Reg. No. TN/MS(C)/1158

Registered with the Registrar of Newspapers for India under R.N. 53640/91.

WE CARE FOR MADRAS

MADRAS MUSINGS

Vol. IV. No. 3 May 16 — 31, 1994 Rs. 3 only

U-RENT
REAL ESTATE DIVISION
helps you buy and sell your property in a profitable manner
Call: 414222 / 411838
36, II Main Road, Gandhi Nagar, Adyar, Madras - 600 020.
We also manage the properties of absentee landlords.

METAL CUTTING TOOLS

Power from the sea

Will it come to the rescue of Tamil Nadu?

(By A Special Correspondent)

With famed Sri Lankan-American scientist Dr Cyril Ponnamperuma endorsing it, Tamil Nadu is getting ready to launch a project that will make history not only in Indian energy production but in the world as well. A memorandum of understanding (MOU) has been signed by the American company, Sea Solar Power, and the Tamil Nadu Government for a $250 million project which promises to bring the state cheap power from the ocean — for only the cost of generation.

Hilbert Anderson of SSP has offered to set up a 100 mw ocean thermal energy conversion plant (OTEC) **at his cost**. The plant is expected to go on stream in 1997-98. The only obligation of the Tamil Nadu Government is that it must buy the entire power produced at mutually agreed on rates. If the project works out successfully, SSP plans to set up other plants off the coast of Tamil Nadu and then offer its expertise to other coastal states in India.

A century-old idea, first experimented with in the 1930s and then seriously considered during the oil crisis of the 1970s, OTEC is at last to be implemented. The conversion of water to solar sea power takes place by exploiting the differences of temperature at different ocean-depths to run a turbo-generator. The SSP plant will be out at sea about 40 m from shore on a floating platform. Submarine cables will lead the power from the ocean station to join the state grid.

While Anderson is confident of the success of his technology, the unanswered question is what effect the constant pumping of water will have on the ocean life and the deep sea environment. That will be the answer eyes around the world will be on, once the plant starts working.

TAILPIECE: Sea Solar's first ocean thermal plant to be set up 40 km off Kulasekharapatnam, with the subsequent five plants being set up 10 km away from each other parallel to the coast, now awaits clearance from the Environment and Defence Ministries. The prime concern of the former is whether the sea surface temperature variations — on which the technology is based — will affect the monsoons that depend on exactly the same factors. Spillage of the chemicals powering the plant and the effects on marine life are other factors being studied by environmental authorities.

Defence clearance is expected to be easier, the scores of off-shore oil-exploration platforms set up by foreign companies being precedent.

But even if clearances are obtained, sceptics wonder whether the $ 250 million investment Anderson feels he can raise in the US from speculators will be forthcoming for a project with such untested technology.

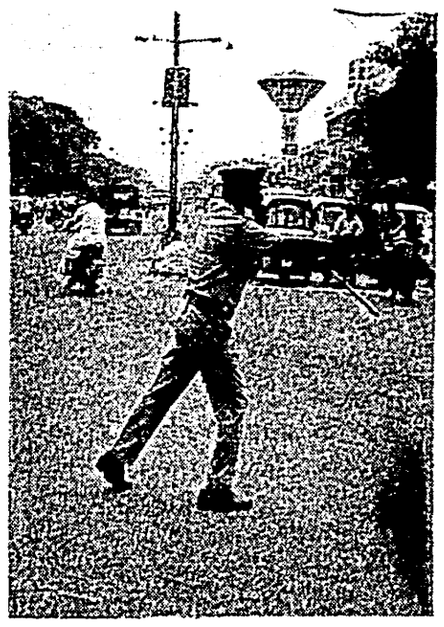
RHYTHMIC CONTROL

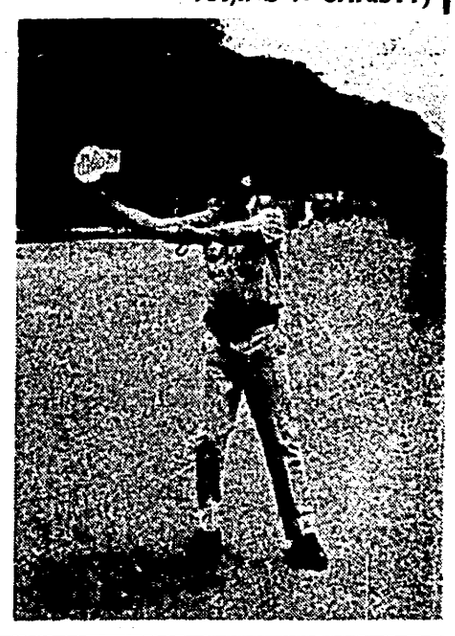
Yet another dancing policeman is traffic constable Nynar Mohamed, attached to R-I Thirumangalam Police Station in Anna Nagar West.

