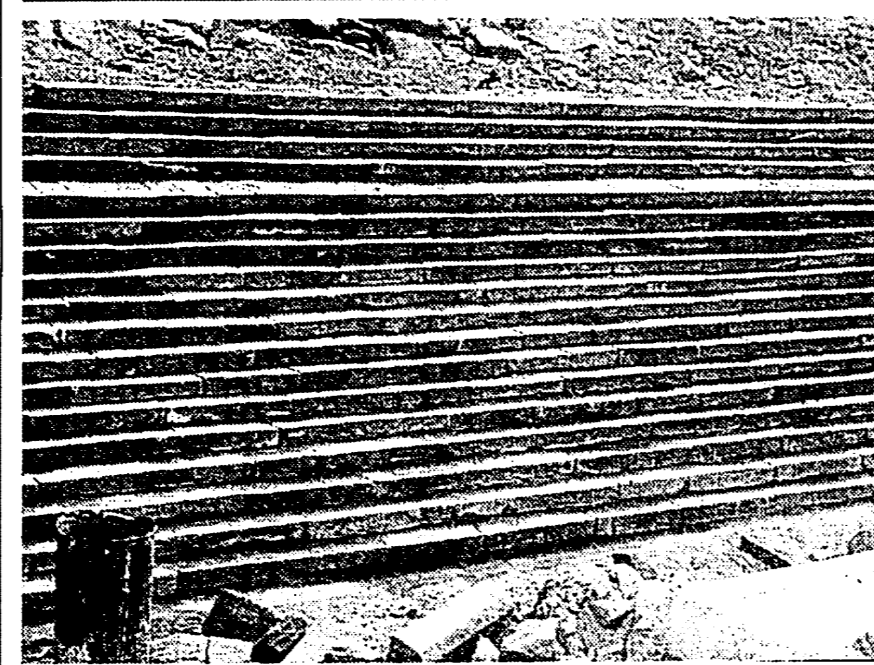
children were still to be married and settled. And he was taking on multinationals. R.K. Swamy Advertising was set up in 1973. The agency grew rapidly and, within five years, was one of the top agencies in the country. To this day it is the only agency based in the South to have national ranking. He never thought small. R.K. Swamy's (the agency) started life as a large one, with a full component of human resources from the very beginning. He launched a full-fledged agency and did not look for shortcuts.

The same sense of vision made him set up large offices in Mumbai, Delhi, Calcutta and Bangalore. The agency had a national character from the beginning. There were many who thought he was being too daring when he decided to get large office space in Mumbai. As it turned out, it was an absolutely astute decision. The Mumbai branch has not only grown spectacularly, but now the agency has two large office setups in Mumbai.

Swamy, virtually single-handedly, was responsible for making many public sector units look at advertising. He helped make BHEL, HMT, ONGC, HPP, MECON,

not have a presence in India. In 1985, BBDO Worldwide and R.K. Swamy entered into an agreement to work together. It was a non-equity deal, as the Government did not permit equity transfer to foreign companies at that time. Again, Swamy proved to be a trendsetter and many other agencies followed suit. Now the rules of the game have changed and Government permits international agencies to buy equity and invest in India. Every major international agency is now in partnership with a large Indian agency.

Swamy was one of the first to recognise the potential of television when Doordarshan finally opened its doors for commercial advertising based on sponsored programmes. Hansa Vision, another pioneering effort, was launched by him to sell commercial time in a programme to various advertisers as opposed to only one advertiser taking commercial time in a sponsored programme. The thinking has become the norm today. Today, Hansa Vision is a leading producer of television software in



## THE OLD... ...& THE NEW

Our OLD and the NEW this fortnight are combined in the picture above and detailed in the pictures on left. Work has started in Tiruvanniyur on restoring both tanks of the Sri Marindeeswarar Temple. And one of the first steps to this end is getting the smaller Chitrakulam Tank into shape before work starts on the main tank.

The Temple authorities and the H.R. & C.E. Department, with the help of the Archaeological Survey of India and the support of the local community, have started restoring, the steps of the Chitrakulam tank — and R. EASWARAJ's pictures show an overview, which clearly shows the OLD and the NEW together — one flight of steps, which was in the same shape as a rest seen in the picture above, provides a striking contrast after restoration to those on the other three sides. In the detailed OLD and the NEW on the left, the OLD is of one flight of steps showing why it cries for restoration and the NEW is of another flight of steps that was in this sorry state but which has been restored to what it should be.

As work progresses through the year, all concerned with this restoration project hope the monsoons will be kind and that we'll not only see water in both tanks but that that happy situation will continue with the promised commitment of the community to take care of the tank thereafter being honoured.

ECGC, BEL and others household names in the country. His public sector campaigns are still remembered in the industry. Not that he didn't handle private sector accounts. Many of the auto component leaders in the South started looking at advertising seriously only with Swamy's prodding. Various consumer brands like Nestle's Ricory, Cerelec and Nestum, ICI-Dulux and Visa credit cards also got the Swamy touch. He pioneered the concept of total communication which took advertising beyond its conventional boundaries and used company brochures, annual reports, direct mailers, exhibitions, audiovisuals and so on as part of image-building exercises.

