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Vol. IV. No. 1

April 16 — 30, 1994

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It's a new lease of life

For 'Government House' (That's NOT 'Admiralty House'!)

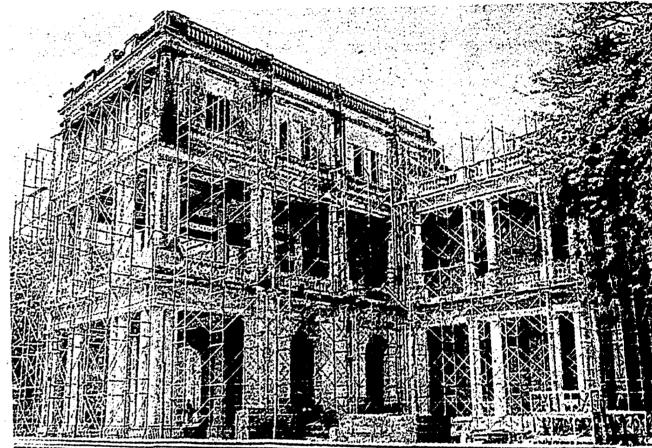
(By The Editor)

restored, renovated and refurbished, is GOVERNMENT HOUSE in Government Estate (just behind Round Tana where now stands the Anna Statue). It was the home of the Governors of the Madras Presidency from 1752 until Independence, when post-Independence Governors decided they preferred the 'country house' of the British Governors (now Raj Bhavan) to this 'town mansion'.

When the near Rs. 1 crore restoration is completed, it is planned to use the building as the offices of the Director-General of Police, Tamil Nadu, until a new police headquarters is built on what was once a site of 'Perfect Unanmity' but on which there is no unanimity now. Senior citizens of Madras are asking Government to

stay the demolition of the present police headquarters and reconsider best how the new headquarters should be developed while at the same time restoring the present headquarters building.

With Government in a grand gesture deciding to preserve Government House, the question arises as to what use the building should be put to once the DGP gets his new headquarters, wherever. These columns have advocated in the past that simultaneous restoration of Government House and its Banqueting Hall (now Rajaji Hall) be undertaken and both be used as a State Government residential conference centre, serviced by a training school attached to it for the staff of the TTDC's Tamilnadu Hotels. Alternatively, both properties could be leased out for care



Sprucing up Government House in Government Estate.

(Photograph by V S RAGHAVAN).

A NOTE: Government House is
NOT Admiralty House, as it has been

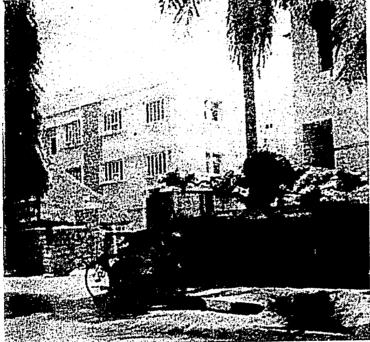
and use by one of the major hotel

that Robert Clive had lived there.

Right: (Photograph by SUSHEELA NAIR).

Admiralty Hotel, on the site of Admiralty House in Mandaveli.

Apartment blocks for the American oil company ARAMCO (when working on Madras Refineries) had been built on the site and these, later, became the hotel. (Photo: V.S. RAGHAVAN)





called in several places by the city paper that for a century and more had prided itself on never nodding. The core of this mansion was the 'garden house' that belonged Mrs Luis de Madeiros. The San Thomé Madeiros family was also known as the Madra family and there is a school of thought that Madras derived its name from this wealthy and influential family. Be that as it may, Mrs Madeiros rented the building to Governor Thomas Saunders in 1752 and, the next year, sold it to him for 3500 pagodas. Saunders, after refurbishing it, used it as a 'garden house' to get away from Government House in the Fort, round which Legislature and Secretariat were later developed.

The Estate was extended in 1756 and again in 1855 when much of the Nawab of Camatic's Chepauk property was added to it. Governors Thomas Rumbold (1778-80) and Lord Edward Clive (1798-1803) were responsible for developing the property. The second Lord Clive worked with his favourite engineer John Goldingham to bring it to almost what the building looked in its heyday. Clive was determined to live

in quarters not inferior to Chepauk Palace! But it was as late as 1860 that the third storey was added. It was from Clive's time that the 'garden retreat' became permanent gubernatorial residence.

Admiralty House, on the other hand, is the 'Great House in Charles Street' in the Fort, now better known as Clive House, just across (westwards) from St Mary's Church. Owned by wealthy Armenian families in the early part of the 18th Century, the Great House was rented to the Government after the restoration of Madras to the English by the French in 1749. With

Fort St David in Cuddalore considered the Company's headquarters till order returned to Madras, the city had a Deputy Governor, Richard Prince, and the *Great House* was where he lived. It was later occupied by Robert Clive. Bought by the Government in 1755, it was used that year for the first time by the Court of Admiralty — to try a few mutineers. From that time, it has been called *Admiralty House* till recent years when the Clive connection was remembered.

It was, however, used by Governors as their town residence from time (Continued on P6)

Thank you all, for your kind words

As Madras Musings enters its fourth year and treads a new path, reluctantly charging a subscription, both your Editor and the Publishers, Lokavani Hall Mark Press (P) Ltd, thank all of you who not only sent your subscriptions in but also took the time and trouble to write us words of encouragement. The nicest words from many of you were that there was no reason for us to feel apologetic about calling for subscriptions: But we do feel sorry that an experiment we thought would capture the imagination of the educated citizens of Madras failed. We, however, still live in hope; we look forward to our advertising SUPPORT increasing to such an extent that we can once again make Madras Musings a free-mailer and, thus, make many more than only subscribers aware of our city and its problems and its achievements. We look forward to every major business house in the city and many a smaller one making that possible.

The subscriptions, meanwhile, have been coming in, in fits and starts. Maybe not as many as we thought there would be, but nevertheless quite a heartening number and promising hope of many more. What has been encouraging is the number of people whom those associated with Madras Musings have met in recent weeks and from whom they've heard remarks like: "I must subscribe; I've just not got around to it; the coupon is lying on my table". We look forward to those coupons being filled in and sent to us. Well-wishers could help by urging friends to send in their subscriptions or by GIFTING subscriptions to their friends. We hope that with your help we'll reach a target of 6000 subscribers by the end of June this year. Meanwhile, if you want a subscriber coupon, turn to PAGE 8.

THE EDITOR

OUR

READERS

WRITE

Russian Constitution

It was a well-organised, wellattended seminar, with several big names present. A Madras University department that is rather more active than most, the Department of South and Southeast Asian Studies, and the US Educational Foundation of India brought the participants together to discuss 'Ethnicity and Nation-building'. The discussions ranged from Vietnam to the CIS, with one session focussing rather ineffectively on Tamil Nadu and another focussing rather more usefully on ethnic movements in other parts of the country.

The paper that rather brightened up things for The Man From Madras Musings, however, was the one on the Constitution of the Soviet Union and its successor state presented by former Ambassador A K Damodaran who has done a stint in Moscow in a middling posting at one time. The paper stoked the memories of those like MMM who had forgotten what a re-

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ing Division - Retired), Installation Manager,

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and think of how suddenly you died; It's sad to

think you could not say Goodbye, Before you

closed your eyes, No one knows how many

times, I have broken down and cried,

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MUSINGS

conceived. There couldn't have been a better concept of federalism to meet the needs of all the constituent racial, linguistic and religious groups of the country that emerged in the post-Czarist days. The federal organisation, not tried out anywhere else, included the Union Republics, Autonomous Republics that were part of the Union Republics (a federal state within a member of the federal state!), the autonomous regions within Union or Autonomous Republics, and the National Areas!

due to the overweening nature of the Communist Party under Stalin and the legacy he left his successors. There was indeed in most of the regions, as Ambassador Damodaran pointed out, considerable autonomy, but in each 'state' there was always the restraining hand of the Number Two in the Government, the Party representative. This stilled the dream to some extent and

made almost the whole world forget the unique feature of the Constitution, one found in no other constitution - THE RIGHT OF SECESSION! No wonder that, when the Party weakened, the Union fell apart and the creaking is continuing to be heard in Russia. But the failure does not condemn the dream; there's much in it that is worth studying, pointed out Ambassador Damodaran. Now if Russia recognised

ethnic differences and the need to retain ethnic identity even while developing one nation, the American experience was virtually the opposite. While not exactly a melting pot, America became a salad bowl of ethnic groups, Professor S Gopal had pointed out while inaugurating the seminar. Now MMM looked hopefully around for a comparison of the Soviet and American experiences and the lessons in them for an India badly in need of a re-assessment of its Constitution and the introduction of a more federal constitution offering greater state's rights. But, sadly, neither was there a paper on the American experience nor were there any Americans present during Ambassador Damo-

daran's presentation who could

have commented on the diffe-

rences in the basic thinking on

the two constitutions. In fact, one of the less happy features of the seminar was the American participation - or, rather, the lack of it - despite

being co-hosts. The American presentation apparently was a case of 'no show', but more unfortunate was that the three or four American scholars - and some of them were very senior and well-known professionals kept a low profile throughout, being basically content with chairing their sessions or presenting non-controversial papers. Could it be that there was a consensus that silence or absence - is golden at all other times in alien surroundings? Whatever the reason, the American constitutional experience contrasted to the

Soviet might have shed greater light on the ethnic issues and their handling in many of the other countries and areas discussed, and especially India. The Man From Madras Musings was also rather

disappointed that the Indian diaspora and its three waves, which have caused various ethnic problems, not the least being a majority being treated as a minority in several countries, found no place in the Seminar. The least shadow of it was the micro-experience of Pakistanis in Bradford, U.K., and the 'Urduization' of all Muslims there, presented by Dr Kalam of Madras University. While this paper was no substitute for an in-depth look at the diaspora, it was noteworthy for one reason: its presentation. While most of the older speakers were not only completely at ease while presenting their papers and spoke almost extemporaneously while highlighting their main points, almost all the younger set studiously read their papers —

and found some effort in doing

that too. Young Dr Kalam was a

pleasant contrast, for not only

did he make a relaxed and

anecdotal presentation, but it

was one of the few presentations

during the seminar tinged with

humour. MMM was delighted to

discover that there is still an Indian or two willing to make the attempt to get a serious audience chuckle.

