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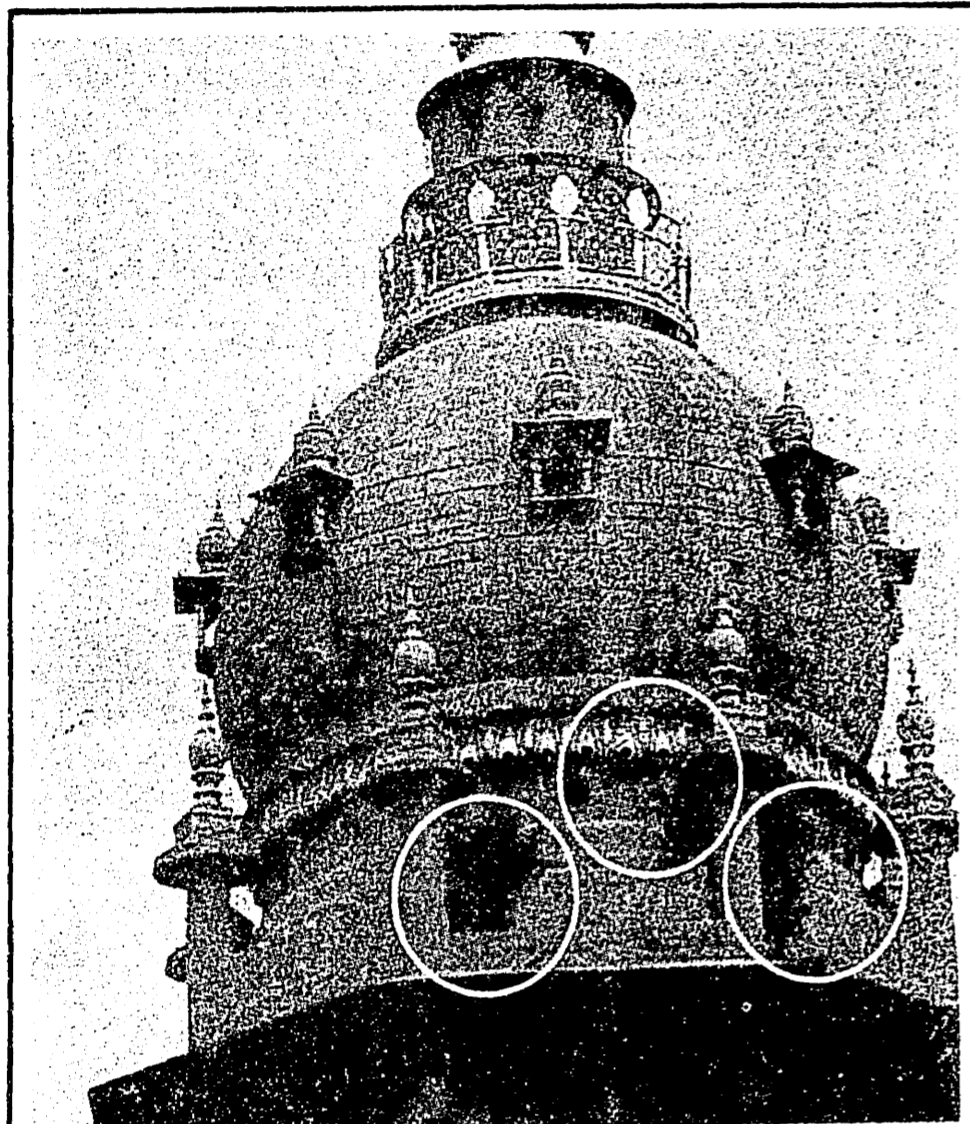
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MUSINGS

Vol. II. No. 19

FREE ISSUE — EVERY FORTNIGHT

January 16 — 31, 1993



The highest tower in the High Court, once Madras's third lighthouse, is now host to several trees — as the circled portions reveal. (Photo: RAJIND CHRISTY)

Trees in Court

Apropos your photograph of *Senate House* sprouting trees, (*MM*, Oct 1, '92), it is not the only beautiful Indo-Saracenic building in Madras to suffer in this manner. They are found to be sprouting from the majestic High Court buildings too. The Public Works Department apparently maintains the building, without removing the trees from it. The walls are gouged where these trees grow and I pray that a brick does not fall on the head of a litigant or a counsel.

These trees are the work of birds which frequent the building, but are beyond the arm of the Law. Birds are the most efficient agents of seeds dispersal because of their fruit-eating habits and the long distances they travel. As the fleshy part of the fruit gets digested by the bird, the seeds pass out unharmed by the digestive juices. Such seeds exploit the manure, with which they pass out, and germinate.

Bats and squirrels too contribute to such plant growth in buildings. Constant vigil is, therefore, necessary to safeguard buildings. And priority should be given to the 100-year-old buildings of the High Court.

Rajind N Christy

Will Senate House promise be kept?

EDITOR'S FOOTNOTE: Dr S Sathikh, Vice-Chancellor of Madras University, recently announced that the University was planning to renovate and refurbish its Centenary Auditorium at a cost of Rs. 1 crore and *Senate House* at a cost of Rs. 1.5 crores. Rs. 4 crores was to be spent on a new block for the Institute of Correspondence Education.

While welcoming this news, especially the component pertaining to *Senate House* (its luxuriant foliage referred to in these columns several times), we only hope that plans will translate into reality and that, this time, next year, the 136th annual conference of the Madras University will be held in a restored and gleaming-bright *Senate House*. With the PWD now likely to be a little more free after the effort put into the *MGR Samadhi*, this, Dr. Sathikh, is the time for the University to get hold of its engineers and see the *Senate House* project through.

Meanwhile, it is to be hoped that the new ICE block, when it comes up, will integrate with the rest of the campus, instead of looking like the ice block which the Centenary Auditorium resembles.

Does Tamil Nadu face...

The plague of the century?

(By Dhanya Gopinath)

Tamil Nadu is the second biggest centre of HIV/AIDS infection in India. Tamil Nadu may have less than 7 per cent of India's population, but HIV positive cases in the state are now 22 per cent of the Indian total — and the position is becoming more critical every day. In fact, AIDS could soon become Tamil Nadu's biggest killer.

Tamil Nadu today has over 2100 HIV positive cases, and this is only the tip of the iceberg. What is more alarming is that most of the cases found to be seropositive have not yet manifested any form of severe illness, and, hence, the gravity of the situation has not registered. Wherever proper counselling facilities are lacking, these people could be guilty of spreading the disease in the community at large. This is so because they are, despite being afflicted, either unaware of the danger or are careless when it comes to adopting methods that would prevent the spread of the disease. According to Dr Rashmi Pachauri Rajan, who did the documentation for the AIDS Resource Group of the Madras Medical College, "The invisibility of the infection, the 8-10 year incubation period, allied to the sheer numbers of sexually active adults, provide vast potential for the rapid and extensive spread of the virus."

People in Tamil Nadu, even doctors, were confident in the early '80's, when the first international reports of AIDS came in, that it could not happen here. At that time, AIDS was considered a disease of the decadent West. According to Dr Sunithi Solomon, currently Additional Professor, AIDS Cell, Institute of Microbiology, Madras Medical College, "When I first heard of AIDS, I thought it was a disease of the West, mainly of the homosexuals, and would never come to India".

Yet the infection was first detected in India in 1986 and that too in our own city, Madras. Our firm belief in protection from such scourges, provided by the 'impenetrable' shields of piety, religion and culture, have been completely shattered. In the six years since, the infection has spread throughout the country. And if Maharashtra is any example, Tamil Nadu is sitting on an AIDS bomb, with a countdown for disaster.

The rising HIV rates are more than sufficient to convey the extent of the problem in Tamil Nadu. When surveillance began in 1986, the positive samples at MMC were 3 or 4 a month.

By October 1992, this had risen to about 30-60 positive samples a month at the same institution. And, more alarming, for every ONE detected case of HIV positive, there are 99 undetected ones, according to Dr Solomon. (There are very few surveillance centres in Tamil Nadu.)

Says Dr Sundararaman, Director of the ARFI (AIDS Research Foundation of India), a pioneer organisation in the field of AIDS intervention in Asia, "AIDS is **not** restricted only to the commercial sex workers in Tamil Nadu, though 10-30 per cent of them are seropositive. AIDS has filtered into the general population."

The findings of ARFI show that HIV **cannot** be minimised by tackling the problem through the education of these unfortunate women, who, to a large extent, are powerless when it comes to insisting on condom use by their clients. Again, it is wrong to blame the truck drivers for the spread of the disease, though 2 per cent of them have tested HIV positive. Neither is it right to put the blame entirely on the professional blood donors, though some of them have definitely tested HIV positive. "At present, the Government of Tamil Nadu is taking steps to ensue.

(Continued on P5)

WANTED

— A Telephone Number

Dear Madam Chief Minister,

We are sure you would have heard of that most commendable action recently taken by the MLA for T'Nagar, S Jayakumar. We feel certain you would have commended him for helping to put a stop to at least a few persons bringing the name of your party into disrepute by insisting on donations, from business organisations, usually of the smaller variety, or from individuals in their homes, and turning nasty and threatening when the donations are not forthcoming.

In this instance, it happened the persons concerned were led by a person impersonating the T'Nagar MLA. But we are sure that you are aware that on many other occasions there are persons who are NOT impersonators but are, indeed, minor political figures or their cronies. They act in this deplorable fashion only because they are confident that neither you nor other responsible leaders know about their activities and that the victims will not be able to reach you to make a complaint. It also happened in this instance that the victim knew the T'Nagar MLA and was able to summon him. But what happens to those with no such contacts?

Only the other day we heard of a perennially late night watchman turning nasty on being dismissed by a family when he turned up late again as well as drunk. He not only became threatening but pulled out a visiting card bearing YOUR photograph, Madam, and reading that he was a party local leader. He then went on to tell the frightened housewife what the party would do to her home. What do you do in case of such misuse of your, and the party's name, Madam?

If we may make a suggestion, Madam, it would do a lot of good if you published a couple of telephone numbers in the Press, which would be manned 24 hours by Police Superintendents/Deputy Secretaries, to whom the victimised public could turn. Recently, when the party's rank and file informed you that they had various complaints, you immediately arranged for complaint boxes. It is to be hoped that you will, to combat the menace described here, act in this instance too, immediately arranging for a couple of telephone lifelines.

And if any of the State's DGPs read these lines, perhaps they too will stress this need of the public to you, Madam, in case you miss this plea.