For someone whom people sometimes tended to see as a conservative (more because of his value systems, I suspect), Swamy was among the first to recognise that India would slowly but surely integrate with the world economy. This made him seek an alliance with a large multinational agency which did

not have a presence in India. In 1985, BBDO Worldwide and R.K. Swamy entered into an agreement to work together. It was a non-equity deal, as the Government did not permit equity transfer to foreign companies at that time. Again, Swamy proved to be a trendsetter and many other agencies followed suit. Now the rules of the game have changed and Government permits international agencies to buy equity and invest in India. Every major international agency is now in partnership with a large Indian agency.

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the South. The company has sold commercial time to virtually every major advertiser and agency in the country.

Swamy was an industry leader in every sense of the term. He was repeatedly called upon to step in to deal with industry-related problems. He was probably the only person who has been president or chairman of all industry bodies relating to advertising. Like Advertising Agencies Association of India, Audit Bureau of Circulation, Advertising Standards Council of India and so on. Many honours were bestowed on him. He was given the “Lifetime Achievement In Management Award” by the All India Management Association in 2001. Swamy was actively involved in the formative years of the Madras Management Association in the 1970s. Those who had worked with him recall his grace and kindness to younger people. He was always willing to share his knowledge and experience with anyone, no matter how young.

(Continued on Page 6)

# In crocs we trust

I spent a delightful weekend among the crocodiles recently, as part of a group of Madras Naturalist Society members on an overnight trip to Crocodile Bank. The Bank, established in 1976 by Romulus and Zai Whitaker to save India's three crocodilians — the mugger, the gharial and the saltwater crocodile — from almost certain extinction, now holds in its 8½ acres over 8000 crocodiles of 11 different species and has supplied over 800 of them for restocking and breeding throughout India. It has also succeeded in creating a unique microclimate on this stretch of the Coromandel Coast where open ponds, well over 150 species of trees and plants, and a wealth of birds and insects have moved into an area of monocultures, casuarina trees, and sand dunes.

Our Sunday afternoon session was marked by an exuberant and fascinating puppet show on environmental themes by a group of children from nearby villages. Many of them leave home early with packed lunches and take the often-infrequent bus to the Bank, returning only by dusk. Acting as spokesperson, 11-year-old Vadvivelu said, “All of us love to come here because we have so much fun. And we are able to go back and tell our mothers, fathers and other people in the village things they don't know.” They have been part of a year-long environmental awareness programme which was formally inaugurated in February 2002.

Says P. Gowrishankar, Education Officer, “The Nature Club activities commenced in June 2002, with the target group being rural children within a 5 km radius and from 20 schools in the area. With an average 30-40 students attending the sessions every Sunday, we have about 140 registered members. The response has been very heartening. Sunday morning activities for the members include slide/video film watching followed by informal, interactive discussions on different aspects of natural history, the behaviour of animals, their role in the eco-system etc. Besides monitoring and reporting any changes in the different enclosures of the park, the members also guide the tourists and stop them from teasing the animals. The afternoon normally starts in the puppet theatre, where the children themselves devise stories based on different environmental issues, the need for conservation and so on. Besides camps and workshops for city schools, we also conduct teacher-training workshops in environmental education. A recent mobile exhibition for Sea Turtle conservation in the fishing villages along the East Coast Road was a big success. Training youth from the fishing community — in a first-of-its-kind effort — to serve as wardens for the Sea Turtle Conservation Network, in collaboration with

another NGO, has also been a rewarding experience.”

Environmental consultant R. Bhanumathi, who is coordinating educational activities at the Bank, says, “Puppetry was chosen as an innovative, interesting teaching tool for children to spread the message of the environment. Setting up a multi-purpose theatre for this purpose

● by Shobha Menon

was a first step. And the response has been tremendously satisfying. The ongoing programme was made possible by a year's grant from the Ford Foundation to set up an Ecocentre that will plan activities for rural children on environmental themes. Hopefully, we'll be able to obtain timely, sustained and adequate funding to ensure that the programme can continue and convert the interest generated into positive social change.”