Where next, after all this



A sentence or two would have heen enough, but, instead when authors, publishers, booksellers and editors met the other day with the Press, the usual hot air was blown. Favourite Ramwords like "atrocious, retrogressive and obscurantist" were tossed around, heating up an already overheated room. Was it all really necessary, wondered The Man From Madras Musings, when all that was needed, as presiding chairman Vikraman of the Editors' Association pithily put it, was a simple statement on these lines:

"The sales tax on books matter how small, must be

able." Even The Man From Madras Musings would be willing to subscribe to that view... and wholeheartedly endorse it. But MMM cannot go along with many of the other views expressed on that platform the other day as reasons for the withdrawal of the 3% Sales Tax on reading the reasons given were that trade would go to other states, none of which charged Sales Tax. The difficulties of keeping records, especially by smaller organisations. The additional work involved and, therefore, the And, above all, the fear of the taxman's visits. MMM has heard all these reasons over the years aging material — and the industries survived. In fact, packaging

The soft touch was certainly applied, but only for a while, by Chandrasekhar of Higginbothams, President of the Booksellers' and Publishers' Association of South India. Mentioning how surprised he was when he read what The Hindu had first highlighted, he said he could not believe his eyes because, hitherto, successive Tamil Nadu Governments had treated the book industry with

available to the Association at a nominal charge for its annual book fairs and all kinds of help rendered by the Department. A senior Minister always inaugurated the Fair. And when the Fair was devastated by fire in 1993, Government came forward to make ad hoc grants to those who suffered and, additionally, enabled soft loans to be given to them. Why was Government taking back by this tax all its generosity so graciously given, he wondered. Such pragmatic politeness will do much more in this instance than all the loud and angry expressions of righteousness, MMM feels.

great kindness. The PWD-super-

vised Quaid-E-Milleth College

grounds had always been made

Incidentally, it is also necessary in such instances to be factually correct. This might be a new tax in India and it might not be levied in Britain too. But this does not mean it is not levied ANYWHERE. There is certainly a tax on books in several countries, many of them in Western Europe where the modern book was born.

In these circumstances, it might be better to emphasise, MMM feels, the Indian constitutional fact that sales tax may not be charged on newspapers and journals. This was indeed because the founding fathers felt there should be no tax on information or knowledge. But they appear to have forgotten books and allied paraphernalia, which probably contribute more to knowledge. And a rectification of that little bit of forgetfulness might be a call worth making.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This para was written before the Chief Minister announced the withdrawal of the tax on books.

Madras Musings' cookery columnist Chandra Padmanabhan's Dakshin, that Indian bestseller on South Indian vegetarian traditional cookery, has just been published in Australia by HarperCollins for the international market. And what a lovely production it is, with every dish presented in glorious colour, being 'shot' after it had been tried out by two South Indian chefs who are now Sydney-based! Rupa plan to import some of these luxurious copies and they are sure to find a niche in the presentation market. Meanwhile, Chandra is busy with a more general South Indian vegetarian cookery book and she's considering a Rest-of-India vegetarian cookery book for thereafter. Meanwhile, another Madras Musings contributor, Simeon Mascarenhas, now Australia-based, is working on a book of Anglo-Indian cookery. That's another one to look out for, based as it is on Mother's recipes and 'Mother' in most Anglo-Indian homes has the reputation of being a fabulous cook.

* It happened at a temple festival in Ramanathapuram District. The man was kneeling in prayer together with the other devotees. Suddenly, the priest took the aruval used to break coconuts and used it to behead the kneeling man. The man was the priest's brother-in-law. As shocked devotees reacted with screams, the priest made good his escape. Presumably, not for MMM

The Army and its men

— In Pallavaram and

non-family stations.

14 per cent and half their service is in

quality of accommodation if it is

available at all. A battalion of my

Regiment, 10 Para Commando, lived

for several years in Bikaner in three

camel stables of the erstwhile Bikaner

Ganga Risala. These had the advantage

of high roofs and so it was hardly an

improvement to be moved into 'tentage

replacement scheme' huts, where they

still are. We don't grumble. We

appreciate better than most that it is

proper that we should make do as best

the years. But it should not be thought

that this is recognition of services

rendered. The pay of the Armed Forces

is laid down by the same pay com-

mission as operates for all governmen

servants; it has no military member

The last pay commission equated the

Infantry soldier to semi-skilled labour

and decreed a 5 per cent pay differential

to compensate for the Infantry soldiers

risks and hardships over the South

Block *chaprasi* who sits on a chair all

day, picking his toes, with a fan playing

mistake on the last Army Day (15th

In my opinion, the Chief made a

The soldiers' pay has increased over

we can with what we can get.

We are not too fussy about the

There is little that escapes the notice of MMM. In his 'Short 'N' Snappy' column in the issue of Feb 16, under the heading 'A Fleeting Memory', he comments on some Army matters

The ex-Army Officer was correct in what he said, no matter how unconvincing he may have sounded. Pallavaram is a good Cantonment for us for the reasons given — it has family accommodation and decent barracks. The officers' bungalows are dilapidated because there is no money to repair or rebuild them. The gardens were untended because the battalion, 4/5 Gorka Rilles, had been away on manoeuvres with its Division for two months, leaving only a small rear party to care for the battalion's lines, property and families.

The Gorkhas arrived in Pallavaram after over three years service in a field area (no barracks, no families), about four months before leaving for manoeuvres, an annual and essential part of training. The Gorkhas came in place of 16 Maratha Light Infantry, which lost its Commanding Officer and 17 officers and men killed in action about a month after moving from Pallavaram. It should be of interest to your readers to know that the soldiers of an infantry battalion are lucky if they get to have their families living with them for one year during their colour service of

Tam sorry you have to explain yourself for getting into step with others. Till now you were indeed 'out of step', as a dis-

article on FM Radio in Madras Musings of Jan. 1, 1994.

The advent of sponsored programmes artists, who were originally assigned this slot, have now been left high and dry.

Most of the programmes in the spon-

MM is deeply involved and committed to the saving of the city's heritage. One of the finest strands of this heritage is the live tradition of Carnatic music, which commands a wide audience. Hence, as a citizen of this city and an ardent Carnatic music rasika, I would appeal to Madras Musings to campaign for the restoration of the original share of classical music on the

S Balaram

approximately 14 years. Family quarters are provided at the scale of

lanuary) in announcing some increase in allowances for high altitude/glacie allowance etc. The point needed making that these had been sanctioned by the Government only as a con sequence of much higher allowance sanctioned for paramilitary and police forces carrying out routinely uncom fortable jobs.

MMM questioned the logic of having two sets of awards: the Vi Chakra and the Ashok Chakra. The Vin Chakra awards are in the presence of the enemy. Since we cannot describe or treat our own citizens as 'the enemy' we have to have a separate series of awards connected with killing and being killed by these misguided people

Editor's note: While accepting all Gen. Gill says, I still wonde whether the Ashok Chakra is the same in the public's eye as the Vir Chakra If it is not, shouldn't something he done to upgrade it, as the risks in both cases especially nowadays, are the same, and possibly even greater. As for officers gardens in Pallavaram they we been in this sorry state for the 25 years we've known

> Lt. Gen. I.S. GILL (Retd. 31 South Bank Road Madras 600 028

Heritage Act

Twas intrigued to read the following *sentences in the letter of Simon Jenkins quoted in Madras Musings, March 16th. "The second is legislation to forbid

demolition, without compensation

payable. If the state is liable to pay compensation it will never torbid demolition" Has the proverbial 'printer's devil' been

at work? To make sense it would appear that, in the second sentence, either the word 'never' should be omitted or the verb 'lorbid' should be substituted by the word 'permit'. R.C. Narayanan

T-59B, 32nd Cross Street Besant Nagar, Madras 600 09C.

Judge-Chancellor

In MM, March 16-31, a letter on Page-3 did not furnish the full name of the Cl of the then Federal Court who was Chancellor of Delhi University. He was SIR MAURICE GWYER.

N.V. Ramasubramanian 31, 23rd Street Thillai Ganga Nagar Madras 600 081.

Madras saviour

Madras is not yet the big slum of South India, surviving without a corporation for 25 years, the credit should go entirely to a single individual and his movement: M.B. Nirmal and his Exnora International. C.T. Vairavan 10 Jagadamba Colony Madras 600 014

Knowledgable viewing

pecently I saw Mahanathi. I was impressed with the acting of Kamal Hasan. But at the same time there are some loop-holes in the screenplay. For instance, a convicted warder cannot come on the rounds at nights. Moreover, he will be in a separate cell. Kamal Hasan, as a screenplay writer, should note that he has viewers with knowledge.