Thanking you in anticipation of prompt action, Madam. And with all best wishes for 1993,

Yours truly,
THE EDITOR.

Madras Musings thanks all its readers and well-wishers who sent the Publishers, Staff and Contributors their greetings and good wishes for 1993. We are delighted by these kind gestures of so many and look forward to your continued support in the coming months.

Deifying another film star

A few years ago, a couple of persons in the Perambur area built a temple and installed an idol of MGR in it. Poojas were thereafter conducted before this new god for a while. But, of late, the temple's popularity appears to have waned and the last time *The Man From Madras Musings* saw a photograph of this shrine it appeared to be in a state of disrepair and without a congregation.

Now another film star is in the process of being deified in the state — without even having gone through an in-between period of Chief Ministership. The star is the buxom Kushboo and there are plans to instal an idol of her, as Sri Khushambikal, in a shrine coming up in a 'colony' in Tiruchchirappalli.

There is said to be some opposition to this project which was first suggested over a year ago. But the "trustees" are carrying on with their plans regardless.

The Man From Madras Musings hasn't heard how the Bombay starlet who became a star in Madras is reacting to this adulatory deification. But he wonders whether she will say 'No' to such blasphemy.

Banking battle

Who's going to win the battle for the Bank of Madras? It's a battle being fought by two Chettiar groups with long family banking traditions — and the

picture is still not very clear, despite the clear-cut victory of the founding Karumuthu Thiagarajan group at the recent AGM of the bank, the sole one left with any of the influence of that traditional banking community, the Nattukkottai Chettiars.

The Bank of Madras was the last of the Chettiar banks to be created. The Indian Bank, the first, saw the Rajah of Chettinad play a major role in its development. The came the Indian Overseas Bank, founded by M.Ct. M. Chidambaram Chettiar, who, tragically, died young. Both banks grew to a size where they came under the purview of the nationalisation act. The Bank of Madras, however, stayed small until recent years when its growth has been spectacular. The bank was founded by Karumuthu Thiagarajan Chettiar, the leading Chettiar textile magnate, and figuring in the battle to retain the family's niche in the Bank is his grandson, Dr K M Thiagarajan.

Dr Thiagarajan recently teamed with the Bombay Kotak group, a natural consequence of the long-time association the two families enjoy as a result of their common interest in the textile industry, when the Bank of Madras appeared threatened. Some weeks ago, it was mentioned in the columns of *Madras Musings* that there was a new Chettiar bank in the offing. The bank in question was the new image A C Muthiah planned to give the Bank of Madras if he and his fellow Chettiars succeeded in mopping up the shares of the Bank. The Karumuthu counterplan was to seek Kotak assistance which now also has Mahindra clout.

The recent AGM, the Bank's 49th, was expected to be crucial in the battle — and Dr Thiagarajan and his allies won it resoundingly, gaining 12.49 lakhs out of the 13.75 valid votes. A secret ballot was resorted to after the opposition had insisted that the overwhelming show of hands in favour of the existing board, by the 600 or so shareholders present, was not an adequate show of confidence.

But just when it looked that things would return to normal at the Bank, the two Kotaks on the Board announced their resignation from it. This was just a couple of days after the AGM — and came as a shock to most of those who had voted in favour of them. Despite all their pious platitudes in their press statement, is there more to their resignation than meets the eye? Can new moves be expected from the A.C. Muthiah group? If there are, it won't be a surprise. Muthiah is a grandson of the Rajah of Chettinad, with every bit of his grandfather's drive, determination and ambition.

A close shave

It's never really been told, what a close shave Kamal Hasan had in that recent accident of his. Anywhere else in the world, the news would have filled the front pages, given the eminence of the actor, but here there appeared to be a self-imposed censorship, almost as though the mishap was something that might just possibly have been covered by the Official Secrets Act.

The accident, a few weeks ago, took place early one morning near Poonamallee High Road. The 'shot' called for Kamal Hasan to take a dawn jog, and as he gaily played hide and seek with the pillars of a building, he went hide one moment and a driver, who was part of the scene, and frustrated after three takes, went seek the next, gunning his car forward. That's when Kamal Hasan emerged, got hit and thrown into the air.

Kamal Hasan's penchant for doing all his dangerous scenes

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

himself had trained him to protect the back of his head as he came hurtling down. But there was little he could do about his spine. A couple of inches and that spinal injury he suffered could have had really brightening consequences — and it was only his experience that saved his skull.

The last time *The Man From Madras Musings* saw him, Kamal Hasan was walking with a slight limp and was looking forward to it vanishing in a few weeks. But if anyone thought this close shave was going to slow him down, they've got another think coming as he gets ready to make his next blockbuster whose action, he promises, will outdo *Thevar Magan's* and yet be a better film.

In brief

* The latest 'fishing war' the fishermen of the state find themselves involved in is with Andhra Pradesh fishermen. The traditional war has always been with Sri Lankan fishermen, but with southern waters posing several worse dangers, Tamil Nadu fishermen have been fishing further north. Meanwhile, the Andhra Pradesh fishermen, perhaps the country's most enterprising, have, for years, ranged from northern Tamil Nadu waters to the northern most reaches of the Bay of Bengal. A clash was inevitable as resources diminished. And in December there was a bloody clash in which the attackers were from the Nellore District, allege the Tamil Nadu fishermen. Claiming that one of their number is missing, presumed dead, and that they've lost eight motorized craft and all their gear and catch, the Tamil Nadu fishermen are seeking Rs. 7 lakhs compensation and state patrol boat protection in the future. The Andhra fishermen, meanwhile, claim they've lost one motorised fishing craft and much gear and catch and, consequently, want Rs. 5 lakhs compensation. Officials of the two states are attempting to work out a settlement, but in the absence of clearly demarcated state fishing boundaries and patrol boats, these clashes are likely only to increase.

* The new Governor of the Reserve Bank, Chakravarti Rangarajan, is, for once, not a civil servant with the IAS tag, but an academic high-flyer.

Degrees from Madras University (in its heyday) and the University of Pennsylvania and Professorships at Wharton School, Pennsylvania, the Indian Statistical Institute and the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmadabad, which he headed for a while, may all be well and good, but Dr Rangarajan will probably, like so many others in key positions in the country, say that "it's Loyola, Madras, that made me". Curiously, many from Loyola, like Dr Rangarajan, are connoisseurs of Carnatic music which is a Classical style the College does not exactly specialise in or encourage. But that says much for Loyola's approach to education, culture and religion.

* The Central Polytechnic campus is now over three decades old and ever since those early days there has been talk of a road bridge across the Buckingham Canal to link the campus area, parallel to which the canal flows, with Indira Nagar (and, thus, Adyar) and Thiruvanniyur. Now at long last the foundation stone has been laid and work is expected to begin shortly on the Rs. 1.5 crore bridge. But how short is "shortly"? The Corporation has promised COMPLETION of construction in 90 days! But it's nearly a year now since this

journal reported plans for widening the 19th Century Binny Road bridge, yet no work has still started there! Promises to widen that bridge and bridges at Harrington Road, R K Mutt Road, Manali Road and Andrews Road, all at a cost of Rs. 7 crores, still await a beginning. *The Man From Madras Musings* looks forward to the promised exception and will report to you in April whether this is one promise that has been kept.

* As *Madras Musings* keeps dreaming of advertising to keep it afloat, the Advertising Convention '92 held in Madras late last year, was told that by the end of the century advertisers would be spending Rs. 10,000 crores on advertising, a five-fold leap in eight years! (Will any of that come *Madras Musings* way?) Food processing, electronics, consumer durables and pharmaceuticals were identified as the growth areas and it was predicted that T V advertising would virtually double from the present 800 companies advertising about 2000 brands. But while most speakers concentrated on consumer advertising, few called for greater social awareness advertising.

— MMM

A special offer to readers on our Mailing List

Readers have from time to time written to us over the past year asking why we do not charge a subscription for *Madras Musings*. They are willing to pay, over a thousand readers have written to us. But we rather like our unique position as a free mailer and still hope to break even on advertising.

And here's how you could help with that. Do you have something to sell? Or do you want to buy something? Do you have an announcement? Or do you have a message? Advertise your requirements in *Madras Musings* SMALLS.

We will give you THREE separate one-centimetre SMALLS before the April 1st issue at an all-inclusive rate of Rs. 100 for the three, if you are on our Mailing List.

And if you are not on our mailing list, but want to get on it, our offer to you is a rate of Rs. 150/- for the three SMALLS in February and March 1993.

We look to you, readers, to build up a lively page of classified Smallts that will enable *Madras Musings* readers to help each other and *Madras Musings* as well.

A way to let Madras Musings help you.

NOTE: All cheques to Lokavani-Hall Mark Press Pvt. Ltd., 62/63 Greames Road, Madras 600 006.

OUR READERS WRITE

A pavement temple

An unauthorised temple, under a pavement roadside tree, has come up at R K Shanmugam Road, K K Nagar. It is small now, made of mud and under a thatched roof. But is sure to grow and encroach upon the liberties of pavement users.

Under a concerted drive from the Corporation of Madras, such pavement temples were removed/destroyed, in other parts of our city, a few years ago. I trust the Corporation authorities will act now, though politeness and persuasion may be the first approach.

Atheism is not the creed of the writer. However, such unlawful building, even of shrines, is anathema to every civic-minded citizen.

K S Sampath

51/A R K Shanmugam Road
K K Nagar, Madras-600 078.

Adding up stamps

Once rated as the proverbial 'silver lining', our Postal Department really deserves some 'stick' for making fellows like me, who spend not less than 75 cards at Christmas/ New Year time, affix two 20 paise stamps, a 10 paise stamp and a 50 paise stamp, on each item in lieu of a single one-rupee stamp, and, in the process, develop conspicuous corns on the fingers.

Raise a (carnation-capped) finger of objection and you will elicit a 'stock' reply from the person at the counter: "We don't have that many one-rupee stamps. Stocks are over."

Mr Post Master General, do Christmas and New Year, Pongal and Deepavali come all of a sudden, like flash floods, that your post offices are taken by surprise and, hence, cannot keep an adequate stock of these one-rupee stamps to meet the increased demand? It's high time that this practice, of doling out several stamps of smaller denominations as a substitute, is stamped out.

And it would be a great idea if the Postal Department prints sticker stamps. Apart from being very convenient, it would put an end to the grotty practice, indulged in by some souls, of sticking stamps with saliva!

