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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)

This grand old house, now being 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 Unanimity' 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).

and use by one of the major hotel groups.

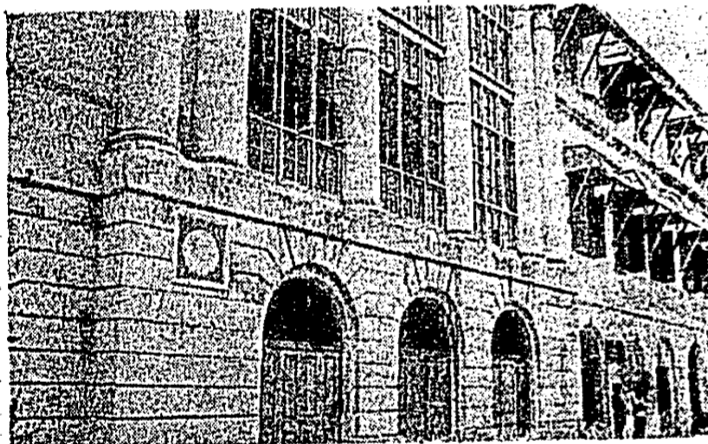
**A NOTE:** *Government House* is NOT *Admiralty House*, as it has been

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.

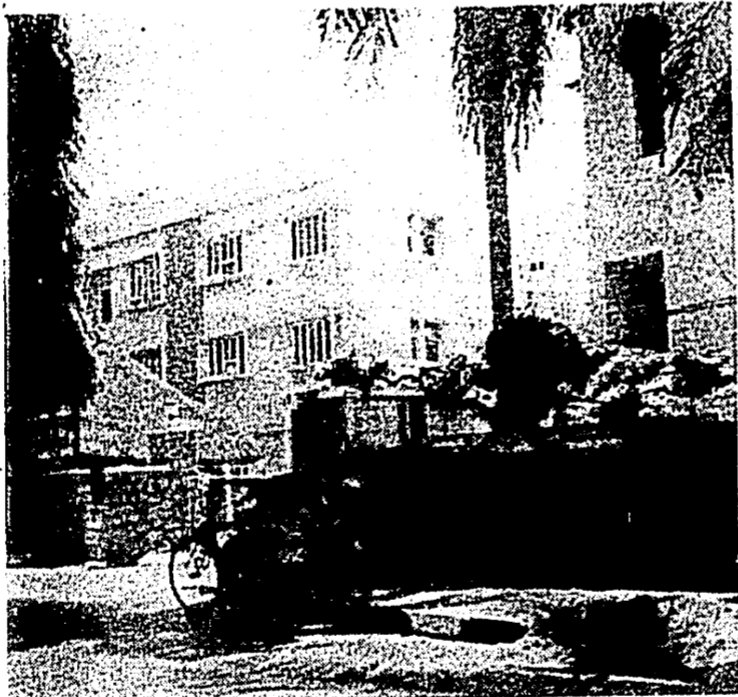
It was, however, used by Governors as their town residence from time  
 (Continued on P6)



Admiralty House in the Fort, with the plaque on left announcing 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)

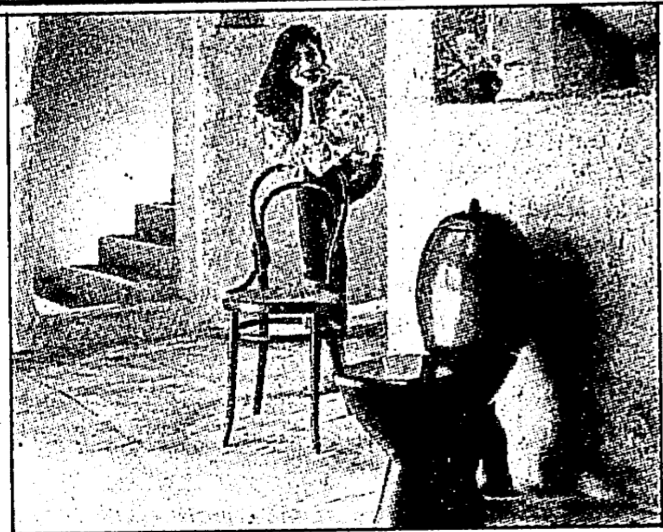


Thank you all, for your kind words

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



No bathrooms for your house.  
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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 Carnatic'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







# Rs. 20 cr. for SAF Games

Every Tamil Nadu sportsperson must have felt proud of the announcement by the Jayalalitha Government's Finance Minister, V.R. Nedunchezian, 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 knowledgeable 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

Horse racing is yet another male 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.



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 Carnatic 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 owning race 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

## 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 decades.

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 six-event card, which was more or less the order as against the eight- and 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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## 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 Rumtek 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*.