Manning crossroads without automatic signals and with long streams of vehicles on all four roads is indeed a herculean task for any policeman. But with whirling lathi in one hand, a Stop-Go signal in the other, whistle in his mouth and dancing feet, Nynar Mohammed not only makes it seem simple, but he also attracts the attention of road-users (look at that cyclist turning back to look at him in the centre picture below).

On duty from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. and 4.30 p.m. to 8 p.m. at a critical junction in Thirumangalam, Nynar Mohamed's imaginative use of the lathi like a drum-major and his rhythmic signalling have won the hearts of impatient drivers.

(Photographs and text by RAJIND N CHRISTY)





Will Madras lose OTA?

(By V Jagannathan)

Will Madras's only military training institution, the Officers Training Academy, be shifted to Dehra Dun next year? It is reported that the Chief of Army Staff has given the green signal for the amalgamation of the OTA with the Indian Military Academy, Dehra Dun. But the State Government has requested the Centre not to go ahead with the proposal.

Several shop-owners, contractors and small businesses dependent on the Academy for their survival will be affected by such a move, the State Government has pointed out.

Ever since the Academy was established in St. Thomas' Mount in 1963, there have been reports about its closure and the shifting of operations to cooler climes. It was only in 1985 the Central Government put an end to such reports and, in 1988, it upgraded the institution to the status of Academy from that of Training School.

Despite, at times, seeming to survive year by year, the Academy has the proud record of producing 1 Param Vir Chakra, 3 Ashok Vir Chakras, 5 Maha Vir and Kirthi Chakras, 40 Vir Chakras and 118 Seva medallists.

Parthenium menaces city

(By A Special Correspondent)

The dreaded Parthenium weed could endanger Madras, as it once did Bangalore, if prompt action is not taken to the crop now flourishing by the airport. The vacant grounds on the northern side of the sprawling new airport complex, administered by the IAAI, have become a breeding site for the feared weed. A serious public health hazard, it may well be the beginning of a Parthenium menace if left unchecked.

The rapid spread of the weed, especially seen round the IAAI residential colony and the environs of IA Domestic Cargo Complex, could lead to severe health problems. The weed has also been sighted in a number of places in Madras city.

***Parthenium hysterophorus*, as botanists call it, has a life span of five months. A prolific multiplier, it is perhaps the most feared plant species in the country. Popularly called the 'Congress weed', it presents a deceptively 'good look'. Growing a metre high, it has characteristically dissected leaves and beautiful whitish flowers.**

Believed to have entered the country in 1956 along with imported food grain, Parthenium contains a potent alkaloid, which causes skin allergies. Its pollen also triggers respiratory infections.

It has so far defied all human efforts at eradication. However, its only known enemy is an effective biological agent of its own clan — a fiercely competing leguminous plant of S American origin, *Cassia sericea*, which could control the spread of the weed.

Will this be used near the airport?

THE BSA SHOP

THE SNAZZIEST, JAZZIEST BIKE HOUSE IN TOWN

The BSA Shop. TI's bike house extraordinaire. Stacked with an eye popping array of BSA SLRs, Machs, Street Cats, Champs, Wild Cats, Mongooses and Herculeses.

THE BSA SHOP

- **T. Nagar** : 90, G.N. Chetty Road (Near Vani Mahal), T.Nagar, Madras - 17. Ph : 8280942
- **Annanagar** : AB, 11, 2nd Avenue (Opp. Annanagar Tower), Annanagar, Madras - 40. Ph : 6214647

679

Convocations await Vice-Chancellors

When is the University of Madras planning to hold its Convocation? With no Vice-Chancellor for nearly six months, and none in sight, the University, one of three oldest in the country, appears not only unable to make plans for a Convocation but also has waiting for their degrees, hundreds of students who've completed their academic programmes.