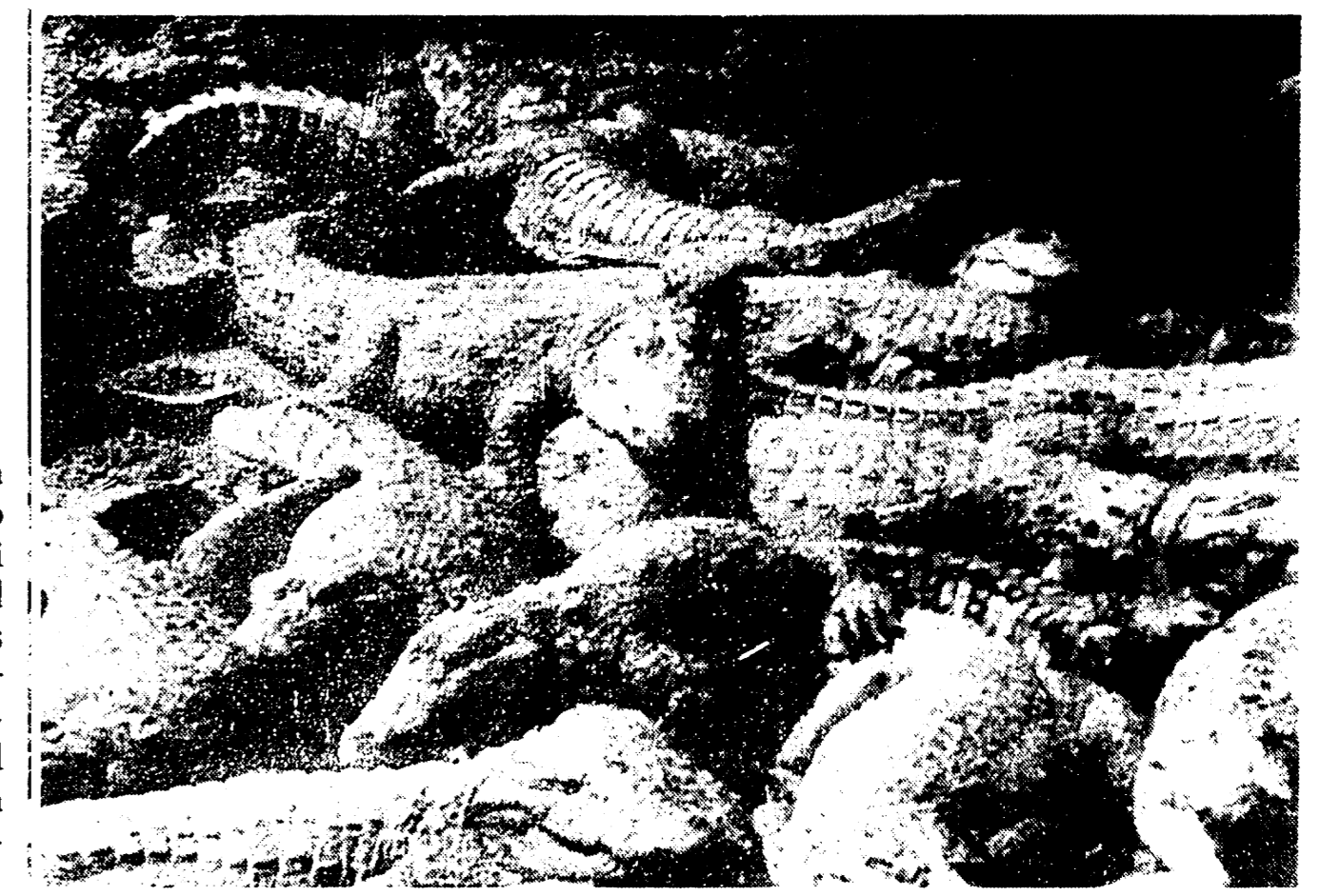
In the central nursery, at Crocodile Bank, upto 2,500 crocodiles are kept for their first six months in small pens/ponds with a stocking density of about 50 per pen. Every day, local fishermen supply about 300 pounds of tilapia fish to the Bank. The nursery is completely covered with mesh to keep out crows, egrets and kingfishers. The yearlings are transferred to large brick or granite walled enclosures to maximise space utilisation. Some of the new larger pens house as many as 2000 crocodiles. Adult crocodiles mainly eat beef waste supplied by a big meat packing company.

Says Harry Andrews, Director, the Madras Crocodile Bank Trust, “The Bank doesn't quite know what to do with a production of 2000 crocodilian eggs each season. Efforts to convince the Government that tribals and people living around protected areas (like sanctuaries and National Parks) should be allowed to start crocodile farms using surplus animals from the Bank have so far failed, in spite of the recommendation of sev-

eral States like Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and the Andaman Islands. Restocking wild habitats has ground to a halt, with the initial funding by the FAO running out and the protected areas reaching a saturation point. Also, fisheries people and residents of riverside areas protest that

crocodilians are dangerous and compete for fish. Seemingly the only option left — since 1992 — has been to separate the males and the females or destroy any eggs laid, in a rather unfortunate step backward in wildlife conservation and management in India. Our huge surplus of mugger were to be relocated through two tourism-related projects initiated about four years ago, to be set up in Goa and Andhra Pradesh. Unfortunately, they didn't materialise.”

On the controversial can of worms that has been opened by proposing the commercial farm-



## Bringing nature to the city's children

Nature Quest, an activity-based, nature and conservation awareness programme for teachers, students and nature enthusiasts, was recently launched as a collaborative effort born of, as wildlife filmmaker Shekar Dattatri said, “the serendipitous synergy between TREE (Trust for Environmental Education, of which he is Managing Trustee), the Madras Crocodile Bank Trust and Orient Longman's.”

The aim of Nature Quest is to conduct a series of activities at The Bookpoint auditorium, Anna Salai, to make up for “a failed education system that does not tap our vast resources of flora and fauna”. A variety of interactive programmes, integrating wildlife and nature with

arts and crafts, music and theatre, will be conducted. Talks, discussions and screening of slide and video shows will be organised. Resource persons will include wildlife film-makers, researchers, photographers, artists, musicians and theatre artists. A resource centre for children at The Bookpoint auditorium is also being planned.