Sanjay Pinto
39 LDG Street
Little Mount
Madras 600 015

For better service

Though the public, nationalised transport system (Metropolitan) was introduced before the city limits expanded in all directions, the routes remain more or less the same as allotted initially, with the outskirts, with few exceptions, barely catered for. Commuters in these areas have to take two or three buses to reach a particular destination.

Even the index letters and the route numbers are irrelevant and irrational.

It is therefore suggested that a thorough study be made and a system introduced to cover every nook and corner of Metropolitan Madras and its outskirts meaningfully, with route numbers and index letters assigned in a more convenient manner. At the same time outgoing long distance mofussil buses may be diverted from Parry's to leave along Marina Beach Road and reach a convenient point near Guindy before proceeding further. Simultaneously, incoming mofussil buses should be asked to reach Parry's from Guindy by way of Inner Ring Road via Ashok Nagar and Poonamallee High Road, thus avoiding the entire Mount Road stretch.

M K Rajini
3 Anjugam Main Road
Madras-600 083.

Appreciated outside

Madras Musings provides valuable information with beautiful pictures to all its readers, particularly to those outside Madras like us. We are very thankful to you for such a good venture in these hard days.

K Nagarajan
B/5, Vadivel Street
Cuddalore-607 001.

English as she's spoke...

...and as others remember it...

Our article 'English as She is Spoke' (MM, Dec. 16th) has elicited a lot of response, but only one or two of the type we had asked for... nevertheless, since so many of them are amusing, we publish a selection this fortnight.

I was very pleased, as you might expect, to read the item about 'my' trees outside my old friend Shenai's house in Annanagar. If ever David Davidar gets around to publishing my book *A Frog in My Soup* you'll read another story about this old friend. Meanwhile, apropos 'English as She is Spoke', the following might amuse:

The Government of India is considering the purchase of a large number of anti-shit missiles (*Indian Express*). (We could certainly do with some of them in Madras!)

When Morarji was P.M., a wicked friend of mine called Roper-Evans, then GM of English Electric, got on the table at an Overseas Women's ball (600 guests) at the Taj, called for silence, raised a glass and said, "Ladies and Gentlemen, tonight I wish to introduce you to a new drink which has been approved by the Government of India and passed by the Prime Minister".

Next morning, Eric Stracey, then IG, rang me and said, "Harry, can't you restrain that incorrigible friend of yours; I've had so many calls this morning complaining he's insulted the Prime Minister!"

And, finally, another item from the *Express*, 17.4.86. Note the final para.

Harry Miller
Madras 600 028

Enclaves where the deer and Black Buck roam

Referring to the lead story in *Madras Musings* December 16th, HARRY MILLER r.s. writes:

The Black Buck is not a deer but an antelope. Male deer grow antlers and discard them every year: antelope grow horns that remain with them throughout their lives. The Black Buck, of course, is an animal unique to India, as every bit as precious, therefore, as the Taj Mahal, and should be treasured accordingly. As your correspondent rightly remarks, the spotted deer, or chital, will eat almost anything (like goats you can see them scavenging in the rubbish bins of the IIT campus) and I've often wondered why they have never been reared domestically in place of goats, since they are just as easy to keep and yield far more meat.

Civets are civets are civets and to call them cats is like saying that elephants are a sort of large bulky horse with long noses. Civets belong to an entirely different order of animals than cats. Similarly, millipedes, scorpions, centipedes and spiders are not insects.

These zoological corrections made, let me turn to the home of wild-life in Madras, the Guindy National Park. The present Cancer Hospital, together with the other structures mentioned, could so easily have been sited elsewhere. During the Emergency, the then Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, visited the Snake Park (earlier her son Rajiv and his family had done so) and was furious when the building of the hospital was pointed out to her. "It's like all these memorials," she said scathingly. "I've told the Governors over and over again...." And, soon after, the building of the hospital was halted, though Mrs. Gandhi was careful, first of all, to have an alternative site selected.

Meanwhile, the authorities of the Cancer Hospital wrote to the *Indian Express* proprietors asking them to stop me personally from writing against the hospital's erection in the Park and even suggesting that some sinister motive and persons were behind it. I still have that letter.

The following history is common knowledge: Indira Gandhi lost the subsequent election, the Gandhian



Now here's a genuine piece of 'English as She's Spoke'! V S RAGHAVAN's picture is from *Madras-18*. Anyone got any others from elsewhere in the City?

(Very complicated foot drill in the skating rink.)

At the end of all this, I must confess that I was the loser. Had I the requisite speed in longhand to trap the commentator's express deliveries, my haul would have been much more rewarding!

S. Sankara Narayanan
Madras 600 097.

As a high percentage of Madras are educated, it is difficult to find howlers in public notices in Madras. If by chance a howler appears, someone would point it out to the management and have it corrected immediately. But howlers do surface when the less endowed in English try to express themselves. Here are a few I have come across:

A Tamil pandit, not well versed in English, was engaged by a convent school. One day he found a girl in his class copying while doing an exercise. He berated her, but the girl denied copying. The pandit put an end to the argument by declaring, "Young lady, you may lie with others but you cannot lie with me! I am well experienced in this matter!"

A Marwari money lender, who built a house with his office in front, invited his friends for the house-warming. Showing them around, he concluded, "I do my business at the front. My wife cooks at the back. By now you must have noticed that my wife's back is much bigger than my front!"

A rotund, middle-aged businessman, with an equally adiposized wife, boarded the Nilgiri Express at Madras for Ooty. The couple were allotted upper and lower berths. The man did not want to occupy the upper berth. He requested a fellow passenger, who had been allotted the other lower berth, "Sir! Would you mind going over my wife? I am a bit too old to climb up!"

M. Sethuraman
Madras 600 088

(Also see Page 4)

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Fun & games on the railways

K.R. VAIDYANATHAN last year wrote a delightful little book, *A Trainload of Jokes and Anecdotes. Towards the end of last year, he followed it up with more in the same vein in a 'vignette' in the Financial Express. We publish a few of the anecdotes that appeared in that article, with acknowledgements to all concerned and with the thought that, in these troubled times, the world could do with a few more laughs like these truly funny stories are sure to raise.*

—THE EDITOR.

★ In colonial times, guards and station masters were considered important persons. Even VIPs, like the Viceroy and Governors, would shake hands with them when they travelled by rail. Lord Irwin, while leaving New Delhi after relinquishing the Viceroyalty, thanked the station master for all his courtesies during the five years he was in India. The station master said: "Not at all, Your Excellency, it has always been a pleasure to see you off."

★ Another station master at Delhi once wired to his counterpart at Meerut that a British Major was travelling in a first class compartment with an Alsatian dog despite requests that he should book it in the dog van. I'd grab the waste and I'd jump!" The LF was mighty pleased.

★ An engineering firm sent quotations for fish-plates to the Railway Ministry and received the following reply: "The purchase of fish-plates does not fall within the jurisdiction of this ministry. You are, therefore, requested to communicate with the ministry concerned, i.e. the Food Ministry."

★ If the English bosses were really nice to railwaymen, the English language, however, played havoc with them. A station master telegraphed frantically, "Ramaswamy running away my wife, my god how annoying".

And another station master at Muttur received a wire to look after a dog and its puppies. It read: "One bitch and two sons of bitches by 5 Down. Look out."

★ "Don't be so long-winded in your report as you have been in the past," said the manager of a Railway to his overseer. "Just report the condition of the track as you find it..."

A few days later the railway was badly flooded and the overseer wrote

his report to the Manager in one line: "Where the railway was the river is."

★ A personnel officer of a division tried his best to reform a senior supervisor who on occasions would overdo the bottle bit and go on the rampage. But he failed, and brought the matter to the notice of the division superintendent. The latter called the offender to office one day and proceeded to give him a pep-talk. He advised him that if he would only exercise a bit of self-control he would surely rise to become an officer. But he was floored with this answer: "Thank you very much, sir, but the trouble is that when I have a drop or two inside me I feel like a member of the Railway Board."

★ The loco foreman of a Loco Shed had a reputation for meanness. The pet bee in his bonnet was oil and waste and at every opportunity he ranted that if every employee was careful with oil and cotton waste, thousands of rupees would be saved.

One day he was having a few words with a new probationary driver. "Tell me," he ordered, "what would you do if you were driving one day and saw an express thundering towards you on the same line?"

The novice thought for a while. Then he said: "I'd grab the oil can, I'd grab the waste and I'd jump!" The LF was mighty pleased.