What strikes *The Man From Madras Musings* even more forcibly is that this is not the only university in the State suffering thus from the fall-out of the differences between Governor Channa Reddy and Chief Minister Jayalalitha. THREE other universities in the State are also in similar predicaments. *MMM* is not certain whether the retirements of the Vice-Chancellors in these three universities took place before Convocations were held or not, but certainly these three offshoots of the University of Madras — Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore, and Alagappa University, Karaikudi — have been left headless in the last few months, with no replacements in sight. *MMM* suspects that a couple of them, like Madras, may not have been able to hold their Convocations, given the timings of the retirement of their Vice-Chancellors.

With all those concerned with the appointment of Vice-Chancellors sitting the impasse out, *The Man From Madras Musings* wonders what next in higher education in our State. Will we soon have universities without Vice-Chancellors? That would be rather like Anna University doing away with the Directors/Principals of its constituent colleges (except in the case of one privileged unit) and replacing them with Deans. Thus, Guindy Engineering College celebrates its 200th birthday (which makes it the oldest engineering college outside Europe) by losing its distinct identity as even a constituent college and becomes a Dean-led department of Anna University!

Meanwhile, what has happened to the invitation to Abdul Kalam to become Vice-Chancellor of the Madras University? Such an eminent person as the space scientist was a shoo-in for the Madras vacancy. But at the last minute he appears to have accepted the Prime Minister's invitation to stay on in Delhi as his Scientific Adviser. Did this acceptance on Kalam's part, however, have anything to do with a school of thought in local circles that felt it would be very difficult to handle yet another high security risk in a state where there are already so many needing security cover? *MMM* trusts that these Universities don't wind up with less-than-brilliant Vice-Chancellors for such reasons.

Sad days

March and April have been sad days for the world of Madras journalists. Two eminent journalists, one who excelled in English and the other in Tamil, passed away, leaving the world of Madras journalism poorer by their demise.

The Man from Madras Musings knew K Balaraman of *The Hindu* and S A P Annamalai of *Kumudam* from his first days in journalism. And two more talented but unassuming persons he has not known in the years since.

It was during his last months of university in New York that *MMM* first met Balaraman. It was at the home of Bertie Abeynaike of the *Ceylon Daily News*, the first journalist into post-War America from a South Asian nation. Bertie's brother had been *MMM's* prep school English Master and been responsible for *MMM* getting interested in writing. Bertie was at the time trying to persuade *MMM* to give up attempts at another career and join the *Daily News*. And an even more persuasive advocate for a journalistic career was Balaraman, as he gently laughed away *MMM's* choice for a diplomatic future. In the event, circumstances landed *MMM* in journalism — and in the *Daily News'* chief rival, at that.

In the years that followed, *MMM* watched the brilliant rivalry in words of two journalists who picked up the American 'Best Foreign Correspondent's Award' a couple of times each. Balaraman scintillated in *The Hindu* with his reports from America and Patrick O'Donovan, who would put down a bottle of whisky before finishing his piece for the evening, adorned *The Observer*, London. Together, their writing taught *MMM* that the best writing is writing with a strong human element in it.

Years later, when *MMM* settled in Madras and tried to persuade a retired Balaraman to play an active and visible role in the *Indian Review*, Balaraman remembered those New York days and smiled as he mused, "Who's trying to persuade whom now?". Balaraman's brilliant writing, sadly, never saw the light of day after he called it a day at *The Hindu*.

SAP, an even more retiring type than Balaraman, *MMM* caught up with during annual visits to Madras in those early years after returning from the States. *Kumudam* was just becoming a weekly in those days and was headed for that day when it would be the first Indian journal to reach a circulation of 200,000. Those were heady days for SAP, when he'd discovered the secret formula to make pop journalism successful, but meeting him you'd never imagine the dedicated Gandhian and Congress faithful was the most successful editor in the country. We'd talk about kith and kin — at least one of whom, on *MMM's* side, was as dedicated and smartly-suited a race-goer as SAP's kin SAA, senior steward of the Madras Turf and the man who brought both civilian flying and cycle manufacture to Madras. And we'd talk about Ceylon and the two different worlds of journalism — English and the vernaculars — and the trials in all three. Then we'd go our ways for another year.

To SAP, *Kumudam* was his whole life. And it is reported that on coming out of that last heart surgery his first question was "What's in this issue?" One of the pieces in the subsequent commemorative issue was a

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

tribute by Karunanidhi. The former Chief Minister remembered a serial he had been writing for the magazine when SAP had editorially criticised some action of his in office. The cadres wanted him to stop writing, but SAP pointed out that the Chief Minister's fiction writing and his political actions were two different things and there was no need to link both. Nevertheless, Karunanidhi stopped his serial, in mid-flow — only to regret it years later. SAP had a way of getting people to acknowledge their frailties without once pointing a finger. *Kumudam* will, without doubt, miss that gentle touch that nevertheless was a magic touch that transformed the world of Tamil journalism. And in all the years he made the written word a success story, neither he nor the other two founding musketeers, who all gave up law careers, forgot the mercurial Alagappa Chettiar, who midst making and losing several fortunes, encouraged them on their way.