Another exciting new initiative is the Friends of the Croc Bank Club. Members of this Club will be able to contribute to the Croc Bank's conservation efforts, and will be entitled to free entry, besides discounts on camps and programmes conducted at Croc Bank. There will also be free entry into some activities of Nature Quest.

S.M.

now concentrates on the herpetofauna of the moist tropical forests of southwestern India and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

Efforts in field herpetology have been intensified and the Crocodile Bank is currently playing a very dynamic role as a development and research centre with a major thrust in public education. Proposed developments are an underwater exhibit for adult gharial, interactive exhibits and guided tours for school groups, expansion of research and public education programmes for the lesser known Indian snakes and the eventual acquisition of all the world's 23 crocodilians.

The MCBT has produced several books for children on turtles, lizards, snakes and crocodiles. Its scientific journal, *Hamadryad* (now in its 20th year of publication), has an overseas mailing list far exceeding Indian subscriptions. Several documentaries and a children's feature film, *The Boy and the Crocodile*, have been filmed here, in addition to ongoing education programme for school children and the visiting public.

In 1991, the Madras Crocodile Bank became India's Centre for Herpetology and the Trust's mandate was changed to include the research and conservation of herps in general.

The Iruka Snake Catchers Cooperative, established by Whitaker in 1978, is a tribal self-help project set up to give the Irukas a livelihood through sustained yield use of snake venom instead of killing the snakes for their skins. It is also the only venom-producing centre in the country and supplies a large proportion of India's venom needs for antivenom serum production and research. The Iruka Tribal Women's Welfare Society, set up in the late 1980s, has been involved in setting up social forestry schemes on the vast wastelands in Chingleput District, besides a seed bank and medicinal herb garden.



(Current Affairs questions are from the period June 1st to 15th. Questions 11 to 20 pertain to Tamil Nadu and Chennai.)

1. Which country's beauty is this year's Miss Universe?
2. Which popular tourist-State is to be the permanent home for the International Film Festival of India?
3. Which Sikh 'crusader', killed by security forces in 1984, was recently declared a 'martyr'?
4. Who are the new French Open tennis champions?
5. Name the latest technology service unveiled by Microsoft on June 8th.
6. What is common to the words 'Bollywood', 'Orcs', 'A-List' and 'Academy Awards'?
7. Name Hillary Clinton's memoir which describes her personal relationship with Bill Clinton after the Monica Lewinsky affair.
8. Name the Grand Old Man of Indian advertising from Chennai and founder of an eponymously-named agency who passed away in the city on June 5th.
9. The 'Spirit' soared from Cape Canaveral on June 10th. What is it?
10. Name the Hollywood legend, an Oscar winner for *To Kill a Mocking Bird* and star of classics like *Roman Holiday* and *Guns of Navarone*, who passed away on June 12th.
11. Which stretch of the metro's bypass highway was recently brought under the toll net?
12. Of the six Collectors who were given the annual 'Green Awards' this year, four are from Pudukottai, Ramanathapuram, Tiruvannamalai and Kanniyakumari. Name the other two.
13. On the above theme, how many Collectors are there in the State?
14. Which popular Tamil Nadu sportsman is to make his movie debut in AVM's *Priyamana Thozhi*?
15. Name Madras's earliest newspaper, launched on October 12, 1785.
16. The Golden Jubilee final of which prestigious cricket tourney in the city was played on June 8th?
17. By what epithet was the renowned academician U.V. Swaminatha Iyer known?
18. Name the next Kamal Hassan film, which has been forced to change its title, following protests from the Puthiya Tamizhagam.
19. What is the State's annual plan outlay for 2003-04?
20. On which MTC route was the first 'low-floor' bus inaugurated in the city on June 11th?

(Answers on page 7)

# James Bond to speak in Hindi Tamil & Telugu

When Hindi/Tamil film producer A.V. Mohan heard on the industry grapevine that the Robert Amritraj/Ashok Amritraj Entertainment Company has secured the rights to distribute old James Bond movies in India, he decided to act fast.

Approaching Robert Amritraj (father of tennis players Anand, Vijay and Ashok) on Vijayadasami day last year, Mohan gave him a blank cheque to buy the exhibition distribution rights of all the Bond movies in English as well as the dubbed versions in India and Sri Lanka.

"There is a whole generation which has not seen the old Bond movies. The plus point of those movies is that the viewers will not be able to attribute the Bond's magic to animation/graphics. They are so realistic," says Mohan. Not only that, as a genre, Bond movies are simple, sexy, uncomplicated, but have lots of sudden and curious twists

and turns to have viewers on their seats' edges.

So, come July 2003, you can see and hear the famous Bond, his beautiful heroine and dangerous villain talking in Hindi, Tamil and Telugu in different dubbed versions of *The Spy Who Loved Me*, starring Roger Moore.

According to Mohan, Goldfinger will be released after that. In all, Mohan has secured the rights for 15 Bond movies and 15 other movies produced by Metro Goldwyn Mayer (MGM), USA.