R Srinivasa Prabu 1/7 CPWD Qrts Besant Nagar Madras 600 090.

All's cheerless, dark & deadly

All's cheerless, dark and deadly" could sum up the state of the

debate in the Tamil Nadu Assembly in the second half of March. The acrimony in the speeches was such that it seemed as though the ruling party members saw the Opposition only as a troupe of troublemakers whose basic function was to distress the Government, while the Opposition viewed the Treasury benches as just a set of sycophants making fatuous points.

The Government benches targeted the Centre for the GATT agreement and the alleged RAW-LTTE deal at a time Tamil Nadu was fighting the latter.

The View from Fort St. George by R.K.K.

But the fuse had been lit earlier by Opposition leader S R Balasubramaniam when he said that the AIADMK owed its landslide win in the last election to the Congress(I)'s presence alongside it and to Rajiv Gandhi's blood being spilled on Tamil Nadu soil. Pat came the angry retort from Chief Minister Jayalalitha — and several Ministers — that without their support the Congress(I) would have got only a couple of seats. "We've the greatest respect for Rajiv's memory, but we'll go it alone hereafter," said the Chief Minister and warned, "We'll prove our worth in Mylapore and Perundurai". She also sprang a surprise by adding that TNCC(1) President Ramamurthy, after accepting her helping hand, had worked — though-be-it unsuccessfully - for her defeat at Bargur and Kangeyam.

The high point of the fortnight, however, was the en masse eviction of the Congress(1) members by Speaker Muthiah who had the rule book open beside him. The most uneviable task in the House was his, either politely pointing the way out to eming members or calling in the uniformed Assembly staff for help.

The RAW-LTTE issue cropped up immediately after question time one Wednesday, when Balasubramaniam sought to clarify "certain points" about the alleged deal. The Chief Minister, he argued, had based her allegations on a report in a magazine. But the Speaker was firm that, since no prior permission had been given, the issue had no place. When the Congress(I) member insisted that he should be

heard, the Speaker pointed out that on an earlier occasion, when he and another had been given a chance to refute charges, they had not utilised it. On the contrary, they had left the House. The opposition leader, the speaker said, had made it a practice to break norms. If he persisted, he would have to apologise. But Balasubramaniam refused to budge, and the Marshal had to be called in. There was slogan shouting by other Congress(I) members and the Speaker ruled that they too be evicted and members could come in only after apologising.

Tamil Nadu's policy of privatising loss-making PSUs came under fire from CPI (M)'s V Thambuswamy and CPI's G Palanisamy. But the Chief Minister was categorical that the Government would not be able to run all the industries in the State. And Industries Minister Chinnaswamy added that even West Bengal's Jyoti Basu had recognised the wisdom of privatising State-owned units in the sick list.

There were exchanges over the Kaveri issue too, with the two parties accusing each other of letting down the State's interests. Revenue Minister Somasundaram pointed out that the Chief Minister had gone on fast on this very issue, and that the Congress(I) had complained to the Centre of law and order problems due to the fast that had resulted in Rs. 100 crore loss to property. Further, Karnataka had a Congress(1) Ministry, he pointed out.

Congress(I) and the AIADMK also locked homs on the issue of the State slipping down the industrialisation list. The Government's stand was that the State had climbed to third position, despite the apathy of the Centre to its

All Congress(1)'s attempts to trip the Government failed, and at no time was the Opposition at an advantage. In fact. Chief Minister Jayalalitha was on firm ground when she said that the World Bank preferred Tamil Nadu for funding

Finance Minister V R Nedunchezhian clarified that the Government was neither totally supportive of the GATT accord nor entirely opposed to it. Inpresenting the State's budget, he announced fresh levies to net an additional tax revenue of Rs. 48 crores. These included hikes on motor vehicle tax and electricity tax — and a new tax, namely on books and therefore.

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That the dream failed was

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Redundancy: coping and bouncing back

wealth of information is mulled over? No doubt, there'll be a book. But will that get the Indian powers-that-be any nearer to taking another look at that Constitution of ours, wonders The Man From Madras Musings.



A sentence 'nut

and allied stationery, no withdrawn forthwith; it is, in effect, a tax on knowledge and is, therefore, unaccept-

books, notebooks etc. Some of need to employ extra persons. - at one time specifically over excise duties involving pack-

is now an even bigger industry than textbook production! No, administrative difficulties or loss of business are not arguments Governments buy. But the view that the proposed tax is a tax on knowledge, and that the honour of this being a pioneering step in the whole of India is something the state can well do without, are likely to elicit a more favourable reaction. Taking to the streets, as bruited by some, often boomerangs, especially when authority is challenged. The soft word, often, does wonders.

Rajaji & the beach

Tam happy to see that you are taking so much effort to focus the attention of residents of Madras on the indiscriminate destruction of ancient and historical buildings and monuments.

While appreciating INTACH for their action in preventing the proposed demolition of DGP Office, I would like to express with concern that Rajaji's view that there should be no high-rise building on the Marina has been completely flouted for a long while now. For instance, the Slum Clearance Board office is one of those that does Rajaji's view no justice. Neither do the tenements along the beach. Huts are mushrooming

every day along these tenements. San Thomé beach, once used by the residents of Mylapore and San Thomé for recreation, has actually been turned into a garbage heap. Some guards need to be appointed as part of the beautification of Marina project to prevent people from using the beach as a toilet. The stretch of beach upto Adayar should be included under the project.

S.J. Vincent Amalraj 9 East Circular Road Madras 600 028.

Bit of encouragement

It's not a journalist's lot to be appreciated or to receive letters of praise or encouragement. People just don't react or take the trouble of writing in when they like, appreciate or empathise with an article or with what a writer has to say. Being a journalist for eight years, I can vouch for it.

So, when I got your letter asking for subscriptions, I thought I should take the trouble and time to write in, with some words of appreciation for the great job you have been doing with Madras Musings. I for one, and my family, enjoy reading the tabloid and I have also often picked up interesting titbits from Madras Musings, one of which I am following up on shortly.

So, do keep up the great job that you've been doing and I hope you will receive the support you need to become a free mailer Vinay Kamath

South India Correspondent Business World, Calcutta.

In step, now

ciplined soldier would say. I now wish you

P.R. Subramanian Madras 600 004.

More Classical

This is concerning Mr V Jagannathan's

on FM Radio has unfortunately been at the cost of the time assigned to classical Camatic music on this channel. Earlier, classical music on FM channel was broadcast between 5 and 6 p.m. as well as between 7 and 9 p.m., besides the late evening classical music programmes. Now, due to the need to accommodate sponsored programmes at peak listening periods, the classical music programmes between 7 and 9 p.m. have been sacrified. As a result, senior AIR artists are being scheduled for broadcast between 5 and 6 p.m. on the FM channel. Junior

sored category are film-based. Plenty of filmbased programmes are being broadcast on Doordarshan channels and the viewers have a surfeit of such programmes. At least, the radio channels should be available for broadcast of classical music for the listening pleasure of the votaries of classical music in

Madras FM channel.

D-1 MICO Housing Society IV Avenue, Besant Nagar Madras 600 090.

April 16-30, 1994

Madras invaded!

Whatever's happened to all those insects I used to see in Madras one light, and that hanging from a cord ·city? I don't mean mosquitoes — as everyone knows they are as plentiful as ever — but the multitude of insect life I encountered when I first arrived here in September 1947 — just a month after Independence.

I stayed then in Bosotto's Hotel, which occupied a corner of Round Tana, the building in which, on ground level, you will find Bata's shoe shop today. Bosotto's was Italian-owned then, and was a delightful little hotel built in the Mediterranean fashion with several floors of rooms rising above a deep central courtyard. The last time I was inside, the main structure was intact, but all the rooms had been

One Man's Madras — HARRY MILLER'S

rented out to various tiny enterprises: a watch-repairer here, a philatelist's shop there, a humble, struggling travel agency in another old, familiar room. I don't know what has become of the pavements (and, yes, dear young building today.

But that was where I was put when I first arrived in Madras, and I wasn't exactly comfortable either, mostly on account of insects of one kind or another. There was no air-conditioning anywhere in India at that time, as far as I know, so you had to sleep under mosquito-nets to keep those pests away. But the nets were no barrier to the tiny red ants that invaded my bed and bit and stung me every night until someone came up with the brilliant and completely effective idea of putting the four less of my bed in little dishes of creosote. Thereafter, I wasn't troubled by ants or anything else, until I went out into Mount Road late one night and found that usually brilliantly illuminated throughfare in semi-darkness, rather as if there was an eclipse of the moon. I quickly saw what the trouble was: every street lamp was clouded with great swarms of thrips, those nasty little insects that normally thrive on mango orchards and ruin entire crops by sucking the sap of growing shoots, especially the young flowers.

Thrips are among the most extraordinary insects. They belong to the order Thysanoptera of which more than 1,500 species have been described. One of their most fabulous and interesting qualities is that they are practically all females. Most of them reproduce by the process known as parthenogenesis, the ability to produce young without bringing males into the business at all. In many species, males are either very rare or completely unknown. I've often wondered what our own world would be like if it were peopled only by women: I know quite a few women who would welcome such an existence, but, then again, rather more who would not.