Losing battle?

Have *Madras Musings* and hundreds of eminent citizens of Madras been fighting a losing battle? Is the DGP's office complex on the Marina to be pulled down, after all, and replaced with a multistorey building?

One report of the proceedings of the House has it that the Chief Minister announced in the House that "an allocation of Rs. 3 crore has been made to build a new office complex for the DGP on Beach Road after DEMOLISHING (emphasis *MMM's*) the present building". Another report makes no mention of demolition. But what is certain is that the Chief Minister made no commitment to STAY demolition plans. Is there hope left for the DGP building or is this to be taken as the last word?

During the current sessions of the House, there was another alarming bit of news *The Man From Madras Musings* heard reported. That was the decision to put up multistorey buildings in Government Estate, once known as Chepauk Park and one of the few lungs in the city. *MMM* was subsequently told that at least one of these buildings was planned as the tallest building in the city! Would someone please tell *MMM* that he's wrong and all this won't happen?

In brief

★ The spirit of mercy, charity and Christianity were all singularly absent at a recent special meeting of the board of management of the Young Women's Christian Association in the city, one of the oldest YWCAs in the country. Shouting, screaming and slanging — with none of the 'turn the other cheek' spirit — prevailed through the three hours of near chaos. *The Man From Madras Musings* wonders whether the prosperity that's come with the new international block has had anything to do with this unseemly state of affairs.

★ Did RAW negotiate with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam a deal to ensure the safety of Prime Minister Narasimha Rao during his last London visit? Was the deal brokered in Paris or London or Madras or in all three centres? Whether such a deal was worked out or not, talk of it has, according to various reports, angered Chief Minister Jayalalitha and Sonia Gandhi, who've been demanding to know the truth. But Government has been dodging the issue — though its initial reluctance to extend the ban on the Tigers, and its subsequent belated decision to do so, makes people wonder. *MMM*, however, feels such a deal might not have been necessary; things being what they are in Sri Lanka now, the Tigers could do with every bit of Indian sympathy and understanding and were, therefore, not likely to indulge in any further provocation of this country.

Business briefs

★ Madras Refineries, which has just announced an all-time high crude thruput of 5.85 million tonnes in 1993-94, continues to look for ways to avoid using the city's precious water supply. Pioneers in recycling water for factory use, MRL is the first to sign up to buy desalinated water from a desalination plant TEAM and TIDCO have agreed to put up in Manali. The plant, when built, will produce five million gallons of desalinated water a day and MRL has signed to buy 40 per cent of this production.

★ NEPC, the only airlines to be headquartered in Madras now that Air Asiatic is no longer flying, will soon be joined by another. Choice Air, belong to the Kochi-based Choice Group, is expected to operate out of Madras from September. The Rs. 30 crore venture with a European partner is expected to operate 22 flights a week initially, using three Boeing 737 Dash aircraft. Apart from the major destinations, Port Blair in the Andamans is likely to be one of Choice Air's first choices.

★ *MMM* understands that Binny's has found a sympathetic partner in Bombay willing to share in the revival of its fortunes. Dynamix, a conglomerate headed by K M Goenka, are reported to be willing to contribute Rs. 30 crore to the revival package and feel confident that Binny's can be turned around in five years. What is significant about Dynamix is that two of its four major companies are into real estate and have made a name for themselves in township development. Binny's, it is well known, has enormous properties. So will the marriage lead to the revival of the textile fortunes of the South's oldest mills or will it lead to property development or both?

— MMM

MADRAS MUSINGS SMALLS

ACCOMMODATION

Residential guest house available in Kilpauk on daily basis. Spacious bungalow with extensive open space (near Khushaldas Gardens). Ideal for marriage or tour groups of 30 to 50 persons. All amenities available. (e.g. telephone, A/C room, colour TV, refrigerator, gas stove etc.) Tel: 6412996, 6411436.

FOR SALE

Well established and running library (books) for sale as a whole or selectively. Books of fiction and non-fiction available at throw-away prices at 63 C P Ramaswamy Road, Madras 600 018.