While dubbing of Hollywood movies in Indian languages is nothing new, it is not so in Sri Lanka. "I am taking a calculated risk in dubbing *The Spy Who Loved Me* in Sinhalese. Based on the success, I will decide the future course of action with respect to the Sri Lankan market," says Mohan.

Meanwhile, Mohan is busy concluding sponsorship deals for promoting the dubbed Bond movies in India and overseeing

the dubbing activity. "Nowadays the success of a film is partly based on the initial promos. But promos are okay only for the first three days after the release. From the fourth day onwards, the film has to speak for itself," he realistically points out.

According to him, special care is being taken with the dubbing. "Normally foreign films are dubbed in Indian languages in three days. But I am taking eight days so that the dubbing quality is good."

Hollywood movies with their universal appeal are more suited for dubbing in Indian languages and for people living in 'C' category towns they are an attractive proposition. The success of dubbed *Jurassic Park* was the trendsetter and was followed by *Titanic*, *The Mummy* and *Anaconda*. And for movie-makers like MGM, Paramount Pictures and others, dubbing opens up an entirely new market at dirt cheap costs.

Today, even TV channels,

like Vijay TV, a Tamil channel, telecast Tamil-dubbed Jackie Chan movies.

"Not all Hollywood movies can be dubbed in Indian languages and even the producers don't like to do that," feels Mohan. To substantiate his view, there is the evidence of a couple of dubbed Hollywood films that have bombed, though they succeeded in their original version.

Curiously, dubbing of Hollywood movies is restricted to only three Indian languages, viz. Hindi, Tamil and Telugu. It is these three languages which contribute the majority of films produced in India.

Mohan, a producer of 19 movies (mainly in Hindi), is now engaged in importing movies and CDs. He is the Indian agent for Columbia Tristar. "I am now also trying to dub some of the movies produced by Columbia Tristar," he says.

Venkatachari Jagannathan

## Restoring Tiruvanmiyur tanks

(Continued from Page 1)

integrates in two or three years but, by then, monsoon rains may ensure that the tank does not run dry. All this may not be quite as simple as the plans look on paper. For one, the experiment can begin only when there is rainfall in Chennai. And, for another, the technical team has to study the percolation and evaporation rates and estimate how long water will remain in the tank when there is rainfall.

"The whole effort started about two years ago as a tank restoration scheme. Then, we simply looked at it as a large open urban space, of no use to anybody. Actually, we could walk around the tank and yet not notice it," says Krishnan, adding, "When we did a detailed study, we looked at not just built heritage but natural heritage as well, old drainage patterns, percolation structures etc."

The Marundeeswarar Temple dates to the 10-11th century. Early inscriptions date the construction to Rajendra Chola (1011-1043 AD). Seven inscriptions belonging to the 11th century have been found on the walls of the goddess' shrine. The present temple, built on the ruins of the earlier one (the Chola period temple pillars are still visible in the northeast corner), is in the Vijayanagar-Nayakar style and occupies a significant place among the 32 sacred Saivite *kshetras* of Tondainadu.

Meanwhile, work has already started, with ASI inputs, on restoring the small Chitra-

kulam tank. "The lessons we will learn from the small tank will stand us in good stead when we work on the main tank," feels Krishnan.

Involving the local community in the restoration process has been one of the priorities in the project. When people realised that RWH would help regenerate water and benefit the community, they began to provide active support. A film on the need to restore the tank, prepared by INTACH, was shown to students and teachers in four or five schools and on the streets in the area. School-children enthusiastically came forward to participate in voluntary work. Students of Shankara Vidyashram even formed a Heritage Club.

This is what prompted INTACH to look closely at environmental issues. "Certainly, we knew that the water flowing into the tank had to be clean, which meant that the neighbourhood had to be kept clean first," stresses Krishnan. So, the Chennai Corporation and Onyx were persuaded to remove garbage once a week and clean the tank. Now that that has started, local residents have volunteered to clean the tank once a month. One of the worst things happening at the tank was people urinating in it. To prevent this, the Corporation will soon complete construction of toilets on temple land.

INTACH's public awareness drive has really been the catalyst in getting things moving. "We used to go around the area

in an autorickshaw announcing a tank-cleaning drive. About 50-60 residents would immediately volunteer their services. The Corporation happily picked up from where we left off," recalls Krishnan.

Assured of community support, INTACH approached various government departments and in Shanta Sheela Nair (now Secretary, Rural Development) it found someone who turned out to be the key person in getting government support and taking the act forward. INTACH's project might have well remained in its record books had it not received the support also of S. Bharati and R. Kuppuswamy from the temple, M. Bhupal (Chennai Corporation), D. Madhavamoorthy (Chennai Water Supply and Sewage Board), M. Gunasekhar (Highways Department) and V. Srinivasan, a local resident.

There are about 40 temple tanks in Chennai. As a collective water resource, it adds up

to quite a lot. Success at Tiruvanmiyur could well lead INTACH and the government agencies to look beyond the Marundeeswarar Temple tank. But a lot will depend on sustained government support and people's participation here. Only then will there be an example to replicate the exercise elsewhere.