Anyway, that night, thrips were swarming in such prodigious numbers that, like many insects so powerfully attracted to artificial light, clouds of them surrounded every street light and the entire city was plunged into partial twilight. Back in my Bosotto's room

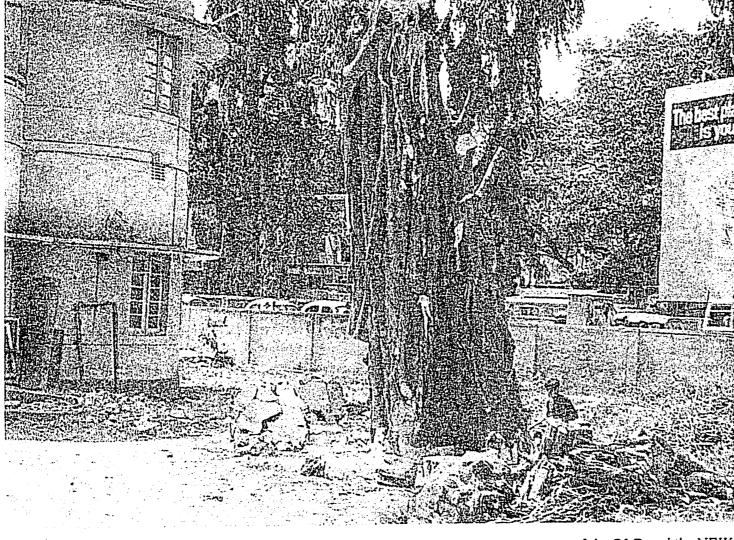
one light, and that hanging from a cord, at the foot of my bed. No bedside lamp. When I was ready for bed and switched off the light, it was like releasing a magnet holding up a swarm of iron filings, for all those thrips fell on my shoulders and when, in darkness, crawled under my mosquito net I found I had brought hundreds of the beastly things with me. They didn't bite, but the experience of hundreds of tiny insects crawling all over me in the darkness was not conducive to sleep. In the end I had to compromise, by going to sleep with the solitary light still shining to keep those maddening

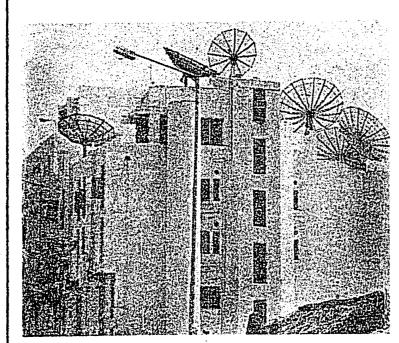
They had gone by next morning and I've never seen such a phenomenon again. But Madras had more wonders in store for a dedicated naturalist. Not long after 'The Night of The Thrips', I had occasion to go to my office late at night, a short walk in those days, and found every step ! made produced an unpleasant crunch. Now we had 'The Night of the Water Beetles'. The Cooum and the Buckingham Canal must have been sparklingly clean water sources in those days, because the crunches under foot were caused by the presence all over the reader, we really did have proper pavements in those days, pavements you could actually walk on) of huge water beetles, which are among the largest insects in the world, big enough to catch and eat small fish. There must have been millions crawling about all over the pavements and it was impossible to walk a step without

crushing two or three with each step. The great scientist J.B.S. Haldane, who chose to spend his last years in India, and died in Bhubaneshwar, was a rabid Coummunist and atheist. Once, when he was asked, if he DID believe in God, what would he consider God's most extraordinary attribute, he replied, "An inordinate fondness for beetles!" For there are, in fact, more species of beetles on our planet than any other kind of life. And those water beetles are certainly among the most spectacular of them.

I left Madras shortly after this, was in Pakistan for two years and lost my health. I then spent seven years back home in Britain, recovering my health to a certain extent, and returned to Madras permanently in 1956. But now there were no more swarms of thrips or water beetles. Perhaps the widespread use of insecticides had done for them for good!







Another twist to our saga of the OLD and the NEW. The OLD is a majestic banyan tree, decades old, in the process of being chopped down even as the wreckers get at the old Clubwalla house on Nungambakkam High Road. No doubt this plot will see the rise of yet another a highrise, though possibly a bit more elegant than our NEW. But couldn't the architect concerned have designed his highrise in such a manner as to have saved this grand old tree? It

might have cost a little Ol D space, but perhaps NEW

charged for the ambience.

What is striking about our NEW are the SIX dish antennas on the roof. The highrise is a hospital in Besant Nagar and its terrace has been rented by a private cable TV operator, who offers 22 channels to the hospital and the neighbourhood! With entertainment like that, where's there the time to worry about old trees!!

(Photographs by V S RAGHAVAN)

Much ado about Morgan!

What went up like a rocket and came down like a damp squib? The Morgan Stanley Mutual Fund. It came with a bang on the eve of 1994, launching the country's first foreign onshore Mutual Fund. It sparked off a race for application forms and set the grey market soaring with its preliminary statement that allotment would be on a first come, first served basis. It again sent the grey market plummeting by a further announcement that allotment would be for all those applied, ostensibly not to disappoint any applicant. And it opened below par on March 22,

Morgan Stanley didn't believe in maintaining a low profile while launching its fund. Neither did the Press, while covering this Fund's listing at Rs. 8.50, knowing fully that listing at this price was inevitable. After all, when Morgan Stanley launched its MF, the sensex had crossed 4000 and had subsequently fallen steeply when it listed.

Mutual funds being long-term investment avenues, neither this negative publicity nor this listing should play havoc in the investor's minds. Morgan Stanley's international reputation for good management of monies and portfolio is mind-boggling and sensational. In our tips over the evaluation of private sector Mutual Funds a few issues ago, we had asked you to check if the sponsors had already floated some schemes in the past and if the performance of them could be compared against the BSE index. Well, Morgan Stanley more than fills the bill in that aspect, if the record of its India Magnum Fund (IMF), which surpassed the sensex, is anything to go by. One rupee invested in IMF at the end of 1989 would have yielded

around Rs. 4 in, say, September 1993. Mutual Funds are investment channels for good and secure, if not

windfall, returns to a small investor. In sharp contrast to shares, they are not subject to very many fluctuations due to the lack of speculative fervour and now that it is available below par. constant disclosures of portfolio and TVS Electronics (CMP: Rs. 21.00):

in due course, outsmart the sensex Madhav Dahr, head, Emerging Markets group, Morgan Stanley, has made his conglomerate's intentions all too clear: "We are here for the long

NAV. The expectation is that these will,



term. We want to bring in higher standards of integrity, client services, systems, and communication. Already, private entry into Mutual Funds seems to have prodded Canbank Mutual Fund to declare its NAVs on a daily basis, from its earlier weekly basis. Such being the case, there is a lot more to come by way of competition - better service, disclosures and returns. So, better times are ahead for Mutual Funds and Morgan Stanley. The simple caveat is stay invested. In tandem with the thought, we recommend Morgan Stanley this fortnight.

Morgan Stanley Growth Fund (CMP: Rs. 9.80): Many investors were in for a rude shock when the unit from this much publicised scheme opened at Rs. 8.75. However, it is not surprising considering that the fund's corpus was invested when the BSE Sensex was around 4000. Nothing to be worried about really. Morgan Stanley has a good 15 years to prove its mettle. A look at the performance of its India Magnum Fund NV (compounded annual pretax

return of 40.5%), and the volume of assets managed by the company (Rs. 270,000 cr) evokes confidence. The NAV is bound to so up once the market revives. Buy this MF,

Promoted by Sundaram Clayton and the TVS family, TVS Electronics was the first in the country to offer a complete range of peripherals under one roof. It now appears to be heading for a turnaround after witnessing hard times. In the recent budget, the import duty on components was reduced from 40 to 30 per cent, creating a level playing field as the import duty on peripherals was also reduced to 65 from 80 per cent. TVSE enjoys a sizeable market share for its products and is reportedly the only manufacturer of Cartridge Tape Disks in India. Its accumulated loss of Rs. 4.57 cr as on March 31, 1993, is likely to be wiped out by 1994-95. We expect the turnover and PAT to reach Rs. 70 cr plus and Rs. 3 cr by 1994-95, yielding an EPS of Rs. 2.10 and supporting Rs. 40. Prices, after making a low of Rs. 15, are showing signs of resuming their uptrend. Buy with a stop loss at Rs. 15.

Iggi Resorts International (CMP Rs. 35.50): Iggi's Property Time Sharing (PTS) scheme is unique as it offers title deed in the name of the buyer while others provide 99 years' lease. Moreover, it offers a 20% annual rental return on the unused time share, as it sells only 25 weeks of any apartment to the buyer and retains 27 weeks to be run as a hotel. The income from the 'hotel' division is expected to surge in the years to come. Iggi has tied up with Four Seasons Exchanges (FSE) through which its PTS owners can opt for an exchange to resorts affiliated to FSE. It has also tied up with the NMC group, Abu Dhabi, for marketing its PTS in West Asia. The company projects the income from the PTS at Rs. 2.64 cr and from the hotel at Rs. 0.34 cr with a PAT of Rs. 0.95 cr for 1993-94. Iggi should fare better than uncertain future? estimations. Prices are moving sideways and have good support at Rs. 30. Buy with a stop loss at Rs. 30.

K. Gopalakrishnan

For the love of maths

OV

RANJITHA

ASHOK

work at times." Srinivasan recalls.