1985 Fiat — in good condition, 3rd Owner. For sale. Expected price Rs. 65,000/-. Contact Phone: 616972.

MATRIMONIAL

Well placed, decently employed/Business groom for a Catholic Sozhia Vellala Pillai 27, fair, slim, graduate bride. Send particulars to the Advertiser, No. 27 Seventh Cut Street, P M Swamy Colony, Coimbatore 641 027.

PERSONAL

25-year-old male, professionally qualified in public relations. Interested in accompanying as a guide for shopping, short stay, travelling. Contact Box No. P. 16 c/o. *Madras Musings*, Madras 600 006.

Wanted a personal, educated and well-mannered friend for a highly successful and cultured but lonely 33-year-old male. Contact Box No. P2 C/o. *Madras Musings*, 62/63 Greames Road, Madras-600 006.

RENTALS

Anna Nagar East near Chinthamani. B-10 Second Ave, opposite IOB, 2200 Sq ft. 2 bed-roomed, first floor, with all amenities. Rent Rs. 6000/- Contact: Premises.

REAL ESTATE

Eight acres of fenced horticulture farm with irrigation facilities at Pushpagiri, 14 km from Tambaram on Manimangalam - Sriperumbudur Road. Please call S. Radhakrishnan 4937046.

TRANSLATION

Translation: Indian/Foreign Languages: Tel: 569481.

Katha welcomes original and unpublished short fiction in English for possible publication. Manuscripts should be clean, double spaced and typewritten. Send by 25th June, 1994. To: Katha, Building Centre, Sarai Kale Khan, Nizamuddin East, N. Delhi. 110 013.

WANTED

Wanted Braun Mixie, 2-in-1, Camera, Crockery, Imported Kitchen Gadgets, Portable Typewriter & Household items. Contact P.V. Sudarsan Gupta. Ph. 8267799 (Res.) 563438 (Off).

Wanted a Speech Therapist for a 6 year old boy at Rangarajapuram, Kodambakkam, Madras. Contact Rajagopal 4836333 (Residence) 8274230 (Office).

British Deputy High Commission
British Council Division, Madras
(Telephone: 8525002, 8525412-22-32)

Recent Additions

Author	*Title*
AITKEN, L	Step-by-step dressmaking course
BASKETT, P J	Resuscitation handbook. 2nd ed
BERRY, A	Bank lending
BIRCH, J	Diagnosis of defective colour vision
BURNETT, K	Strategic customer alliances
BURT, S	Just like Eddie
BRAGG, M	The hired man
CROWTHER, P	Art and embodiment
MAY, J	The book of curious facts
FREEMAN, M	Michael Freeman's creative photography
FRY, J C (ed.)	Biological data analysis
GRISHAM, J	The Firm
O'TOOLE, P	Loitering with intent
PARKES, A M (ed)	Driving future vehicles
RAIMOND, P	Management projects
RAYNER, C	First blood
SAUNDERS, M	The lone trainer
SPINDLER, T	Soccer techniques
TORY, P	Giles: A life in cartoons
WILLIAMS, R	Illustrated DTP with Wordperfect

Even as this neem turns BROWN, photographer V S RAGHAVAN *captures it beside an exhortation for GREEN.*

Why's the neem susceptible?

Can anyone enlighten me as to why the neem tree, justly renowned for its insecticidal properties, should itself be subject at this time of the year to overwhelming insect infestation? Several years ago, when I was in charge of grounds of several acres, I saw to my dismay one year that our biggest and oldest neem was apparently dying, all the bright green leaves turning a dirty, terminal brown. Neighbours reported the same and some were even preparing to cut down the trees, believing them to be dead.

I spoke to a Conservator of Forests who explained it all to me and begged me, through my columns in the *Indian Express*, to implore owners of neem trees not to cut them down.

"Tell them not to worry," he told me. "This is just a transitory thing and the trees will all recover on their own."

He went on to explain that the destruction of the leaves was caused by an insect called the tea mosquito. I asked him if spraying the trees with an insecticide would be advisable, but he told me it was too late. "The insect causing this phenomenon," he said, "will have already gone through all the stages of its life-cycle, grown into adults and long ago departed, after causing all that quite spectacular damage. There is nothing to be done about it now. Just leave the trees to recover on their own."

I did as he asked and, sure enough, the trees did recover as he predicted. This year seems a particularly bad one for the neem and I see them turning that ugly brown everywhere. So the question remains: Why is it that the neem, known for its insecticidal properties for thousands of years, is itself so susceptible to overwhelming attack by insects?