Traditionally, water overflowed from irrigation tanks to village and temple tanks. "Recovering irrigation tanks is also feasible. That is the level to which INTACH can take this experiment forward," Krishnan says optimistically. INTACH may have set its sights high, but it is clearly not interested in stopping with restoring just one temple tank. It seems to have made the right start through involving the community, working bottom-up and getting government departments not only to team with themselves but with the community as well.

Sashi Nair

## R.K. SWAMY REMEMBERED

(Continued from Page 4)

When I first met him (when he was still actively involved in the day-to-day running of the business) to do a story for the magazine I was then working for, several things he told me remain fixed in my memory. He explained to me why the name Hansa accompanies all his ventures. Hansa, the legendary swan, could separate milk from water when they were mixed.

Likewise, he believed that his organisations should separate substance from nonsense. He asked me what my favourite advertisement at that moment was, and I was raving about the hoarding of a paint company. He smiled at me and said, "Do you realise that good advertising shouldn't just look pretty, but should also sell products". Needless to say that company slowly went down the drain and was recently closed down.

The second in an occasional series on Tamil writers

## Stirring emotions with short stories

Late afternoon in Poona circa 1947. The dialogue-writer of Thyagaraja Bhagavathar's much-awaited comeback movie *Raja Mukthi* (1948) walked into a restaurant for his 'tiffin' and sat at a table where already seated was a bright-eyed, Marathi with his bag displaying a name tag that showed he was a journalist. Birds of the same feather, the two exchanged introductions and, thereafter, met almost daily in the restaurant. The Tamil writer found his Marathi friend intelligent, articulate and knowledgeable, with a clear vision of the Independent India he wanted and of journalists and writing in that India.

The Tamil writer, forced to return to Madras, due to ill-health, was not long afterwards shocked to hear on the evening of January 30, 1948 that his 'tiffin-time' friend had plunged India and the rest of the world into an ocean of grief. Yes, the Marathi journalist was Nathuram Vinayak Godse, the assassin of Mahatma Gandhi! And the Tamil writer was one of the founding fathers of the Tamil short story form, Puthumaipitthan!

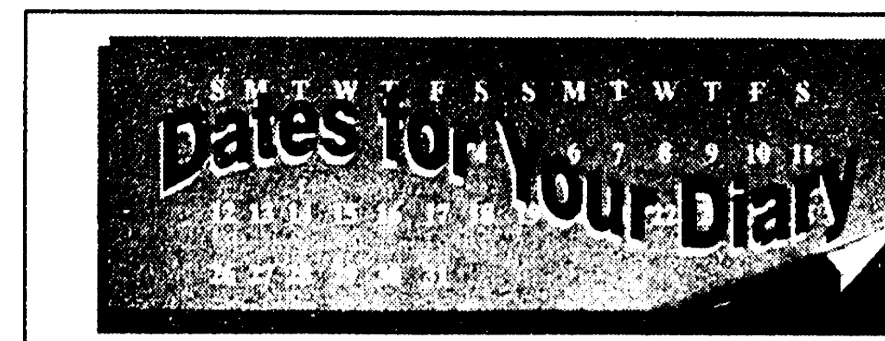


Even though the revolutionary and intellectual Vu. Ve. Suleri is credited with being the 'inventor' of the Tamil short story, the form really took off only after the advent of

set new trends in them, with his choice of subjects, characters, and challenges to the establishment order. He even wrote tales re-appraising mythological heroes and gods like Lord Rama. He was also one of the first in the Tamil literary scene to experiment with stream of consciousness narration.

He wrote about men and women who were then unfortunate of society and whom it frowned on. Prostitutes hanging around dimly lit street corners waiting for customers to ensure them a meal that night... A poor married woman with no option but to sell herself to a stranger to buy the medicine, her bedridden husband needed urgently... A middle-class man in dire need parts with the rupee he had borrowed from a friend, because

• by Randor Guy



July 13: *Nee Engey*: A Shadow Puppet Theatre Festival. Today, there are only a few puppeteers still practising this art form. Stories and life styles have changed. R.V. Ramani's film *Nee Engey* is about these shadow puppeteers, living in Southern India. With the help of the South Zone Cultural Centre and Alliance Francaise of Madras, R.V. Ramani is organising a festival of Shadow Puppet Theatre with artistes coming from different parts of Tamil Nadu and also from Karnataka and Kolkata. (At Alliance Francaise.)

July 19: The next in the Travelogue series, in which every month you meet a remarkable personality. This month, to celebrate the French Revolution, it's a Madras Frenchman, Jean-Francois Lesage, who has revived an extraordinary but dy-

ing art - embroidery - in the heart of the city. (At Alliance Francaise, 7 p.m.)

July 22-31: *Prahalada Charithiram* presented by Koothu-pattarai and directed by Gil Alon, a theatre personality and Zen Master from Israel.

The story *Prahalada Charithiram* is the conflict between a tyrannous father and a defiant son, a popular theme with generations of Indians. The play is written by N. Muthuswamy and presents the story of Prahalada in a way never seen before. (At Alliance Francaise.)