He retired as Headmaster of the

Madras, in 1981. He holds a Bachelor's

Degree in Mathematics and a Master's

degree in Education. He was a Ful-

bright Exchange teacher of Mathematics

in the USA. He was posted as Senior

Federal Education Officer and Senior

Lecturer in Mathematics in Nigeria. He

· Muthialpet Higher Secondary School,

Mathematics...For many of us, it's a scary word. When I was in school. Mathematics was intimidating, a subject we dreaded. We felt dull and useless in some way admitting we were not good in Maths. Mathematics... a subject all us 'Arts' students left behind with a sense of relief when we reached the level of making choices. "That is because Mathematics has been taught so badly the world over," claims P.K. Srinivasan... maverick, off-beat Maths teacher and Resident Curator of the Ramanujan Museum at the Avvai Kalai Kazagham (Avvai Academy) in North Madras.

"Most Maths teachers are more interested in output rather than in creating a love for the subject or providing an insight into the world of Mathematics. It is not enough merely knowing one's subject well if all one succeeds in doing is creating a sense of awe, a fear, in one's students. Mathematics has been removed from the cultural mainstream of life," asserts Srinivasan.

Why are mathematicians always portrayed as pale, sad creatures with filled with incomprehensible combi-Group during '68-'70. He participates in the International nations of numbers? he asks: "On the contrary, mathematicians can be com-

Congress on Mathematics Education. which is held every four years in pared to great explorers in their quest different parts of the world. He is quick for their own particular goals and in to point out that while countries like their spirit of adventure. Like all thinkers and philosophers out of step with their lapan send many delegates to these time, mathematicians too have faced meets, very few attend from India. Since his retirement, he serves as Mathematics Education Consultant to State and Central Government agencies, and private and public educational institutions. He has organised many mathematics projects, expositions and fairs all over India, USA and Nigeria over the years. Srinivasan abuse and social condemnation for their firmly believes that a child can grasp mathematical concepts from the age of P.K. Srinivasan has been a Mathe-3, provided they are presented to the mathics teacher for more than 45 years.

> Mathematics Expositions from LKG to the Plus 2 stage. The day I met him, he had just returned from a very successful 11/2-hour session with street children in

> child in an interesting, uncomplicated

way. He has organised Children's

solving puzzles. "Mathematics is like music; it cuts through all barriers, and is a source of integration," he says. Srinivasan has always tried innovative, unorthodox methods to interest his the Nungambakkam area. These were students and get their minds working children who did not know alphabets, and thinking. In 1991, he was presented the National Science Award for Best

> Does he see any difference between the children he taught 25 years ago and the children of today? Children these days are very articulate, he says, and are exposed to so much stimuli. But, he warns, that does not necessarily mean their intellectual growth is stimulated too. He finds, in many cases, their thinking becomes diffused. Children these days seem to be on the hear "the music of reason".

Effort in Popularisation of Mathematics

among children.

P K Srinivasan, making Algebra simple

but had absolutely no problems dealing

with mathematical concepts and in

(Photograph by V S RAGHAVAN)

run all the time. They never seem to have the time to think, ponder and grasp the zen of any subject they are taught. He also feels many Mathematics teachers make no attempt to make the subject interesting. They are content with boring routine. Added to this is our completely stilling examination system. "Our educational system does not equip us to spot prodigies among our midst. Any country where bright children are stifled and frustrated thanks to the short-sightedness and lack of imagination on part of the policymakers is poorer as a result," he sales.

The indefatigable Srinivasan is the author of several books for children, such as Number Fun with a Calendar, Romping in Numberland, Maths Quiz 300 and 2000 - Math Quiz. He has also written an instruction guide to maths teachers called An Introduction to Creativity of Ramanujan. These come in three parts, for primary, middle and high school levels, and carry photographs of Ramanujan's original iottings. He also runs a Credit Practical Course Completion Certificate for teachers, in which about 40 teachers have participated so far.

This month, he conducted a 'Primary Algebra Festival' at P.S. Senior Secondary School, in which 10 schools and 120 students participated.

Srinivasan is also deeply interested in Folk Mathematics, which is handed down by oral tradition in rural areas. In June this year he plans to hold a National Seminar on Folk Mathematics. Mathematics... may be the word is

not so scary, after all. For a brief moment, this 'off-beat' teacher has provided a glimpse into a fascinating, intriguing world. I cannot help thinking... it is not enough to merely know a subject thoroughly. It is the courage to be innovative, the ability to communicate and coax a response out of a student and watch understanding dawn in a fresh mind...that is what makes a good teacher. If there were more P.K. Srinivasans, there would be many more people out there who could

(To be concluded next fortnight)

Madras, or a cloth called George, as worn by the Nigerians The romance of 'Madras'

— the cloth known as George

The Real Madras Handkerchief (RMHK), or Madras Rumaal, Route seems every bit as evocative fascinating - mysterious - interesting as your Silk or Spice Routes. From whence came this humble, lowly bit of 36" by 36" woven and checked cotton, whose warp and woof have even shaped history, cultures, lifestyles and rituals, this rather large handkerchief so shaped by canny British traders to escape taxes on cloth-by-the-yard? Dyed in real indigo and called the REAL Madras Handkerchief to distinguish it from Japanese and Swiss 'imitation' indigo-dyed 'Madras' cloth, the RMHK's journey to exotic corners of the world is an enthralling record of the mystery and romance implicit in history, travel and trade, in the spontaneous defining of cultures. What is the story behind the genesis and evolution of the RMHK and its avatars: The Madras Rumaal, the Bandana, the Telia Rumaal, the Rumaal-e-Haj etc., etc.? What is its colourful past and its

At a seminar organised by the Madras Crafts Foundation in the city in February, curators of museums, scholars and historians of RMHK

gathered from many parts of the world to unfold the mystique of the Madras Rumaal, to probe into the whys and wherefores of its colourful international outreach as well as put its history present and future into proper perspective. From USA came Joanne B Eicher, Dr Robin Maxwell, Susan Bean and others, the French scholars

• by **PUSHPA CHARI**

were Valerie Berinstain, Joelle Lemaistre and Francois Cousin, Switzerland was represented by Dr M M Nabholz Kartaschoff, Dr Rosemary Crill and Mr and Mrs Byron represented Britain, while India was represented by, among others, Amrita Mukerjee, Jasleen Dhamija and Martand Singh,

Ironically, the Real Madras Handkerchief is really not from Madras at all. Historically speaking. The Madras Rumaal Route actually begins in Cassim Bazaar, near Calcutta, home of weavers who first wove the bright checked cotton. Due to unknown imperatives, the weavers shifted, between

and Chirala in the old Madras Presidency. There is photographic evidence of this migration as well evidence in the shape of large orders for the Rumaal placed by East India Company traders in Pondicherry where the ships carrying the weavers had berthed. Equally fascinating is the 'travel' by RMHK to far corners of the world. It's omnipresent 'auspicious' presence in Nigeria today dates from the time when British traders and plantation owners in the Caribbean clothed their African labour in clothes made out of the Madras Handkerchief. Today, the redoubtable RMHK is an integral part of Nigerian culture and ritual. Known as 'Injri' or George - presumably after Fort St. George in Madras — this vividly checked cloth has become a mark of status, wealth, substance and fashion in Nigeria, a ritualistic symbol accompanying a Nigerian's passage through life unto death...

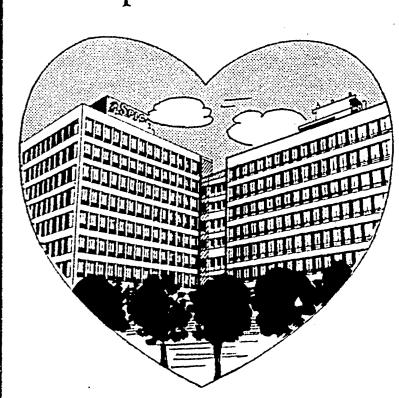
1670 and 1790, to Machilipatnam

Did Trade take RMHK to Araby as well? According to Jasleen Dhamija, the RMHK was called Rumaal-e-Haj by the Arabs, and its tying around the wrist signified the successful completion of the Haj. While referring to trade links between India and the Arab world. loelle Lemaistre presented archaeological evidence of RMHK being found during excavations in Arab countries. Terracolla jars too have been unearthed with filter block lid, which was presumably used in block-printing the Rumaal. Another quaint avatar of RMHK is the Telia Rumaal, a tie-and-dye piece executed by threads dipped in 'Neem'

(Continued on P6)

SPIC

The Corporate Star in Madras



The SPIC Group of Companies has made its mark in fields as diverse as Fertilisers & other Agro-Inputs, Biotechnology, Shipping, Project Management Services, Engineering & Construction, Heavy Chemicals, Fine Chemicals, Petrochemicals, Drugs & Pharmaceuticals and Electronics.

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Birthday Blues?

HOTEL ABU PALACE, E.V.R Periyar High Road, is four year; old. So it pulled up its socks and had a birthday bash recently.

Being a wee, sleekit, timorous, cowering sort of person, I waited for the festivities to be over before looking in, past the landscaped front lawns and cluster lamps, at the PROMENADE, the restaurant that rejoices in that unlikely

First, the all-pervasive silence and dim lighting cast a dampener on your spirits — and appetite as well. The menus materialize, and you pretend to be absorbed in putting together a good feed, while taking a sneak peek at your co-diners — which is very odd, because it is (nearly) the middle of the night, and there aren't any.