Harry Miller
3A Suryanarayana Avenue
Boat Club Road
Madras 600 028.

Dismal aquarium

Recently, I visited the aquarium at the Marina Beach with my granddaughter. I was shocked to see the appalling condition of the aquarium. The whole place was dark and dingy and had a deserted appearance. It was so filthy, one could not even walk around. As for the fish tanks, only a few had some fish, mostly of the variety one sees in small aquariums in homes. They had very little water in the tanks, each with only one or two spikes of grass inside. Even sand appeared scarce. There was no aeration arrangement even in a single tank. In all, the few fish that were there in the aquarium looked pathetic.

I wonder what the planners of Madras Vision 2000 have in their mind for this old aquarium. I suggest that if the Corporation of Madras cannot maintain it, they hand it over to the Veterinary University who may have both funds and manpower to maintain it. Or else, it can be leased out to a private entrepreneur on a long-term basis.

P C M Santhanam
5, Lakshmana Street
T. Nagar, Madras 600 017.

In step now

I am beholden for the four lines cryptic indeed (*MM*, April 16). I dare say that many would fail to understand "in and out of step", simple marching tactics in ceremonial marching at military parades. I have experienced the joy of correcting my steps on many route marches in the U.T.C. While marching, I would suddenly find myself out of step and would lose no time to shuffle my feet and "change step".

There is little doubt that *MM* was not in step with the other media and ploughed a different furrow, more like distributing 'bit notices'. I have sadly seen that *MM* did not

OUR READERS WRITE

get better treatment, as quite a few numbers would lie unopened. Anything free has no value, explaining this unhappy treatment.

I am glad you have changed step. You may now swing your hands and walk majestically. The 'Thank you all' is sad reading, as it reveals how the many thousands of free readers are dragging their feet and limping towards becoming subscribers. Never mind! You will still win. There is always hope for even the hopeless!

But I must confess that there lurks a fear that you want to go out of step again. When circumstances improve, don't become free again. Halve the subscription or even slash it to Rs. 10/- p.a., but NEVER free. If there is a substantial surplus, there are many good things to do.

When I was warden of Sri Venkateswara Hostel, I would help two poor boys study upto Matriculation or SSLC, give them food, shelter and pay for two years during which time they would have to learn typing, shorthand, accountancy, or even car or motorcycle mechanics. At the end of two years, they would be sent out to seek a living. I would also watch their progress and, if unsatisfactory, accounts would be settled forthwith. You may do the same; train a few in your organisation and use them as reporters during training.

Before I close, please note my door number is 8 and not 5. Here is another chance to "get into step".

P R Subramaniam
8 Kennedy Ist Street
Mylapore, Madras 600 004.

Saving trees

Thank you for highlighting my message on conservation of trees, stamped on a used Seasons Greetings envelope that has been turned inside out in order to make it reusable (*MM* Feb. 16.)

We are wasting a lot of paper on envelopes and packaging which can be easily avoided. Personal letters could be sent without envelopes, just by stamping it or with used envelope turned inside out.

A conservation-oriented person could easily save a quarter tonne of paper (250 kgs) in his lifetime, which is equivalent of planting of 5 trees. Conservation of paper/ reduction of the usage of paper will go a long way in the prevention of destruction of forests.

Dr K R Balasubramaniam
Kaarthik Nursing Home
1 SKC Road-3
Surampatti Nal Road
Erode 638 009.

Welcome increases

But a lot of unasked questions too

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

Despite the occasional walk-outs and suspensions in the Tamil Nadu Assembly during the last fortnight, the House did brisk business — granting benefits to different sections of society, announcing welfare programmes and on-the-spot remedies for grievances and rescinding the arrest of a city news editor on a privilege issue and then ordering it again. But unasked questions indicated a gap between the politician and the public's viewpoint.

For instance, when Chief Minister Jayalalitha announced allotment of Rs. 3 crore for the new DGP complex on the Marina, there were no questions asked about the demolition of the present historical building about which several eminent citizens have expressed concern. Nor were the people's representatives anxious to know Government's attitude to autorickshaw men fleecing passengers in several ways.

When the Chief Minister announced an increase in dearness allowance to Government employees from Rs. 52 to Rs. 285, no one wondered whether this would lead to fewer allegations of corruption. A sponsored T V 'short' on the need for registration of marriages recently mentioned Rs. 15/- for a marriage registration. Probably the members are not aware that it often takes Rs. 150/- to Rs. 200 before the formalities are completed!