Till July 14: An exhibition of the work of M. Siva, a 26-year-old artist, who graduated from the Chennai Government College of Arts and Crafts and who has participated in several joint exhibitions. The exhibition is his first solo. (At Alliance Francaise.)

turbed. But he too did not show much interest in school and its rigid syllabus-regimented study. However he loved reading and read voraciously, mainly Tamil detective fiction by Vaduvoo Duraiswamy Ayyangar and Arani Kuppuswami Mudaliar. Later, in college in Tirunelveli, he began reading Western literature and was attracted by writers like Maupassant, Anatole France, Leo Tolstoy, Chekov and Maugham. Besides reading, he loved to hang out with like-minded friends discussing literature and the new art form, the film. He revealed a flair for writing, which was possibly in his genes, for his father wrote, rather surprisingly for a minor government revenue official, a classic treatise, *Indo-European Races*.

When *Manikodi* was started in 1933, by 'Stalin' (because of his moustache!) K.Srinivasan, Puthumaipitthan began to write short stories in it. The enormous interest they created almost from the beginning, made him decide to move to Madras leaving his wife in her parental home. But in spite of his fast-growing reputation, he had to struggle in the city to make ends meet. In spite of its image and fame, *Manikodi* too found every issue a struggle and so it could not afford to pay its contributors. In those days, Tamil magazines, with the exception of *Ananda Vikatan*, did not pay their contributors. As he could not live on writing, he took up work in the editorial department of *Dinamani* and, then, *Oozhiyan* (in Karaikudi).

When writers of the '*Manikodi* School', like B.S.

Ramaiah and Elangovan, moved into Tamil cinema, Puthumaipitthan followed suit. Thanks to good friends like Ki.Ra. and Murugadasa, he joined Gemini Studio to work on the script of *Avvaiyar*. Though he contributed interesting material, it was not used in the film. Meanwhile he got the opportunity to write dialogue for a forgotten film, *Kamavalli* (1948).

Ill-advised by friends, he took a leap in the dark and promoted a film company for which he neither had the money nor experience of the business. The project never took off, and landed him in debts. Then came the opportunity to work on Thyagaraja Bhagavathar's *Raja Mukthi*.

The constant struggle to keep the wolf from the doors, staying away from his wife and child due to economic reasons, the stress and strain of the insecure life of a writer, all destroyed his health and he fell victim to tuberculosis. He passed away in Trivandrum in 1948.

Puthumaipitthan in death became a cult figure and role model for aspiring writers. His short stories, articles, poems, literary criticism and other writings earned him immortality as a pillar of modern Tamil literature. Some of his short stories are among the best ever written in Indian languages. It is indeed sad to reflect that though stray attempts have been made to translate his stories, no serious effort has been made to render his body of work into English for the benefit of a wider world.

## Answers to Quiz

1. Miss Dominican Republic, Amelia Vega; 2. Goa; 3. Jarnail Singh Bindranwale; 4. Juan Carlos Ferrero (men) and Justine Henin-Hardenne (women); 5. The 'Smart Watch', which can deliver instant messages, news etc; 6. They have all been included in the Oxford English Dictionary; 7.
11. The 19 km Maduravoyal-Tambaram-Chennai bypass; 12. Salem and Vellore; 13. 29; 14. K. Srikanth; 15. *Madras Courier*; 16. The Hindu Trophy; 17. 'Tamizh Thatha'; 18. *Sandiyar*; 19. Rs. 7000 crore; 20. A 18 (cross) between Tambaram and Broadway.

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# Memories of Madras losing

It is pleasing to find the Ranji Trophy is back where it should be, in Bombay (or Mumbai if you prefer it that way). But I feel sadly let down by Tamil Nadu. For I learnt my cricket in Madras, now Chennai, and I also watched all my early games at Chepauk. But I prefer to be recognised as a Mumbaikar, all the same.

The first Ranji final I saw was at Chepauk on March 7, 1941 and it ran for just three days while the Battle of Britain was at its height. The magic voice of Bobby Talyarkhan, I would imagine, cleared the way from Loyola College to the iron gates of the MCC ground, past the mounted police who kept order among the tumultuous multitude.

Bobby was surrounded by an admiring crowd, which kept asking him "Madras jayikka mudiuma" (Can Madras win)? "No," was the answer and it was substantiated by Sarwate and Hazare as they pulled the game round for Maharashtra against the bowling of Rangachari.

Tamil Nadu had a rich crop of bowlers. In addition to Rangachari, they had Gopalan and Ram Singh who could begin with the new ball before he turned to left-arm spin. And they also had three leg spin bowlers, in N.J. Venkatesan, G. Parthasarathy and B.S. Krishna Rao. But they could not shake the might of Maharashtra who ran amok as if they were part of Shivaji's army, levying 'chouth' wherever they went. They were led by an elderly scholar, Dr. D.B. Deodhar, who wore drain-pipe trousers, held in place by a necktie round the waist.