The butter naans finally arrive, with chicken instead of the expected lamb. Mistakes, you admit, do occur. The chicken is whisked away and replaced by Szechuan Lamb (Rs. 65), by which time the naans wilfully insist on resembling starched Victorian collars. Initial troubles, however, are followed by delightfully warm and soft romali shoots and capsicum (Rs. 45).

You would do well to leave the entrees alone and wade into the fillers; the vegan selections, however, surpass the meats, if the lamb is any indication.

The desserts are on the pricey side, but offer nothing new; there is the inevitable vanilla and strawberry to fall exteriors spring up, displaying everything from watches to upholstery. And now designer ethnic wear is available just across from them.

The new plaza has a selection of salwars in a number of hardlybigger-than-a-cubicle ground floor shops. The lack of space is compensated for by the posh decor and tactfully displayed

FOODS & FADS

back on, just in case. On the whole, a quiet, understated dining experience, set to a live Indian orchestra, that leaves you feeling complacent — if you've made the right choices, which is easy if you don't go for the ambitiously exotic.

Another mall

Wet another trendy mall has opened its designer doors to the public - PRINCE ARCADE, on Cathedral Road. The area has seen, in the last couple of years, a number of up-market jewellery boutiques and several intimidating chrome and glass

Madras Rumal

(Continued from P5) oil and tied around bits of sheep dung for the desired patterns to emerge! Oh, and to find out the authenticity of a Telia Rumaal, one had to smell it if it smelt of oil and dung it was OK...

And did you know that the colourful Bandana rakishly tied around your favourite cowboy hero's neck is a good ole' Madras Rumaal tie-and-dye 'Bandhini'? In fact, according to Robin Maxwell, the RMHK was widely used in Indonesia, Java and Sumatera, evidence of which can still be seen in the checked lungis wom in those countries. The French paintings of the 17th and 18th Centuries too show that use of RMHK was widespread, especially in 'haute couture' salons during that period. But while the sumptuous Indian silks and gossamerthin cottons, then so popular, have

disappeared in the byways of European Fashion history, the game little RMHK or its derivative goes marching on... Today, the RMHK is woven in

Anakaputtur near Madras, in the Washermanpet area of the city, in Machilipatnam and Chirala in Andhra Pradesh. Most of the handkerchiefs are exported. But contemporary Indian involvement has come in the guise of cushion covers, table mats, salwarkameez suits etc., fashioned out of the cloth squares. But the weavers are illpaid, exploited and in dire financial distress, despite the efforts of voluntary agencies like Oxfam, CCl and other NGOs. Much more organised effort needs to be done to help the weavers help themselves in order to ensure that the RMHK continues full sail on its historic journey of heritage into the coming century.

wares. The inevitable snack bar serving bisi bele, dahi vada and curd rice is down the corridor. An all-for-the-young store specialises in cassettes, cards, posters and giftables. The last two have extremely affable and chatty service, which probably accounts for their being patronised at all hours of the day, and positively flooded in the evenings. And one thought there was no place left for another eatery in this part of town! Heartens one, I'm sure.

Beat the heat

Summer is here again and everyone is busy reaching for the prickly heat reliever, or waiting to hare off into the hills - with a slight shift in perspective. Seeing our little ol' town flooded with sweating, hatted, back-packing foreigners seems to have given much of the populace bright ideas — to the extent that the WWF outlet sold their last sleeping bag a couple of weeks ago!

Backpacking in the hills is a much cheaper and a much more adventurous way of seeing mere mahaan Bharat, would seem to be the ruling impression. And the Youth Hostels' Association of India in Madras have thoughtfully lined up a couple of escape routes into the mountains.

If you think only the young like to go sneaking up jungle trails and slithering down rocky fastnesses with all troubles packed up in the old rucksack. you're in for a pleasant surprise! The oldies do it too! Here's to the heat anyway - it's at least

making us plains-people upwardly mobile!

Biking blues!

First we were treated to those mobikes with no silencers and futuristically helmeted riders simulating close encounters of the third kind. Undoubtedly designed to look macho, and not as in Massive Compressed Halo Object, you don't need me to tell you. (You know, those things the astro-physicists are going on about.) The heat and commonsense finally having got to the riders, and the traffic-police finally desisting from levying fines on non-helmeted bike buffs, lots of things began to.

First — the guys decided there was no point using up all the Clearasil, or whatever if you were going to hide behind nontransparent head-gear, however out of the world the latter may make you look. And the girls decided to hit the roads in unprecedented numbers.

Enter medieval plastic visors minus the Ave! and accompanying salute; exit Streethawk helmets. The feminine spacetravellers came up with their own version of the bike-riding vestments - Ray Ban and demure little scarves which sent the neon baseball caps in a downward spiral. Ah, those scarves. Pure silk, of course; costly, definitely, one of a kind, mais oui. And what of the guys? The powers-that-be make sunglasses for them too, you know. Costly, definitely; macho, of course; one of a kind, mais non, May be one should check with. the traffic police in the interests of road safety and Indian sunglass manufacturers. (I think the scarves are indigenously made.) Solar topee, anyone?

Bhavana Kay

Quizzin's with Kamanan

(Quizmaster V.V. RAMANAN'S questions are from the fortnight March 16-31.)

- 1. Which 'controversial' personality had his first fan association being set up at Vayalapad, near Tirupati?
- 2. After which famous scientist has the latest element been named?
- 3. The place to have the dubious distinction 'most polluted city in India'
- 4. Tenzin Chentse, a 10-year-old Tibetan boy, was in the news. Why?
- 5. For what aesthetic achievements have T Emperumal and KT Bharathan (both of Tiruchi) been honoured? And with what award?
- 6. The first aircraft manufactured in the private sector in the country had its inaugural flight on March 17th. Name the plane and the manufacturer.
- 7. Who are the new All-England Badminton champions? 8. Who is the VI on MTV's Hindi 'Top
- 10' show, 'Oye MTV'? 9. Which place in Tamil Nadu was airlinked on March 22nd? And by
- Why was the Immaculate Conception Cathedral at Pondicherry in the eye of
- a storm recently? According to the monthly magazine Gentleman's, poll, who is the 'sexics' man in India'?
- 12. Who is the next US Ambassadordesignate to India?
- 13. What path-breaking change will the Australian Open see next year? 14. Name India's first diesel three-wheeler
- launched on March 29th. 15. Why did tiny A. Mettur village, near Perambalur, Tiruchi, create a stir in the
- State recently? 16. Which agency was voted the 'Agency of the Year' by the Advertising Club of Madras at its annual 'awards nite'
- 7. What is the novel theme of the book 'Saga of Salvation Sung in Stamps'?
- 18. Who wrote the play Caligula, the Tamil version of which was staged recently at Museum Theatre, Egmore?
- 19. What honour has Book Advisor Sumathi of L B Publishers, Madras,
- 20. The edifice popularly called '100 Mount Road', the home of a famous national institution till 1939, is underdemolition. Name the institution?

(Answers on p. 8)

New life

(Continued from P 1)

There is, however, another of Vizianagaram.

Neither of these Admiralty Houses is GOVERNMENT HOUSE and it is



During the early decades of Tamil cinema, several noted classical Carnatic singers, like Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer, Musiri Subramania Iyer, G N Balasubramaniam, V V Satagopan, M M Dandapani Desikar, M S Subbulakshmi, N C Vasanthakokilam and others, appeared in films with varying degrees of success, playing roles which made use of their singing talents. Others did not appear on screen, but lent their voices as play-back singing artistes. D K Pattammal was one of these singers.

Pattammal, who recently celebrated 75 and who has been in the top flight of Carnatic music for more than halfa-century, was brought into films by that South Indian film pioneer K Subramaniam in his movie classic Thyaga Bhoomi (1939). Written by the celebrated Tamil writer and journalist Kalki (R Krishnamurthi), and featuring S D Subbulakshmi, K J Mahadevan (a London-educated son of the noted Mylapore lawyer K S Jayarama Iyer), the legendary Carnatic music savant and composer Papanasam Sivan and the sensation of her day the 'Shirley Temple of South India Baby Saroja, the historic film has a sequence towards the end showing a group of freedom fighters singing while walking in a procession which the heroine S D Subbulakshmi joins. The song, highlighting the Indian Freedom Movement. "Desa Sevai Seyya Vaareer...", was composed by Papanasam Sivan and sung by Pattammal.

A mjad Ali Khan is said to be the sexiest man in

India today, according to some

magazines," Madurai G S Mani

interjected, in the middle of a

very informative talk/concert or

wizard Zakir Hussain who had

been voted the sexiest Indian

male by the readers of Gentle-

man magazine. But Mani was

not too far off the mark. Amjad

Ali Khan, the sarod maestro, has

his own sex appeal. Madurai G S

Mani is himself a very handsome

man in the conventional sense of

the term. He has a well chiseled

face, is tall and has a deep voice.

As a Carnatic vocalist, he has

made a speciality of giving pro-

grammes featuring the gems of

classical music found in early

Tamil films. These programmes

Serious music institutions

have marginalised Mani for this

association with films, even

though Carnatic music legends

are in great demand.