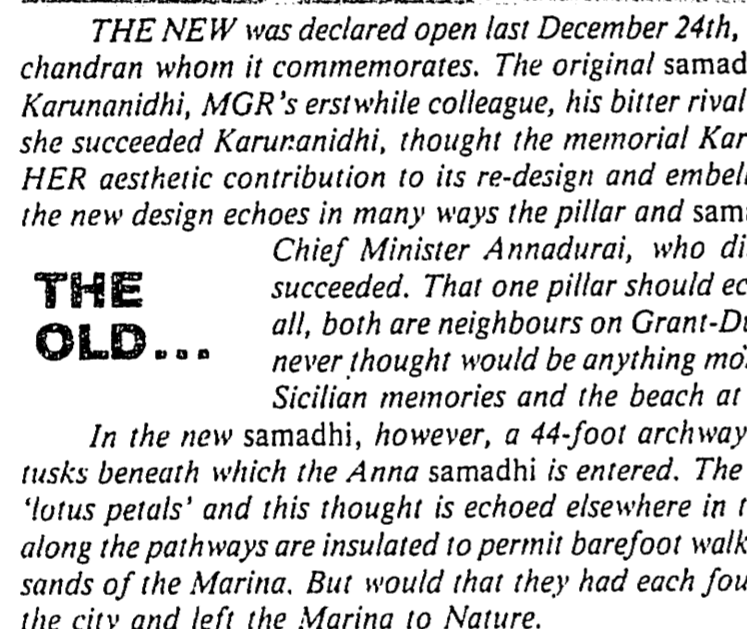
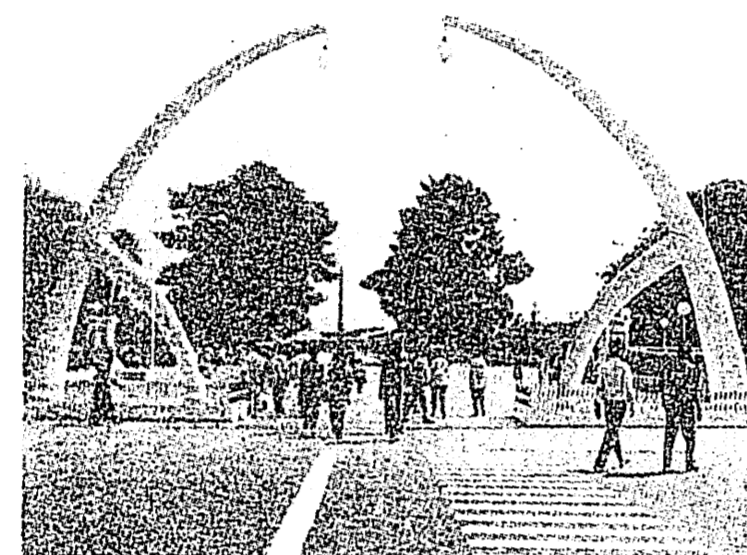
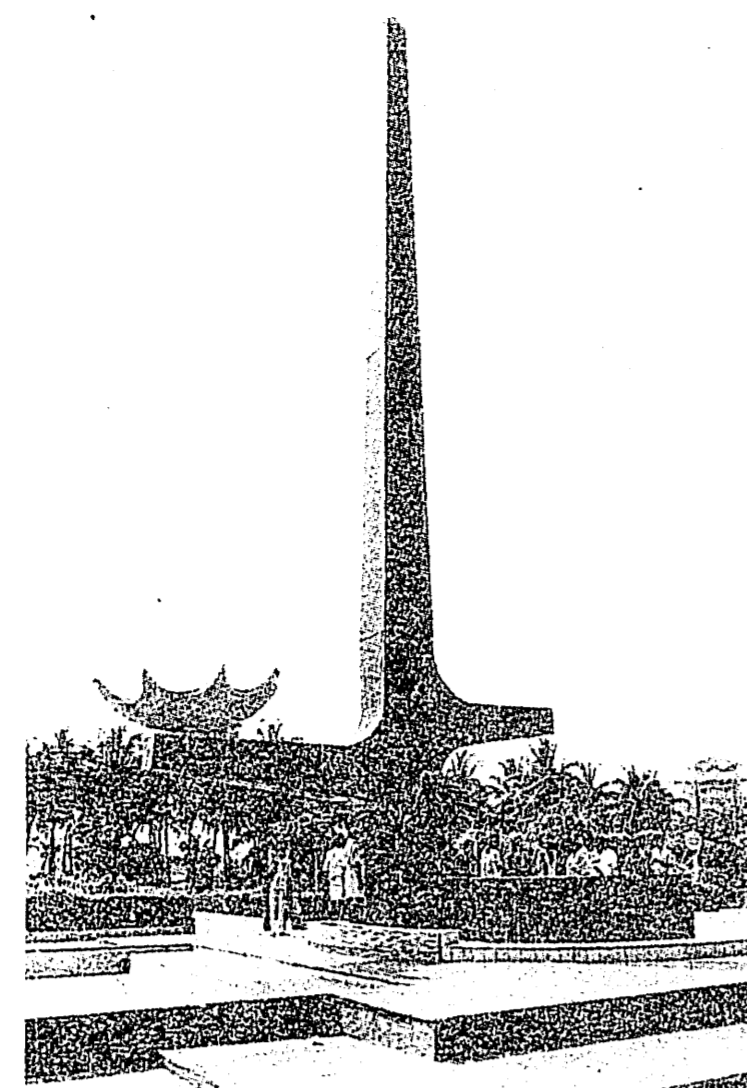
★ An engineering firm sent quotations for fish-plates to the Railway Ministry and received the following reply: "The purchase of fish-plates does not fall within the jurisdiction of this ministry. You are, therefore, requested to communicate with the ministry concerned, i.e. the Food Ministry."

Will it serve the purpose?

Insider Trading Regulations that came into force on November 19, 1992, have only gone on to add to the prevailing confusion. This law aims to ban profit-making, or the avoidance of losses, through securities trading by those who have access to unpublished, price-sensitive information, or who even counsel another person to trade. It will be an offence punishable with imprisonment up to two years and/or a fine up to Rs 5 lakhs.

The term 'Corporate Insider' is not restricted to the top echelons of the organisations alone. An 'Insider' could be any person who is connected with the company or deemed to have been connected with it and who can reasonably be expected to have access to price-sensitive information. Hence, the kind of people who easily fall into this category could be the Managing Director, Chairman, merchant banker, share transfer agent, investment advisor, sub-brokers, investment company or its employees, Board of Trustees of a Mutual Fund, Director of an Asset Management Company or of a Mutual Fund, a relative of any of these or any employee of any of these. Thus it spans the whole gamut. Virtually anyone could be an 'insider'.

The dawn of the statute is a significant development, as it will no doubt serve as a moral deterrent against



THE OLD...

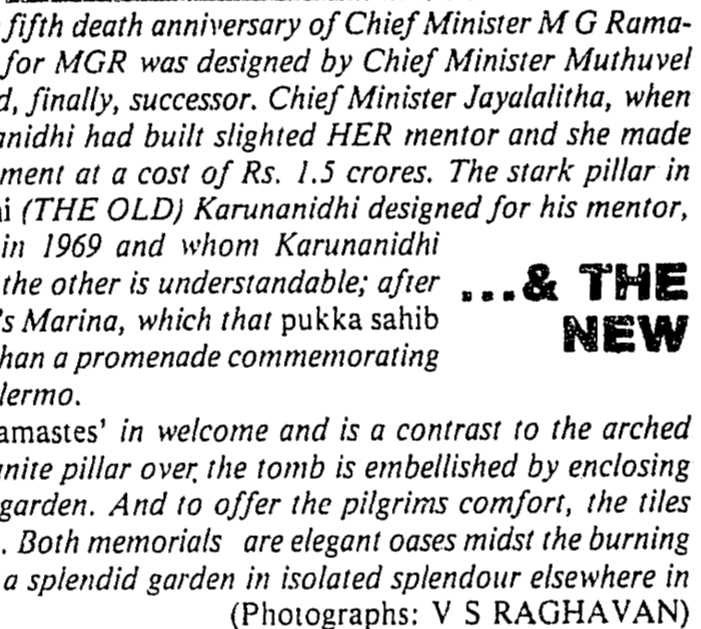
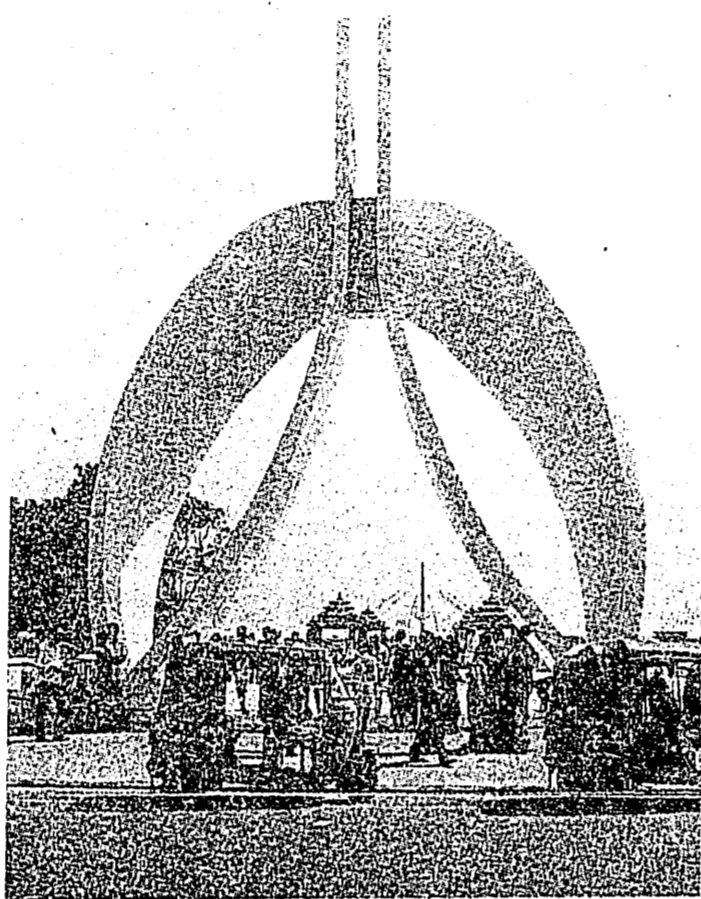
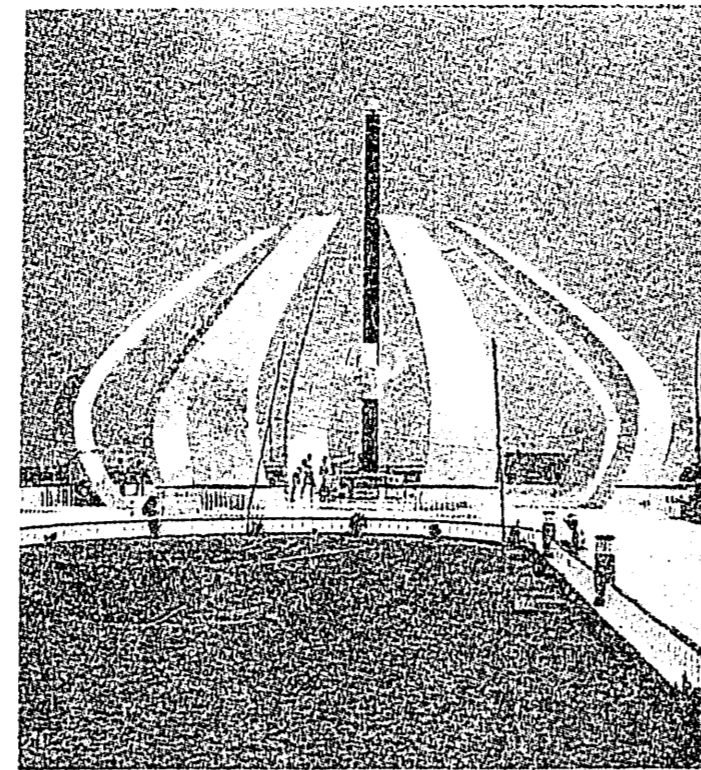
In the new samadhi, however, a 44-foot archway 'namastes' in welcome and is a contrast to the arched tusks beneath which the Anna samadhi is entered. The granite pillar over the tomb is embellished by enclosing 'lotus petals' and this thought is echoed elsewhere in the garden. And to offer the pilgrims comfort, the tiles along the pathways are insulated to permit barefoot walking. Both memorials are elegant oases amidst the burning sands of the Marina. But would that they had each found a splendid garden in isolated splendour elsewhere in the city and left the Marina to Nature.