It was through the intervention of the Chief Minister that the arrest order against the *Dinakaran* news editor was revoked. Kumari Anandan (CPI) had raised the privilege motion and the Privileges Committee had said the person had not only failed to apologise but had also not sought to explain publication of certain expunged matter.

Even while suggesting the order be revoked, the Chief Minister said that the media were not playing fair and the intention of the press was only to criticise her party. There was no single champion for the press to point out that the breach of rules was only an exception and that, by and large, reporting had been fair and factual. Subsequently the arrest was ordered again.

MLAs will return home happy after this session, having learnt that their monthly emoluments have been hiked from Rs. 3350 to Rs. 3950. Members from all parties had demanded a generous hike — as in Mizoram, Rajasthan and Bihar. Finance Minister V R Nedunchezhian also announced that the salary of the Opposition leader, Deputy Speaker and the Government Whip have been revised from Rs. 3200 to Rs. 4000 and that Ministers and the Speaker would now get Rs. 4500 instead of Rs. 3500.

Chief Minister Jayalalitha announced that a Rs. 20 crore Police Academy would be set up at Veerapuram near Avadi, with emphasis on tackling terrorist activities. A special Coastal Security Group, she also said, would be constituted to patrol the State's 1000 km coastline.

A welcome reform announced by the Chief Minister was that all police stations would register any complaint brought to them, regardless of their jurisdiction. Appropriate action would be taken if this was not done. Not only was major crime with violence less in Tamil Nadu than in other States, but the crime detection rate was also the highest in the country, she added.

Unexpected tribute for the quieter law and order situation in the State came from three Congress(I) members — K Selvaraj, who said the situation was worse in Andhra Pradesh, Zeenath Sherifuddin, who described the Chief Minister as the 'glory of the State' and K K Chinnappan, who saw in the Chief Minister the strength of Indira Gandhi.

A notice of breach of privilege was given by Zeenath Sherifuddin (CPI) against three of her party colleagues — S Balakrishnan, Peter Alphonse and Panneerselvam — who, she alleged, abused her and tried to attack her while she was coming out of the House. There was also Sanjay Ramaswamy (CPI) accusing his Party Whip of not allowing him to speak.

The Assembly, through a resolution, called for the ban on the LTTE to be extended beyond May 14th for two more years. The main Congress(I) opositon boycotted the House on the day, but four Congress(I) members were present. The House heard the Chief Minister accuse the Congress(I) and the Centre of trying to politicise the LTTE issue.

Agriculture Minister K P Krishnan made it clear that Tamil Nadu was opposing the GATT agreement in order to protect Indian agriculture and also the country's sovereignty.

A Rs. 18-lakh renovation programme for *Rajaji Hall*, now lying disused, has been announced. The Rs. 15 crore film city, to be named after the Chief Minister, will be inaugurated at Taramani shortly. And the ceiling for a jewel loan by Cooperative Credit Societies is to be increased from Rs. 25,000 to Rs. 40,000.

Would you like to send *Musings* abroad?

With Vol. IV No. I, we have been pricing *Madras Musings*. Besides accepting Indian subscriptions, we will now be pleased to mail *Madras Musings* to you or your friends or relatives abroad. The annual rates are as follows.

Rs. 60 — in India.
Rs. 375 — for Sri Lanka, Malaysia and the Gulf.
Rs. 425 — for Europe and U.S.A.

All rates are inclusive of subscription, postage and handling charges.

Madras Musings will also be available at selected outlets — bookshops, departmental stores, restaurants — at Rs. 3 per copy.

If you care for Madras, *Madras Musings* is the journal for you to support. And to keep *Madras Musings* alive, fill in the coupon below and mail it to us together with your cheque.

..... **COUPON** .....

M/s. Lokavani Hall Mark Press Pvt. Ltd.
62/63 Greames Road,
Madras 600 006.

Dear Sirs,

I would like to subscribe to *Madras Musings*, the journal that cares for Madras. I enclose my subscription for 24 issues of *Madras Musings* from the coming fortnight.

☐ Rs. 60 (India)
☐ Rs. 375 (Sri Lanka, Malaysia, the Gulf)
☐ Rs. 425 (Europe and U.S.A.)

(*Tick whichever is applicable*)

NAME .....

Address .....
(*in block letters*)

.....

.....

PROFESSION .....