It was actually the tabla

'Classical Music in Films'

Both song and sequence became famous. Interestingly, no gramophone disc of this popular song was released by the producers because they were afraid the disc might be banned. Indeed, the film was banned as being anti-British, mainly because of this sequence, and that led to very serious consequences. But, that's another story! The inspiring song rendered by Pattammal was, however, released as a private

A few months before India attained freedom, A V Meiyappan released his

Randor Guy

Naam Iruvar, which turned out to bea super hit and set AVM firmly on the pathway to fame and fortune. In this film there were two dance sequences composed by the great Bharatha Natyam guruVazhuvoor B Ramaiah Pillai and danced scintillatingly by Baby Kamala. The songs, 'Aaduvomey Pallu Paaduvorney' and 'Vetri Ettu', written years earlier by the rebel poet of India, Mahakavi Subramania Bharathiar. were sung off-screen by Pattammal. But, interestingly, her name was announced in the film before the sequences started, obviously a tribute to her stature in the world of music. The music composer was R Sudarsanam. Both song and dance sequences were the highlights of the film and created not only a sensation but also

Classical Carnatic

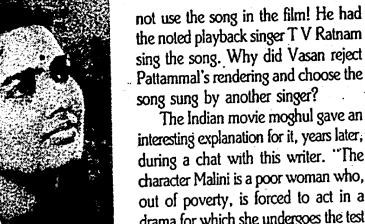
proved the turning point in the history of Bharatha Natyam in South India. The rendering by Pattammal in her characteristic silky style invested the songs with immortality.

In 1947, D K Pattammal sang two songs, in Mahatma Udhangar, directed by G Pattu Iyer. The film sank without a trace, so few remember either the film or her songs. Pattammal also sang in an entertaining comedy Pizhaikkum Vazhi (1948), produced by the noted comedian TS Durairaj who also played the lead role.

A film that highlighted the struggle for freedom was khadi-wearing A K Chettiar's compilation on Mahatma Gandhi. One of the earliest globe-trotters, Chettiar travelled to many countries collecting footage on Mahatma Gandhi and also shooting for the film. Pattammal sang 'Aadu Ratte' in the film. As the film was more of a documentary, it did not receive the

public support it deserved. A V Meiyappan's Vedala Ulagam (1948), based on a play by the founding father of the Renaissance of Tamil Theatre, Pammal Sambandam Mudaliar, had Pattammal singing offscreen two songs, both written by Bharathiar: 'Thoondir Puzhuvinai Pol' and a song and dance number which became very famous, 'Theerada Vilayattu Pillai'. The dancer was Baby Kamala who was well on her way to becoming a legend.

D K Pattammal's off-screen voice was also heard in A V M's box-office



D K Pattamal... in the days she sang Camatic Music off-screen... and in the days she was all Classical. (Photos courtesy: SRUTI)



bonanza Vazhkai (1949), which catapulted the lovely newcomer Vyjavanthimala to instant stardom. The lalented Bharatha Natyam dancer executed a song and dance number, 'Bharatha Samudayam Vazhgavae' sung by Pattammal to music composed by R Sundaram. It was yet another composition of Subramania Bharathiar. D K Pattammal also sang for forgotten films like Lavanya (1951). The Gemini boss, S S Vasan, in-

vited Pattammal to render a song for his Miss Malini (1947). Based on a story by R K Narayan and directed by Kothamangalam Subbu, the film had the noted bi-lingual star Pushpavalli (the mother of the Hindi film star Rekha) in the title role. She played a poor woman forced to go on stage to keep the home-fires burning. Thanks to a friend (M S Sundari Bai), she was asked to test by a stage-director (Javar Seetharaman) and sang a song for the audition in pure Camatic style ('Sri Saraswathi Namoshuthe'). Vasan recorded the song sung by Pattammal and paid her a fee that was unheard of in the 1940's. However, Vasan did

sing the song. Why did Vasan reject Pattammal's rendering and choose the song sung by another singer?

The Indian movie moshul gave an interesting explanation for it, years later, during a chat with this writer. "The character Malini is a poor woman who, out of poverty, is forced to act in a drama for which she undergoes the test of singing a song. A person with such a background and in a difficult situation will be most nervous and even scared. And Malini is not a trained musician. ·Such a person cannot be expected to sing with the class, perfection and brilliance which D K Pattammal had in abundance. That was the reason I did not use Pattammal's rendition and got a regular playback singer to sing the song," Vasan narrated.

Because of her family background and her traditional and middle class values, Pattammal refused to sing love duets, and hardly ever saw the films in which she sang. Then, as she rose to dizzying heights in the world of Camatic music, she moved away from playback singing. But while she sang in those few films, she made the songs of Bharathiar immortal, especially those she sang in Naam Iruvar.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

April 20: Electronic dialogue on 'World Cup Soccer USA '94'. U.S.I.S presents a live electronic dialogue between Scott Gleba, spokesperson for the Confederation of North, Central American and Caribbean Association Football, and S Thyagarajan, Deputy Sports Editor, The Hindu, R Eswar, Sports Editor (South), Press Trust of India. and G R Viswanathan, Vice-President, All-India Football Association. The live teleconference will be preceded by a video tape on World Cup Soccer USA. (At American Center,

April 27 to May 6: Boyd Webb, the official British participant in the Eighth Indian Triennale, who exhibited a series of 12 large, colourful Cibachromes on themes of reproduction and reprocessing, is a sculptor who uses photography to record the images he constructs. Boyd Webb's works shown at the Triennale will be displayed a the Lalit Kala Akademi, Madras. (British Council in collaboration with LKA.)



A scene from Chandralekha's Yantra. Will photographer S ANWAR extend this into

The traditional classical arts and their relevance in modern times are topics for perpetual discussion for all ages and times. Madras, the seat of the classical arts, has produced several pioneers who have steered the traditional in directions in which they have believed. Rukmini Devi Arundale institutionlised classical Bharatha Natyam, giving it an educational status, Padma Subramanyam says she is recreating a lost all-India margi form of Bharatha Nrityam, and Chandralekha is creating dances

stripped of the emotional content. Chandralekha's latest production, Yantra, received round after round of applause at the Music Academy hall for

the physical feats of the Kalari artist and the slow positions taken by the dancers in the dance diagrams. Several people said the production was stunning and several asked S. Anwar, our photographer, if he planned a photo feature in Debonair. But one came up to me and said. "This should have been called 'Yawntra'; I was yawning so

As far as I was concerned, I liked the presentation, for it proved a point: that the traditional technique of Bharatha Natyam, in its oft-tried Nritta passages, is also relevant to contemporary times:

- V.R.D

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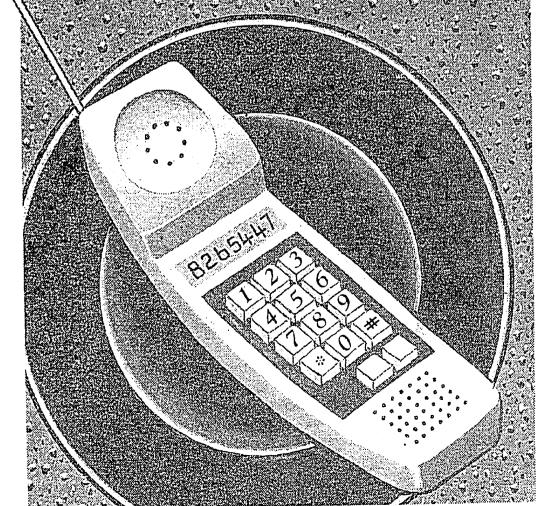
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to time in the second half of the 18th Century. In the second Lord Clive's time it was used for his official entertainment until Banqueting Hall was built in 1802.

property in Madras that was also called Admiralty House. This was the Mandaveli property where the old name is remembered in the present usage: Admirally Hotel. Once residence of the Admirals of the East India Fleet, it became the property of the Maharaja

is the building now being restored. That in Government Estate, names which we well might consider restoring even as a thought is given to landscaping the grounds which were once known as

like M S Subbulakshmi, G N Balasubramanium and others have been associated with films. Mani himself feels he is "jeopardising" his musical career with these programmes, "but if they can get a few converts to

happiest man," he says. A graduate from Madurai, Mani had no ambitions of becoming a professional musician. He learnt his early music from

Carnatic music, I will be the

music, but strongly feels that no system of music can touch the grandeur of Carnatic music. The View From The Wings by

Madurai G S Mani

his mother, who learnt her songs

by listening to the many Hari-

katha Kalakshepams in the

village. Mani also learnt Western

music (from Dhanraj, Illayaraja's

guru), as well as Hindustani

V.R. Devika Mani worked with film music director M S Viswa-

nathan. In 1974, he did a programme in Tiruppur to show the beauty of Carnatic music as used in films and it was a great success. He knew such programmes would be a hurdle in the way of his becoming recognised as a classical musician. So he stopped giving pro-

grammes of film music, till that classical music and dance magarevive these programmes. Mani's talent and training in classical music is quite formidable and he has a good range of

zine Sruti persuaded him to

voice. "It gives me tremendous pleasure to linger on one note. As far I am concerned, pure music is singing raga. It is the raga singing that should decide the vidwat of a musician," feels Mani. Many Carnatic musicians give too much emphasis to gamakas, but too much oscillation takes away the spirit of music. Mani also feels that music has been mechanised. The thud music today is not based on melody but on rhythm. He also feels strongly about young people preferring Western music to classical music. "Shouldn't they know our traditions?" he asks sadly.

dancer of yesteryears and now an abhinaya, also has similar views. Alarmel Valli, the young dancer, speaks sadly about why young people feel there is no creativity in traditional art. In fact, a big question was raised when the Sangeet Natak Akademi in Delhi presented awards for traditional streams of music and dance and a separate one for 'creative dance,' thereby officially indicating agreement with the point of view that traditional arts are not creative. A completely wrong view, in my

Nirmala Ramachandran, a



a picture feature for Debonair, wonders V R D

Rs. 20 cr. for SAF Games

Levery Tamil Nadu sportsperson must have felt proud of the announcement by the Jayalalitha Government's Finance Minister, V.R. Nedunchezhian, in his Budget speech the other day, that Rs. 20 crores has been allotted for the organisation of the SAF Games next year-end.