What could one do against a side, which had earlier beaten Bombay by 25 runs in the first innings. Bombay got to 650 when Havewalla chanced his arm but forgot that Deodhar was waiting for the lofted stroke. Earlier, Maharashtra had made 518 against Gujarat and 798 against Northern India.

In *His Sort of Cricket Person*, E.W. Swanton writes of Deodhar being surrounded by an admiring crowd at the Pune

railway station. Deodhar must have been on his way to Madras for the Ranji final, while Swanton went on to his tryst with building the Burma Road for the Japanese as a prisoner-of-war.

And so at Chepauk, it seemed that Madras did reasonably well to have got rid of Maharashtra's hordes for 284 runs. And in the second innings, though Madras ran up a score of 384, it was not good enough to rattle stroke players like Ranga Sohoni and Deodhar.

Indeed, when I look back at Madras's record, I am reminded of the disgruntled Queenslander who felt that winning a lottery ticket did not ensure a prize, for the Queenslander, if he won it, would have misplaced the ticket. This was how I felt when Madras rescinded from the strong positions they held in the Ranji final of 1967 at Brabourne Stadium and in 1973 at Chepauk. (Courtesy: *Straight Bat*.)

K.N. Prabhu

## Nostalgia

### • Six centuries

# A record still

N. Krishnamurthy who played for Egmore Excelsiors, established a record with six centuries in a row when he played for Excelsiors in the 1946-47 League season. His record for any division of the TNCA remains unbroken.

The sixth century, particularly, was made in a key match. The match was against rival Egmore club, the Egmore Recreation Club 'B' run by V. Pattabhiraman. A mere draw would be enough to take ERC (B) into the division.

The indefatigable and determined 'Pattu' brought in four Maharashtra State players from Poona who were in Madras on a temporary transfer to the Avadi Air Force unit, and two players from Madurai — Timms, an Anglo-Indian hockey player and a dangerous hitter, and V.P. Raghavan. The Poona players were accustomed to play on turf and the contest was to be played on Marina turf. The wily captain and strategist of Excelsiors, S.R. Jagannathan, persuaded K.S. Ranga Rao to change the old venue to Pachaiaappa's College matting wicket. Two test umpires, T.A. Ramachandran and S.V. Kumaraswamy, officiated as umpires.

N. Krishnamurthy rose to the occasion and hit his sixth consecutive century, enabling Excelsiors to declare at 176 for 5. ERC 'B' were skittled out for a paltry 63 runs, succumbing to the medium pace of J.C. Mohan and the spin of SRJ.

Krishnamurthy, it may be remembered, played for Combined Universities, Districts XI and was captain of the Annamalai University team.

Another incident, not at all pleasant, comes to mind. In an earlier match during the same 1946-47 season, nine Excelsiors batsmen were given leg before wickets and the 10th was declared run out in a match against the Bheemanpet Recreation Club played at the P.S. High School. Excelsiors' protest was rejected with a senior journalist exercising his influence in the decision-making. What a perverse and pernicious verdict! Nine batsmen being declared lbw is certainly another record for the TNCA — but an ugly one. — (Courtesy: *Straight Bat*)

R. Ramachandran

## ATTACKS ON ACTIVISTS

(Continued from Page 1)

— A co-ordination committee to be formed at the State, District and local levels in order to function in the above manner.

— Citizens' Centres to be set up in various localities to function as information centres, discussion/study centres, discourse centres, guidance centres, monitoring centres, action centres and testing centres. The centres to function in such a manner as to make people feel that if they approach them, they will get

a possible solution to their problems.

— Ensuring Electoral Rolls, on which basis elections are held in a democracy, are without any deficiencies or irregularities, by obtaining the Electoral Roll relating to particular areas from the officials concerned and requesting the removal of defects in the Rolls. This includes enrolling those who have not been listed already, and removing names which ought to be removed.

— Voluntary organisations to

offer good and honest candidates for local body elections and work jointly for their success.

— Essential public services, like primary education, primary health, drinking water supply, public distribution, roads, electricity etc. to be monitored by the centres to ensure that these facilities are readily and easily available to the people and that the agencies concerned function according to the rules and regulations of the Government.

— The Public Distribution System is at present not functioning as it should and essential commodities worth crores of rupees are being diverted from PDS to the open market. Voluntary organisations should jointly verify the accuracy of the Register of Cardholders in respect of the PDS outlet in their locality.

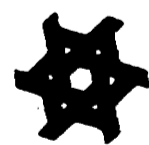
In the last two activities, students, particularly of the Higher Secondary classes and colleges, to be involved so that they will get a direct exposure of the irregularities in the existing scheme of things. It will also be an inducement for them to take

an active interest in public issues and, thus, eventually lead to the formation of a strong students/youth wing of the Network.

It was decided that the action plan will be implemented first in the Municipal Corporations areas of Chennai, Madurai, Trichy, Coimbatore, Salem, Tirunelveli and other Municipal towns. Replications in other areas will be taken up later.

Catalyst Trust may be contacted at 4/386, Singara Illam, Ram Garden Road, Anna Salai, Palavakkam, Chennai 600 041. Phone: 24512586, 24512587. Email: catalyst-trust@eth.net

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