BULL'S EYE

trading. Similarly, sharebrokers dealing with stock in the normal course of their business would unwittingly be vulnerable to exposure from law and consequent harassment. Consequently there is an urgent need for additional explanatory case laws. Simultaneously, the infrastructure has to be upgraded to be on par with the best in the world for monitoring trades. This would make the law itself more just and fair.

Meanwhile, it remains to be seen how these laws will weather the test of court trials. As the Indian market is rife with surreptitious deals that undo the cause of investor protection, codes



...& THE NEW

(Photographs: V S RAGHAVAN)

of ethics/conduct are being worked out for the players, like brokers, financial institutions, mutual funds and companies. Maturing of the law will take time and there is a price for growing up. It is to be hoped that the menace of insider trading will be contained without any damage to the innocent.

Meanwhile, here are some exciting recommendations for the coming fortnight:

A V Thomas Industrial Products Ltd (CMP: Rs 40.00): A V Thomas Industrial Products Ltd, a unit of the multifaceted A V Thomas Group, is engaged in the business of solvent extraction of rice bran, soyabean and other minor oil seeds. It recently embarked upon marketing of refined sunflower oil in consumer packs under the brand name 'Sunbeam'.

The working results for the half year ended Sept '92 have been satisfactory with a 62 per cent growth in sales and 36 per cent in PAT. However, the profit margins were pressurised due to high operating costs. The company's expansion of soya processing capacity from 200 tpd to 300 tpd has been completed, and this will result in increased sales for March 1993. An EPS of Rs 4 is estimated, which would support a price of Rs 65 for March 1993. Buy for medium-term gains.

R R Medi Pharma (CMP: Rs 17.00): This company entered the capital market in September '92 with a public issue of 15,20,000 equity shares of Rs 10 each for cash at par, to manufacture 14 million

bottles per annum of IV fluids in disposable, medium density Polyethylene (MDPE) plastic bottles. The project site is located at SIDCO's pharmaceutical estate in Alathur, Chengai MGR District, Tamil Nadu. Due to increased health awareness, the demand for IV fluids has been growing in recent times. There are no units adopting this process at present in South India and the demand is met entirely by companies situated in northern and western India. Hence, this company would be able to market its products easily in the South. Moreover, it is already engaged in trading activities in IV fluids as a part of its market operations. This scrip has recently started quoting in the market. It is a good buy for medium-term gains.

Techtran Polylenes Ltd (CMP: Rs 24.00): This company ventured into the capital market with a public issue in Oct '91 to set up a 100 per cent EOU in technical and financial collaboration with M's VECIL Spa, Italy, to manufacture hard resin ophthalmic lenses used in spectacles. The company is promoted by an NRI group and has its unit, with an installed capacity of five million pieces, in Medak District, Andhra Pradesh. The hard resin ophthalmic lenses are superior to conventional glass lenses and are, therefore, fast replacing the latter. The demand for them is estimated at 374 million pieces worldwide in the current year against the likely production of 273 million pieces. We had strongly recommended it at the time of public issue. It appears to be a good buy at current levels of short-term gains.

K. Gopalakrishnan

A Madras solution to Ayodhya

A trip to Madras, that is what the BMAC — VHP twins (B.V. twins for short) need, and they'll soon be eating out of each other's hands, and India's greatest crisis of the hour, Ayodhya, will blow over like one of our proverbial 'depressions in the Bay'. I can see that what-on-earth-are-you-talking-about expression on your face. Well, let me explain.

It was on New Year's Day that I discovered that the answer to the Ayodhya question lay here in Madras in the sleepy village of Thirumangalam-upon-Cooum, to be precise. As it was New Year and a Friday at that, I resolved to visit the local Amman Temple near home, something that I had not had time for earlier. I went in, mentally recalling all our *nakshatrams* for *archanas*. But the sight that met my eyes sent everything smack out of my mind. There stood Amman resplendent in a brocade and bedecked with flowers, watching lovingly over a Christmas tree and a little manger complete with Joseph, Mary and Baby Jesus!

The scene was so moving that when the priest came up, instead of requesting for *archanas*, I found myself asking, "Please, can I photograph this?" Here lay the solution to



The Thiruveethi Amman Koil, Thirumangalam (near Anna Nagar), celebrates Christmas. Is there a solution to the problems of Ayodhya here?

Ayodhya! The young Brahmin priest readily agreed, but wistfully added, "I wish you had come on the 25th; the Christmas tree was green and fresh then; now the leaves have dried up a bit." I ran home and returned with a camera. And as I clicked, *bhajans*

privately struck up 'Ram Rahim ko bhajane waale...'

I wished the learned B.V. twins had been there; they would have learnt a valuable lesson from these humble villagers! And they'd learn another lesson if they follow this itinerary.

● BY HIRAMALINI SESHADRI

resounded in the courtyard and the village children's band, led by the local Sai Samithi volunteers, most appro-

On arrival at Madras, Stop One should be the Thirumangalam temple that I have just mentioned. Stop Two would logically be the Velankanni Church in Besant Nagar. The number of non-Christians attending this church is perhaps more than Christians! Believers from all creeds come to pray and the Divine Mother blesses them all.

The next stop would be at the Mylapore Shiridi Sai Temple. Hindus, Muslims, Jains, Buddhists, Christians — all congregate here to worship the One who in His Shiridi Form, recited the Koran in temples and the Vedas in mosques, while He lived in a dilapidated, abandoned *masjid* which He named *Dwarakamayee!*

Since it is the Sabarimala season, it would be only fitting for the visitors to move on to the Erumeli mosque in neighbouring Kerala. Pilgrims seek the Lord's blessings at this mosque before proceeding to the Ayyappa temple. And to complete the South Indian tour, they should drop in at Puttappathi. I was there for Christmas; and I witnessed the greatest miracle of Bhagawan Satnya

One of his many exploits is worth narrating. A rich man in Madras had a son, tall, muscular and athletic. The boy vanished from home one fine day with a lot of money. The police were not able to trace him. A family friend suggested KC to the worried parents. During the long briefing, KC noted that the missing boy was a fine basketball player with ambitions of making it big in the U.S. Using this information, KC released a carefully-worded press ad calling for tall basketball players from India for a team being formed in the USA by an interested NRI. Suitable candidates were asked to contact an interviewer at a named hotel, on a particular day. On that day, into the

hotel room where waited KC, there walked the young basketball enthusiast. And out of an inner room walked his dear father!

Randor Guy

KC claims to have unearthed a scam in a state-owned company and has all the details in a neat file. But his offer to reveal all has not been accepted by the powers-that-be, he claimed at the celebration. "Is our nation then going to the dogs?" asked one of the audience. Cracked a wit, "No. To the politicians!" And KC laughed loudest — and most knowingly.

THE CENTURY'S PLAGUE?

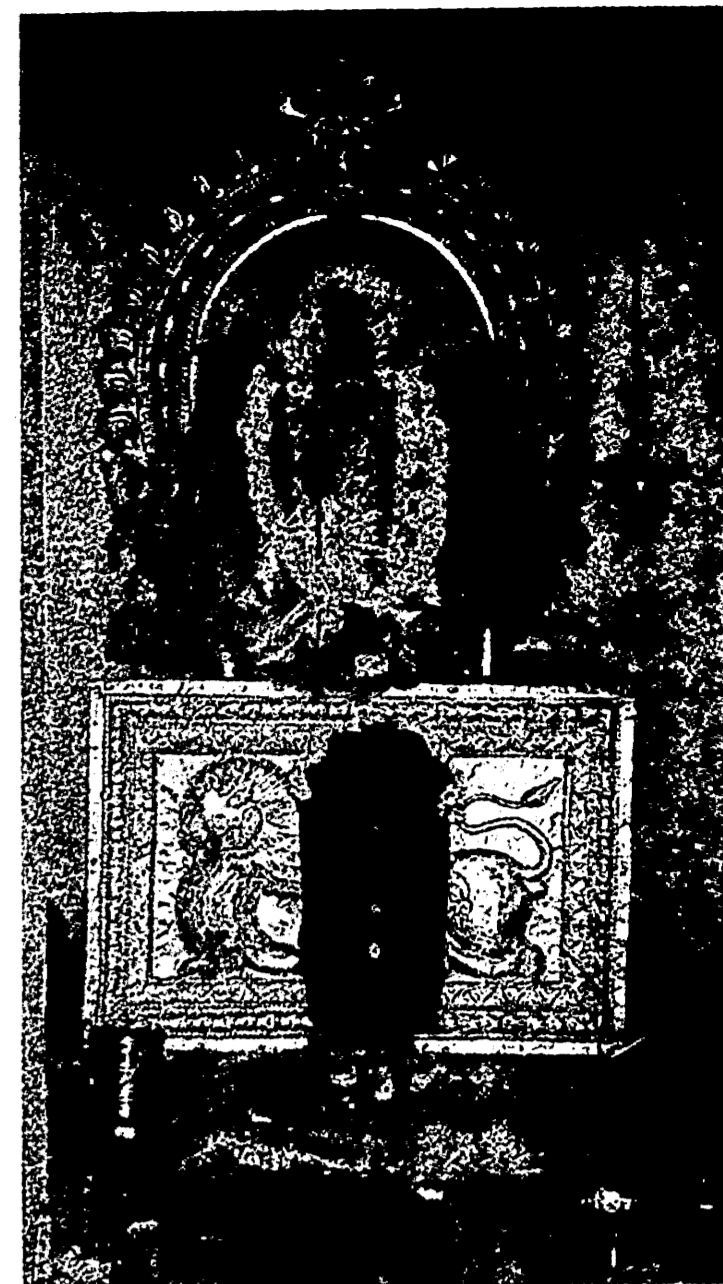
(Continued from P1)

that every unit of blood is being checked for HIV," says Dr Solomon. With 2100 HIV positive cases in 1992, this really means that there are 210,000 HIV cases in actual terms in the State. In another 5-7 years, that is by 2000 A.D., 50 per cent of these HIV cases (nearly 80,000-100,000 persons) will be full-blown AIDS cases! Some of them would have already died, some dying and the rest suffering. There will be no beds for them in the hospitals.