The stage is as good as set for the transformation of Madras into India's best-equipped sports city, with its fully-equipped soccer-cum-athletics Nehru Stadium and equally modern infrastructure for every other Olympic discipline, including swimming. Time

would, however, seem to be running short. Hardly 21 months remain. But for a government that had the old Nehru Stadium demolished and the new structure put up in its place in less than two years, the construction of an indoor stadium, a swimming pool, a gymnasium and other infrastructure of modern standards is unlikely to pose any problem.

According to a top official of the Tamil Nadu Olympic Association, which will conduct the South Asian Games on behalf of the Indian Olympic Association, venues have already been

chosen and plans drawn up for the construction of the various stadiums. With the Government's commitment and the Chief Minister's involvement, he was confident all the facilities would be ready in time, and all that the TNOA would have to do would be to pick knowledgable officials from all over the country to give the international event a smooth passage that would, in turn, give the organising body its biggest-ever boost.

Jaici

The Storai that's Jockey Silva

bastion stormed by women in recent times. And one who has stormed it in South India is Silva Storai. Having ridden in over 65 races (at the time of writing this report), Storai has an impressive success rate of 8 wins, 17 seconds and several places.

Surprisingly, there is no one in her family remotely connected with horses, leave alone racing. Born in Italy, Storai rode for the first time in her life when she was 13. But her professional racing career started only in Madras and not in her native land. In 1978, she came to India as a tourist and fell in love with the country. The next year, she fell in love again. It was in Bangalore that she met and married Joseph, a Kodaikanal-based artist.

Once settled in Kodai, she was prompted by a close friend, Patricia Norelli, the owner of a stud, to become a professional jockey. "In Kodai, riding is an enjoyable experience, galloping the horses over the mountains and meadows and through streams, admiring Nature's bounty," Storai enthuses. On her friend's advice, she applied for a jockey's licence in Bangalore — and was refused it, as she was a woman.

ANSWERS

1. The CEC, T N Seshan: 2. The 1951 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry, Glenn Seaborg. (Element: Seaborgium); 3. Delhi; 4. He is the new 'Karampa', or head, of the world-famous Rumlek Monastery, Sikkim; 5. The National Award for Excellence for border design for cotton saree and silk saree respectively; 6. 'Observer' by Taneja Aerospace and Aviation Ltd.; 7. Haryanto Arbi (men) and Susi Susanti (women), both of Indonesia; 8. Anu Agarwal: 9. Salem: 10. The Hindu Munnani has contended that the church stands on the site of a Siva temple and would, therefore, be demolished by them; 11. Ustad Zakir Hussain, the tabla maestro; 12. Frank Wisner: 13. The women's final will be a five set affair; 14. 'Greaves Garuda': 15. The deaths within a span of eight weeks of eight children below the age of 11 years due to a mysterious illness; 16. HTA; 17. Philatelic descriptions of Biblical incidents; 18. Albert Camus; 19. She is the year's best salesperson of Time-Life books in India and will represent the country at Vienna; 20. Obviously, the 'Mount Road Mahavishnu', The Hindu.



Jockey Silva Storai (Photo: V.S. RAGHAVAN)

Undeterred, she came to Madras in March 1993 and got her licence here, following it up with a good season in Ooty.

However, ill-luck dogged her on the Bangalore and Mysore tracks soon after. First, she was suspended for dangerous riding in Bangalore and, later, was restricted to riding ten specified horses. And in a sport where danger lurks even off the track, she fell off her rearing mount in the Mysore paddocks and the horse, weighing all of 600 kgs, fell on top of her. Storai recalls, "It was really a miraculous escape when Mysterian fell on me and, later, used my chest to regain his feet!" Fortunately for Storai, she escaped with a minor ankle fracture and some bruises. Ironically, it was on the same horse that she first won a race after recovering from her injuries!

Speaking of her suspension in Bangalore, Storai says, "My horse was hanging in badly and I didn't have any choice but to ride in that manner". A senior jockey, however, feels she needs more experience. "Silva is good riding at track work, for she handles animals strongly. But she is unable to judge the pace of a race and needs more racing experience".

Silva starts her day at six in the morning and does track work for two hours. Later, she goes to her stables on her Jawa to exercise the other horses and she also does some weight-lifting to keep fit. Weighing 51 kg, she is vigorously trying to lose weight which she gained while bedridden recently. A strict vegetarian, Silva started eating fish only a few months ago. She does not mind controlling her taste buds; "My aim is to be 100% fit and riding trim, as I don't have the blessed allowance of weight," she remarks.

People in racing circles comment on how shy Storai is and how she keeps aloof, not mingling with the other riders. Storai explains, "Well, I just like being alone. Moreover, training and taking care of my horses sap my energy and time. As a result, there's little time for socialising". Taking up more time are the dogs she breeds for sale. All this leaves her with little spare time, but what little of it she finds she likes to use listening to Camatic music. In fact, she studied Bharatha Natyam for four years in Kodai. But when her dancing interfered with her riding, Storai bid it goodbye just before her arangetram.

Though a jockey is prohibited from owningrace horses, Storai has a couple of former race horses. "I am just a groomer and do not intend to become a race horse-owner," she emphasises. Doesn't her husband object to her horses, travel and racing? "He understands my love for horses and racing. The only condition which he puts is that I take my horses along with me wherever I go," she responds. And taking her horses with her is like travelling with giant babies. "Maybe not having a child is one of the reasons for my deep love for the horses," she muses. This considerate attitude prevails even while racing, and unless she is sure of getting that extra burst of speed from her mount, she does not whip any of her rides.

In Madras, Storai rides the horses trained by actor-cum-trainer Irfan Ghattala. Of Javed Ghattala, her stable owner, she says, "He is one of the few horse owners who races only for the stakes". In Bangalore, she rode for Puttana, Manohar and S M Shah. She does not feel anything special about racing alongside men. But she feels that a section of jockeys frowns upon women taking the reins.

Storai hasn't found time or reason to visit Italy in the last eleven years. And now she's busy with plans to hold an exhibition of her husband's paintings. That is the one ambition which she nurtures, apart from becoming a first rate jockey, accepted as such on the Turf in all the racing centres of India.

Venkatachari Jagannathan Edited by S MUTHIAH.

Guindy slump!

Figures were not available. It was, for instance, not known what profit, if any, the Tamil Nadu Government's Department of Racing (D.O.R.) made from the recent Madras racing season at Guindy. Profit or no profit, the Season went more or less on the same lines as recent ones, and underscored the fact that Guindy, India's oldest racing centre, was not the crowd-puller it was until recently. The DOR has, in fact, been left way behind not only by the other senior centres of Calcutta and Bombay but also by the far junior clubs of Bangalore and Hyderabad, to both of which the Madras Race Club (the DOR's predecessor) had been a godfather for

The slump in Guindy's popularity was evident as never before from the average size of the jackpot pools of the season just ended. While a Rs. 1 lakh pool, if not a bigger one, was the order a couple of years ago, at none of the 38 meetings of the recent season did it go anywhere near the six-figure mark, not even on a day when it had a carried-over sum to boost its size.

Off-course betting on the Bombay, Bangalore and Hyderabad races having gained in popularity, it was understandable how several Guindy fixtures were arranged to clash with the meetings of those three centres. The size of the Guindy crowds vindicated the manipulation of dates. But the majority turned up not to bet on the live racing, but for the "shadow betting". Consequently, while the Madras jackpot pool invariably languish-

ed between Rs. 15,000 and Rs. 20,000, those on the other centres invariably crossed the Rs. 2 lakh mark each, often even Rs. 5 lakhs. This was a slap in the face of the country's oldest turf by its home punters!

A popular comment was that tame racing, with the leading stable enjoying a virtual one-way traffic, was mainly responsible for the slump. But it is noteworthy that the champion stable housed more classic and higher stakes winners and costly and fashionably-bred juveniles than any other establishment in the country. They could not be kept idle or gifted away. It is for the other trainers to persuade their patrons to invest, if they can, more in high-class horseflesh, which could help them halt the champion's virtual monopoly. But it is difficult to visualise the emergence of such owners in Madras.

Whatever the reason, the fall in Guindy's status can only tell on the DOR's finances, if it has not already done so. The sixevent card, which was more or less the order as against the eightand nine-event cards of Bangalore and Hyderabad, was perhaps a pointer. Guindy is indeed sorely in need of rejuvenation.

The powers-that-be seem to take the deterioration in their stride. The majority of them are not regulars. Their casual approach led to a regular Steward setting up a national, even a world, record of dubious worth by presenting the trophies at nearly every meeting—because the rest preferred to stay at home.

Ajax

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