In Africa, whole villages have been wiped out and, in certain countries, 80 per cent of the state medical institutions are occupied with HIV-related illness. The expenses on HIV/AIDS patients are at the cost of other preventive healthcare services which are needed for the development of the nation. Tragically, this can become a reality in Tamil Nadu too; the danger is very much around the corner.

And to wind it all up, I would, before leaving Madras, take the B.V. twins to visit Mrs. S., a dear old Christian lady living near my place. Though into her late sixties, she has a zest for life that few can match. Every Thursday, she and two friends, Mrs. I, a Muslim, and Mrs. B., a Hindu, meet for a game of cards. Afterwards they drop to their knees at the card-table, and while Mrs. I prays facing West, Mrs. S says a rosary and Mrs. B prays to Krishna. By God's grace, the rummy-cum-prayer sessions continue and they look forward to a cheerful 1993.

If the B.V. twins take me up on my suggestion and visit Madras, they'll find a solution to Ayodhya lies not in the courts or in political parleys, but in the everyday lives of so many in Madras! Are you listening, Mr. Rao?



The divinity at the Thiruveethi Amman Koil, Thirumangalam.

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No shaggy dog stories here

The Madras Canine Club's 29th and 30th Championship Dog Shows, at the Y.M.C.A. College of Physical Education grounds in Nandanam in early January, were very good indeed.

Lovely grounds, nice and grassy after the rain we've had, and lots of big trees under which dogs and their owners lolled or waited anxiously for their turn in the ring. Plenty of visitors asking questions about the various

breeds, picnic lunches and samosas, golf umbrellas, stalls selling doggy accessories and dogs, dogs and more

here, but I can't tell you how pleased I was to see Indian breeds entered — Caravan Hounds, Chippiparai and

rather unimpressive. Would that there were more people to take an interest in Indian breeds and breed them upto standard!

The 29th Show was judged by Nawab Zada Ahmed Hussain, a veteran breeder and judge who judged all breeds except the German Shepherd Dogs. The 30th Show was judged by Horst Kliebenstein of Germany. All G.S.D.'s were judged by Don Mascarenhas in a special show under the aegis of the German Shepherd Club. So there were three shows, really: two All-Breeds, one Specialist. And R M Salvi of Bombay judged the obedience trials, which were comfortably won by the Madras Police dogs.

ALL the results would take all day to run through, so I'll just tell you what the final line-up was in each show. Best in Show (both shows) was the Pug 'Scarborough Bamboo' owned by S Rangarajan, and second best, in both shows again, was Nawab Nazeer Yar Jung's G.S.D., 'Brando of Blueblood'. Third BIS in the 29th Show went to S Rangarajan's Whippet 'Kana-Ka The Candy Man', and in the 30th, to Dr Narasimha Prasad's Dachshund dog 'Cinbob's Douglas of Riverdale', which was bred in India, unlike the other dogs on board. Fourth place in the 29th Show was taken by 'Emperor Justinian', a Dalmatian owned by Nawab Nazeer Yar Jung, and in the 30th Show by A D Sharma's Boxer dog. Top place in the obedience trials went to 'Jansi', a Labrador Retriever bitch owned by the Madras Commissioner of Police.

If you really want to learn more about dogs like these, or more about looking after the one you've got (it doesn't have to have an impressive pedigree), why don't you get in touch with the Madras Canine Club? And, perhaps, become a member? They have showtrading sessions, and will soon be conducting dog-and-owner training classes on a weekly basis. There are video shows, lectures and exhibitions of excellent breed specimens, so you'd learn a lot. Who says Madras has gone to the dogs?

and the water is completely absorbed. Add the remaining ghee. Mix well. Garnish with cashewnuts. Serve hot with a coconut chutney.

Chandra Padmanabhan

MILK POLI

2 cups *maida*
2 lbs oil
A pinch of Salt
A little water
Oil for frying
3 cups milk
A little colour
Powdered cardamom
Saffron
Pachai karuparam
2 cups sugar

Method

Mix *maida*, oil, salt and water and make a smooth spongy dough. Make balls, roll out and deep fry in oil. Boil milk, sugar, cardamom, saffron etc, till the milk is reduced in quantity and becomes slightly thick. Soak the *polis* in milk. When they are well soaked, remove, arrange on a plate. Pour the remaining milk over *polis*. *Polis* can also be eaten chilled.

Saraswathi Krishnaswamy

Quizzin' with Ramanan

(Quizmaster V V RAMANAN's questions are from the fortnight of Dec. 16th — 31st)

- Who will be the one-man commission to probe the events leading to the Ayodhya incidents?
- What is the reservation limit for all PG medical disciplines for Service candidates in the state for 1992-93?
- Which country celebrated its 21st victory day on December 16th?
- According to World Bank reports, what is India's external debt for 1991-92?
- What post did Nareshwar Dayal assume recently?
- Why was Veena Vidwan Tanjore K P Sivanandam in the news recently?
- How much funds has UNICEF earmarked for programmes aimed at improving the lot of children in Tamil Nadu?
- Who is the new President of South Korea?
- Who were crowned the National Squash Men's and Women's Champions in Madras recently?
- Dr C Rangarajan is the new...?
- Where in Tamil Nadu will the country's fifth Farm Machinery Training and Testing Institute come up?
- Who is to be Bill Clinton's Secretary of State?
- Can you name the trophy, the symbol of supremacy in Indian Bridge, won by the Railways in Madras?
- Which Tamil Nadu police officer achieved the unique distinction of receiving the President's Police Medal for distinguished service for the second time?
- Which Tamil work has won this year's Sahitya Akademi award?
- Can you name the mascot for the 10th Jawaharlal Nehru Football Tournament being held in Madras?
- Who plays the protagonist in Richard Attenborough's Christmas release, *Chaplin*?
- Which controversial US Defence Secretary involved in the Iran-Contra affair got a Christmas Eve Presidential pardon?
- To mark the centenary of Swami Vivekananda's 'Bharat Parikrama', this year has been declared as ...?
- The use of which motoring appendage in Tamil Nadu has been restrained by the Madras HC?

(Answers on Page 8)

by Simeon Mascarenhas

dogs. All very colourful and attractive, and so lively.

There were Pugs, Chow Chows and Whippets, all pretty uncommon

Kombai. Five Indian breeds have been officially recognised by the K.C.I., and one by the Kennel Club, London. Unfortunately, those on show were all

A little bit of Swiss taste

Any regular reader of the City's newspapers would have been baffled by the cryptic ads to be found in them of late for a new cake shop called ANNS. The amount of space taken up by the ads promised a large shop bursting with goodies — but the small corner of Prince Plaza (Pantheon Road) was a bit of a let-down, at least in size. But the fare was compensation enough.

Like most cake shops new-days, the interior is all glass and metal, with an anteroom, where you can sit and eat the fare on display. ANNS' fare included the usual selections of cakes, but with a few welcome additions — VANIL KRUEZLI (Rs. 9/-) is a Swiss vanilla cross, studded with raisins. It is served warm and is a welcome change from the pastries in the cold section that are usually available.

The prices are a little steep — the Apple Pie is Rs. 6/-, the Fudge Tart is Rs. 5/- and both leave you a little dissatisfied. ANNS' forte, however, is its fruit and plum cakes, which turn out to be exactly what the names imply — rich, fruity and mellow. These apart, the shop has the mandatory chocolate and pineapple pastries and made-to-order cakes.

The cookies too are innovations — Nut Rings (Rs. 15/- for a quarter kg) and Jam Rings

(Rs. 17/- a quarter kg). They also serve rolls, samosas, patties and selected Indian sweets like *halwa*.

Quite a nice place on the whole, but choose your pastries carefully.

Greetings and bargains!

Although the New Year season is just over, a few bargains are still available. One of them is to be found at Kolam Co-optex (on Anna Salai), next to Khadi Gramodyog Bhavan. There is a wide variety of upholstery

FOODS & FADS

material on sale, with rebates of upto 20 per cent. The bedspreads especially are worth a trip — stripes, plain or checked ones at Rs. 80/- each! Check the sizes before you buy any — they aren't uniformly of the same size. They wear well and are ideal for rough use.

There are pillow cases too and shawls, napkins, cushion covers and just about everything else. They may not be very fancy, but are just right for a divan or bedroom that takes a lot of beating.

Just next door, Khadi Gramodyog Bhavan has some

new arrivals — *jubbas* in pastel shades (pinks, yellows, greens, mauve) and shirts. *Khadi* is comfortable during the summer months, so it would be a good idea to stock up right now.

Puppets for sale

Almost all the emporia celebrated Handicrafts Week in December and followed it up with Pongal rebates during the last couple of weeks. LEPAKSHI, the A.P. Emporium (Dowland Towers, Dr Radhakrishnan Salai) has a few interesting things up for sale. Right at the entrance, there are huge terracotta jars and vases from Rs. 90/- to Rs. 190/- and above.

Inside, there's a craftsman who makes leather *Katputhlis*, or puppets, and lamp shades of stretched translucent leather painted in many shades in traditional motifs and designs. The lampshades start from Rs. 140/- upwards — costly, but worth every paise you pay.

Upstairs, there are wood carvings that merit a second look, and dress materials at Rs. 70/- a metre and upwards. Pricy, but now you know where to go when on a buying spree!

— Bhavana Kay

Reap a rich harvest with this bountiful spread. Delicious sweets for the Pongal Season — The unusual *Carrot Cashew Payasam* and the customary *Milk Poli*. And, of course, the *pongals*, both the *Sweet Pongal* and *Rava Pongal*.

Heat the four tablespoons of ghee. Fry the cashewnuts and raisins and add to the *pongol*.

Add the powdered cardamoms, cloves, nutmeg and saffron. Serve hot. ...

CARROT-CASHEW PAYASAM

SWEET PONGAL

1 cup raw rice
½ cup green gram *dhal*
1 cup milk
2½ cups water
3 cups jaggery, powdered
4 tbs ghee
2 tbs cashewnuts
2 tbs raisins
5 cardamoms, powdered
2 cloves, powdered
1 small piece nutmeg, grated
A pinch of saffron

Method

Roast dry the green gram *dhal* for a couple of minutes. Pressure cook (without the weight) the rice and green gram *dhal* with 2½ cups of water and 1 cup milk. Set aside. Dissolve the jaggery in ¼ cup water and cook on a low heat till the jaggery melts. Strain the jaggery to remove the dirt. Put the syrup once more on the heat and stir till it becomes slightly sticky. Add the cooked rice and *dhal*.

1½ cups carrot, grated
1½ litres milk
½ cup cashewnuts
1 cup warm milk for soaking the cashewnuts
½ cup sugar
6 cardamoms, crushed
2 tbs ghee

Method

Soak the cashewnuts in one cup warm milk for half an hour.

Boil 1½ litres milk in a heavy-bottomed vessel. Keep stirring till the milk reduces to half the quantity.

Fry the grated carrot in the two tablespoons of ghee for five minutes. Set aside.

Grind to a coarse paste the soaked cashewnuts and the fried carrot. Add to the milk. Add the sugar and simmer till everything blends well. Add the crushed cardamoms. Serve chilled.



RAVA PONGAL

½ cup *mung dal* — dry roasted
1 cup semolina
½ cup ghee
1 tsp peppercorns
1 tsp cummin seeds
1 piece ginger, separated and chopped fine
2 tbs halved cashewnuts for garnishing
5½ cups water
A few curry leaves
Salt to taste

Method

Add 1½ cups of water to the *mung dal* and pressure cook. Set aside. Heat ¼ cup ghee and fry the cashewnuts till golden. Set aside. In the same ghee fry the semolina and set aside.

Boil the remaining four cups of water, adding salt and shredded ginger. Add the fried semolina gradually. Add the cooked *mung dal*. Mix well, add curry leaves, pepper-cumin powder. Cook till semolina is cooked

The talk of the Season was...

Film stars at the Academy

by V.R. Devika

I went to the Music Academy to take a look at the decor and to discover why film star Meenakshi Sheshadri had been given the opportunity to dance Odissi at the Annual Conference. The decor was quite interesting, but Meenakshi was disappointing. Not that she is a bad dancer, but there are better dancers than her who have given their lives to the art and deserved precedence. Her being a film star had clearly worked in her favour.

She is neat and her Odissi definitely shows the influence of Bharatha Natyam in the movements of the torso. But she obviously was not ready to be presented at such a prestigious venue;

perhaps it would have been wise to have tested her first at the Academy's mid-year series, but it was not done. That I stayed on after the second piece may have had something to do with the fact that even special reserved seats, way up in a corner of the balcony, cost Rs. 75 each!

There can, however, be no complaints about the other film star who was featured this season at the Academy, Shobhana. She has proved

her credentials as a dancer several times in Madras, winning prizes at different venues. But for an inauguration concert, was she the right talent? The Indian Fine Arts Society has a competition for young dancers every January and the winner gets the December inauguration programme. A very good practice indeed, which other *sabhas* might follow.

Scientist's dance-drama

Prof. C V Chandrasekhar of Baroda presented a dance drama, *Arohanam*, in place of Chandralekha's *Sri* at the Krishna Gana Sabha on January 4th. Chandrasekhar has been

a Professor of Botany for many years, and that may have something to do with his theme for *Arohanam*, which spoke about the evolution of Man as propounded by Darwin and as found in the descriptions of the ten incarnations of Vishnu in the *Dashavatara*.

Chandrasekhar is an excellent dancer and singer. His choreography has never disappointed; there is always something new and different in it, even though there's a definite Kalakshetra bias. His costumes are imaginative and dancers well-trained. He took on the responsibility of singing the hour-long dance-drama himself this year, without a pause, and that was quite a feat.

The other dance-dramas presented during the season included Padma Subramaniam's new work, *Dasa*, choreographed for the ITC festival, the Dhananjayans' *Tyagaraja Vaibhavam*, which was quite a success and drew good crowds, in spite of repeated performances, and *Shakthi Prabhavam* by Sudharani Raghupathy, which is being presented again, by the Brahma Gana Sabha, on January 20th at the Music Academy.

Who's the attraction?

The Manipuri dance performances by Daishana Jhaveri and disciples were poorly attended at the Bharath Kalachar Hall. It is a pity that Madras finds it difficult to appreciate outsiders. The presentation had a lyrical beauty about it, reminiscent of the soft mountain breezes of the dance's home state. It was a joy to see a busy artist like Dr Padma Subramaniam attending the recital, introducing the artists and staying on for the entire programme. That Padma is the attraction was proved when, after her lecture demonstration at the Krishna Gana Sabha, there was an exodus and only a few diehard dance fans remained to see the soulful demonstration of Rajkumar Singhajit Singh's Manipuri.

It was, in this context, a wise move to have Lakshmi Viswanathan's demonstration after the lecture on Sattriya dance by Indira Bora of Assam. Many of Lakshmi's admirers had to sit



Sharad Kumar

charming wife now runs the agency), this handsome young man with a still-slim figure has had to work hard to make his way to the top. It was the box-office hit *Sooriyam* which catapulted him to nearly the top of the

Our Cinema Correspondent reports from the Madras Film World

heap. Now he is somewhere near the top bracket and his 'going rate' is said to be around 2 million rupees! Of course, the most expensive star is Rajanikanth, whose fee is said to be a stunning 10 million rupees! Well, that's the talk around town, anyway.

1992 was not the best of years for South India's No. 1 Superstar. Only *Annamalai*, a K Balachander

...and dubbed films & Vijaya Shanthi stole the year

It's stock-taking time once again — about the trends that dominated the year, the down-turns and hits and misses on the Tamil screen in '92. It was dubbed (in Tamil, that is) films, and that too films starring that fearless female fighter Vijaya Shanthi (some call her the Nadia — of the John Cavaas team — of the days of innocence in Hindi cinema, while others call her the 'Lady Amitabh Bachan' of Telugu cinema), which were the real winners during '92. It was a year which suffered from a hang-over of the *Chinna Thambi* success the previous year. The previous year's mega-hit *Chinna Gounder*, which gave a totally different image to that bang-bang dishum-dishum actor Vijaya Kanth, also provided a few hiccups to Tamil cinema in 1992, when some producers showed a penchant for titling their films with a 'Peria' prefix — as in *Peria Gounder Pannu*.

While there were fewer original films released during the year, which witnessed more flops than hits, there was a remarkable spurt in the number of dubbed films, and, surprise of surprises, it was not just Telugu films that were dubbed in Tamil, but also the films of Malayalam superstars Mamooty and Mohanlal. Two of them, Lal's *Arsalan* (*Abhimanyu* in Malayalam) and Mammootty's *Kshatriya Vasham* (*Kouravar*) fared better at the box office than some of the Tamil originals.

It was the runaway success of *Vijayanthi IPS* (*Karthavyam* in Telugu) which reformed the image of Vijaya Shanthi as the most saleable screen icon in Tamil. Distributors made a beeline to grab any Telugu film starring her for dubbing in Tamil. So staggering are the prices offered for dubbing rights of a successful Vijaya Shanthi starrer in Telugu, that it is no



Vijaya Shanthi

surprise that the actress herself charges Rs. 40 lakhs a Telugu film.

With the success of *Thovar Magan*, Kamal Hasan was back to centre-stage once again, scoring a march over 'superstar' Rajanikanth whose *Mannan* generated a great deal of frenzied adulation, but only among his die-hard fans.

The luckiest producer-director of the year was K Bal-

chander, who accomplished a 'Grand Slam' of sorts with his three productions — *Vaname Ellai* (which he directed), *Annamalai* (a money-spinner with Rajani and Khusboo) and *Mani Ratnam's Roja*.

For *Chinna Thambi's* P Vasu, the director with the *Midas* touch, it was a year of let-downs rather than soaring successes.

The two fact-cum-fiction thrillers, *Kutra Pathrikal* and *Sivarasam*, both trying to recreate the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, did not hit the screens last year, despite much hype and hoopla about them.

Tamil Cinema generally disappointed; it is to be hoped that it will regain its verve and vitality in the year ahead.

— T K Abdul Majeed.

(Pictures courtesy: Film News' Ananthan)

through the demonstration by Indira, which was itself most interesting and informative.

Is Bharatha Natyam limited?

Though Sonal Mansingh, chairing the Krishna Gana Sabha's Natyakala conference, had kept the usual practice of praising the convener to a minimum during the ten days of the conference, the last day got out of hand and, instead of becoming a summing up session, turned into one long eulogy. First Prof. Sundaram read a sonnet to her. Then Sudharani Raghupathy, one of the few Madras stars seen at the conference, rushed to the mike to say her piece — and wound up telling everyone that she was constantly being mistaken for Sonal.

She also told the audience how a gathering at an orthodox church had wept after she had performed a Christian theme. Chandrasekhar had earlier mentioned that he had choreographed an entire repertoire of Christian themes for a Christian priest who had been a student of his.

These remarks were in answer to a question from a person in the audience about why only Hindu gods and goddesses were featured in Bharatha Natyam. Well, the simple answer to that is that Bharatha Natyam is a tradition derived from the ritual of worship in Hindu temples and most of its dancers, being Hindu, like to dance to compositions familiar to them. The art form is open to any narration, depending on the artist and the occasion. Anyone with training, skill and imagination can do anything with it.

Dates for Your Diary

January: 'Artist of the Month', Manjit Bewa, from Delhi and Dohouse, exhibits his drawings (MMB).

Till Jan. 18: Photographic exhibition: 'Theatre in Germany 1950-1990', at LKA. The exhibition, focusing on drama in the FRG before unification, is also a presentation of German theatre photography.

Till Jan. 23rd: The South Rashtriya Kala Mela at the Museum complex, organized by the LKA.

Till Jan. 31: Floating book fair on m.v. *Doulos* in Madras Port. Entry fee of Rs. 25 reimbursable when a book is bought.

Jan. 18: Recital by jazz pianist Keith Tippet, who came to prominence in London in the late 60's with his sextet and 50-piece ensemble 'Cenitpede'. Widely recognized as one of the most radical pioneers in contemporary jazz. (7.00 p.m. B.C., by invitation from Rec. Desk).

Jan. 19: Legacy of a Dream: Remembering Martin Luther King, Jr. (6.00 p.m., USIS).

Jan. 21: The inauguration of President-elect Bill Clinton: Coverage and Discussion (6.00 p.m., USIS).

Jan. 22: 'Economics in Transition', lecture by Madhava Mohan (6.00 p.m., USIS)

Jan. 25: 'Hollywood, Multiculturalism, and the American Dream', lecture by Paul Levine (6.00 p.m., USIS).

Jan. 26 — Feb. 5: Exhibition of the graphics and sculpture of Kathe Kolwitz — 75 exhibits dating from 1895 — 1983 (originals). At the LKA.

Jan. 29: Lecture-demonstration on 'Philip Glass and Minimalist Music' by J Andrew Cortez-Greig (6.00 p.m., USIS).

February: 'Artist of the Month', Anita Chakraborty from Calcutta, exhibits her prints.

Feb. 4 — 19: *Leather as a Medium: An original exhibition by French and Indian artists working with leather as their medium of Art.* A.F. art gallery.

(A.F. — Alliance Francaise; B.C. — British Council; M.M.B. — Max Mueller Bhavan; M.A. — Music Academy; L.K.A. — Lalit Kala Akademi; U.S.I.S. — US Information Service.)

CITY ALL SET FOR SOCCER FEAST

'Leo's' ready for the kick-off



The stage has been well set. Indeed, there could not have been a more fitting venue for the most glamorous football tournament ever to be held in Tamil Nadu than Madras City's new Nehru Stadium, where the tenth edition of the country's lone annual international tournament will be kicked off on Tuesday, January 19th.

The Rs. 40 crore Nehru Stadium, the country's best-equipped sports arena, is indeed the pride of Tamil Nadu. It has helped the Tamil Nadu Football Association (TFA) regain its lost prestige and pride. Nearly a decade ago, when the All-India Football Federation (AIFF) allotted it the organisation of the Nehru Cup competition, the TFA was forced to decline the offer because it did not have a suitable stadium for an international tournament. It had thus to swallow what little pride it had as smaller controlling bodies, like those of Kerala and Goa, staged the prestigious tournament. Fortunately for the TFA, when the AIFF repeated the offer this time, it was lucky that a sport-minded Chief Minister had entered Fort St George. A formal request to her by a TFA delegation, led by that indefatigable soccer official C R Viswanathan, was enough for the TFA to realise its dream of staging the country's most prestigious football tournament.

The field for that tournament's tenth edition includes Romania and Russia, last year's winners and runners-up, respectively, and also the World Cup surprise packet Cameroon. In this field, India has little hope, but the 1993 team is stated to have benefited immensely from the long coaching camp the probables attended in Bangalore under the supervision of a foreign coach.

It is anybody's guess whether the Indian squad for the first-ever Nehru Cup tournament to be held in Tamil Nadu will include a local player. Three were invited to the Bangalore camp, but at the time of writing, there is no knowing if any one of them will make the grade. A safe guess is the National selectors might be chivalrous enough to pick at least one Tamil Nadu player — to sit amongst the reserves — as a 'Thank You' gesture.

— AJAX

Lone Indian star, the Stadium

(By A Sports Reporter)

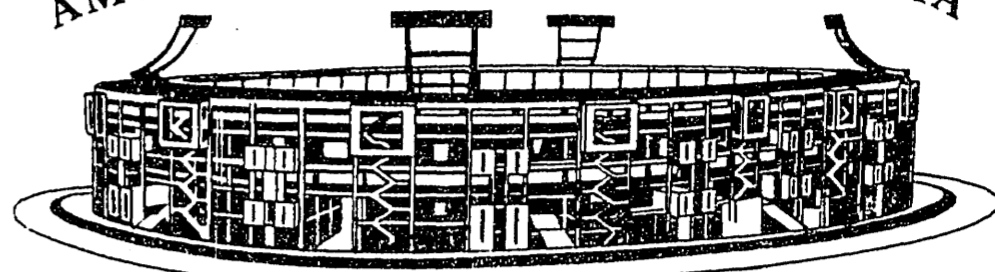
When Prime Minister Narasimha Rao inaugurates the new Nehru Football Stadium in erstwhile People's Park on January 19th, he will be inaugurating a stadium not as impressive as Calcutta's 100,000-capacity Salt Lake Stadium or Delhi's 75,000 capacity Nehru Stadium. But the 40,000 capacity Madras Stadium will be the country's most state-of-the-art stadium.

When the 10th Jawaharlal Nehru Gold Cup international football tournament gets underway soon after the inauguration, the visitors from eight countries will find the following facilities *in situ*:

- A subway for players to enter the field directly.
- Facilities for medical examination and physiotherapy.
- An indoor gymnasium.
- Rooms for referees and other delegates.
- A separate conference room.
- Accommodation for 100 players.
- A two-way vehicular entry point for emergency use by the fire brigade and ambulances.
- Roof cover for 30,000 spectators.
- Easy accessibility for spectators — in case of an emergency the stadium can be vacated in just 11 minutes.

THE QUEEN

AMONG SPORTS STADIA IN ALL ASIA



JAWAHARLAL NEHRU STADIUM MADRAS

- A special ramp for use by the handicapped.
- Grass for the field from Calcutta.
- Suitable drains to get rid of surface water to enable matches to restart fast.
- Closed-circuit TV.
- Electronic scoreboards.
- An eight-lane German synthetic track, each lane of 1.2 m width, with a 13 mm synthetic layer over asphalt.

The stadium will be set in ten acres, half of it built-up area which has involved the use of 764 piles, 25,000 cu m of concrete, 88,000sq m of shuttering, 5076 pre-cast elements of upto 16 t each and 17,000 t of erection.

With so much to impress the public, what is the need for the organisers to empty promise the public such "international football figures like

Joao Havalange, president, Federation International de Football Association, Switzerland, Joseph S Blatter, also of the same organisation, Tan Sri Haji Hamzah and Peter Velappan of Malaysia and Pele, the all time great footballer."

Like much else with The Stadium, Chief Minister Jayalalitha has taken a personal interest in the mascot for its first tournament — 'Leo' in "green to represent the playing field, yellow to signify an auspicious occasion and brown to stress that it is a rugged, earthy sport". But in decreeing that hereafter the State's colours in all sport will be green and yellow, she appears to have forgotten "the rugged, earthy element". Obviously the Chief Minister knows well what is lacking not only in Tamil Nadu sport but in ALL Indian sport. That will become obvious as the days of the tournament go on. We'll find that the Stadium will be the lone Indian star. Would that this reporter is proved wrong.

Where's the Spin?

"India needs to remember its traditions. If the development of pace bowling is going to become detrimental to spin bowling, then I would say don't do it. The cost will be too high. I think what India has to do is to work on spin too, simultaneously. The balance must be maintained."

This categorical assessment was made last September by Ian Chappell, the former Australian captain, a batsman of distinction and a very outspoken critic of the game after his retirement from it more than a decade ago. He was in Madras at the invitation of the M.R.F. Pace Foundation, of which Dennis Lillee is the guiding spirit, to assist the latter train pace bowlers. His words, spoken on the eve of the tour, strike a significant note in the context of the Indian team's sad experience in South Africa.

From the time international cricket resumed after the World War II, the spinners have provided the main thrust to Indian bowling, from Vinoo Mankad

A warning to be heeded

to that great quartet of the Sixties and Seventies. Chappell could make his frank statement because he had the experience of having batted against the quartet as a member of Bill Lawry's Australians in India in 1969-70. That was a fascinating series of test matches, because of the display of the nuances of spin bowling by Prasanna and company.

Australia may have won the series 3-1, but the significant feature was that

going about its task of shaping Indian pace bowlers. India certainly needs such bowlers and the Foundation is doing good work in trying to evolve them; but in the enthusiasm to do this, our traditional strength, spin bowling, seems to have been totally ignored, so that there is no spinner today of the quality of the quartet. It is against this backdrop that Chappell's views should be received and studied and proper steps taken to revive an art which seems to be forgotten. It will be costly to shut our eyes to the problem.

The Indian attack chosen for the tour of South Africa consisted of five pacemen and two spinners. The wickets in South Africa may have helped the pacemen a bit, but accustomed as they are to pace bowling on their pitches, the South Africans were able to negotiate them comfort-

ably, and captain Azharuddin had to turn to his spinners. But they were inadequate.

Against England, our pace bowlers will, in the next couple of months, find that our slow pitches will reduce their effectiveness — an all-too familiar sight — and again we may have to call in the spinners to deliver the goods. But are our present spinners equal to the task? I think not. That is why Chappell's warning is timely.

the best Australian total in the tests was only 348, at Kanpur. Indian batting let-downs, as in South Africa, were the real reason for the adverse result. Incidentally, Chappell was one of the few batsmen who succeeded against the Indian spinners, scoring a century in the Delhi test and 99 in the Calcutta match, displaying masterly footwork and a wide repertoire of strokes.

Chappell had a good chat for the Pace Foundation and the way it was

• by P N SUNDARESAN

ANSWERS TO QUIZ

1. Justice Manmohan Singh Liberhan;
2. 50 per cent; 3. Bangladesh; 4. \$ 71.5 billions; 5. High Commissioner to Sri Lanka;
6. He presided over the 66th Conference of the Music Academy; 7. Rs. 6 crores;
8. Kim Young Sam; 9. Adrian Ezra and Misha Grewal; 10. RBI Governor;
11. Tiruchi; 12. Warren Christopher;
13. Ruia Trophy; 14. DGP V Vaikunth;
15. Kovai Manisekaran's Kutralak Kurinji;
16. Leo, the Lion; 17. Robert Downing (Jr.); 18. Caspar Weinberger; 19. Rashtriya Chetna Year; 20. Air-horns.

What do we do with this athletics promise?

(By The Corner Flag)

A few athletes of promise were to the fore in the 64th Tamil Nadu AAA championships which were recently held in Palayamkottai. But little attention was paid to any of their performances by the Madras dailies.

Obviously the dailies think promise is not to be encouraged. This Press sees for itself the role of critic alone — and that too for the failures in the international arena of the few athletes it unrealistically boosts. Lacking support from this Press, no wonder many a promising athlete soon decides to fade away, and no wonder Indian Athletics remains in the doldrums.

The Tamil Nadu athletes who could do with some confidence-building support are:

M S SHREEDHARAN, who won the 100 m in 10.5s, up-

setting national champion Bharadwaj.

V JEYALAKSHMI, who won the 100 m in 11.8s and the 200 m in 24.9s.

ANAND NATARAJAN, who won the 200 m in 21.1s, beating Shreedharan, but who has not fulfilled the promise he showed a couple of years ago yet remains among the country's top sprinters.

P GRESON, who clocked 1:57.1 in the 800 m.

C HEMALATHA, a 16-year-old from Palayamkottai who won the 400 m in 57.9 s. And

B. JAYAKUMARI in the 3000 m and 10,000 m.

Is there anyone who will ensure these athletes and a few others will get year-round training on the new track at the Nehru Stadium under qualified coaches? Some systematic training on a dream track could do wonders for such athletes who show promise.