All cheques to be made out to Lokavani Hall Mark Press Pvt. Ltd. Cash subscriptions will be accepted at the reception desk at Lokavani Hall Mark Press Pvt Ltd. 62/63 Greames Road, Madras 600 006.

Natural is better than artificial

Agriculture in Tamil Nadu is being revolutionised by the use of micro-organisms like algae and earthworms. Both the scientific community and farmers have begun taking an active interest in biofertilisers and vermiculture replacing chemical fertilisers.

The argument is that natural is better than artificial. Says G S Venkataraman, Director of the Centre for Biofertilisers, Madurai Kamaraj University (CBMKU), "Natural nitrogen fixing systems such as biofertilisers are the only solution to soil degradation, brought on by synthetic fertilisers and pesticides".

Opinion is, however, sharply divided on whether they can totally replace chemical fertilisers. Whereas agricultural scientist M S Swaminathan maintains, "Biofertilisers are not a complete alternative to chemical fertilisers", experts from CBMKU argue that their use for three years will generate the nutrients needed by the crop, negating the need for chemical fertilisers thereafter.

Biofertilisers — naturally occurring fertilisers— are micro organisms that can be introduced into the soil to fix atmospheric nitrogen in a way that can be absorbed easily by plants. Commonly used biofertilisers are blue green algae (bga), *Azolla*, *Rhizobium*, *Azospirillum* and *Azotobacter*. The Department of Biotechnology is conducting research on biofertilisers at its various centres, Madurai among them, to screen beneficial algae and evolve means of multiplying them.

In addition to providing nutrients, biofertilisers can increase crop yield. A study conducted by the Tamil Nadu Rice Research Institute in 1992 indicates paddy yields were 20 per cent higher when treated with bga, *Azospirillum* and chemical fertilisers, than when treated with bga and *Azospirillum* only or with chemical fertilisers alone.

Inspired by this, K Subramaniam Vandayar, who owns a 14-ha plot in Vadayaryiruppu village in Thanjavur District, has been using 100 kg of biofertilisers with 50 tonnes of dung and 100 kg of chemical fertiliser on a one-ha plot of paddy. He hopes to bag the district's highest yield award, this year.

So popular are biofertilisers in Thanjavur District that the Government is unable to meet the demand. Says S Kunjithapatham, Joint Director, Department of Agriculture, Thanjavur, "Only 10 per cent of the demand is met by government agencies. In 1993, only 160,000 packets of 200 gm each were supplied in Thanjavur's rice belt, against a demand of 2 million packets."

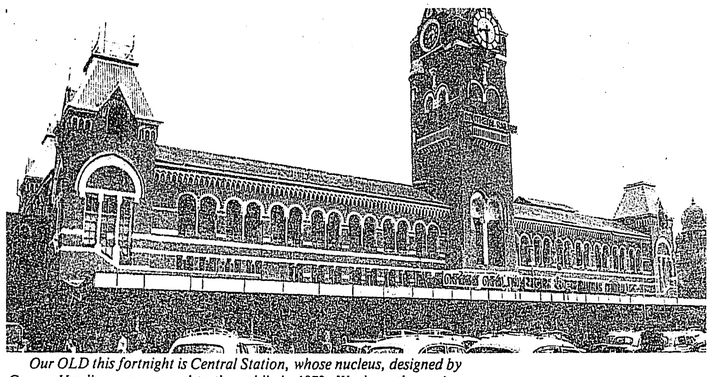
Organic manure is also catching on as a concept. It has now become a source of income for civic bodies in Tamil Nadu. In 1992-93, the Thanjavur Municipality sold 11,790 tonnes of organic manure for Rs. 1.69 lakhs. The manure consists largely of wastes from slaughter houses and vegetable markets, besides domestic waste.

However, in most cases, the manure is not decomposed properly. T Anbazhakan, Thanjavur's municipal health officer, attributes this to untrained sanitary inspectors and the huge demand from farmers, who don't wait for the waste to decompose properly.

At the other end of the spectrum are the experiments in organic food in Tamil Nadu. While the Kurunji Organic Food India Pvt Ltd farms are concentrating on production and processing of fruits "without adding chemicals, preservatives or colouring agents", the Bombay Burmah Trading Co. cultivates tea organically.

The demand for vermicompost is also rising sharply. According to a zoologist, vermicompost contains five times more nitrogen, seven times more phosphate and 11 times more potash than the given top soil. Every hectare

(Continued on P7)

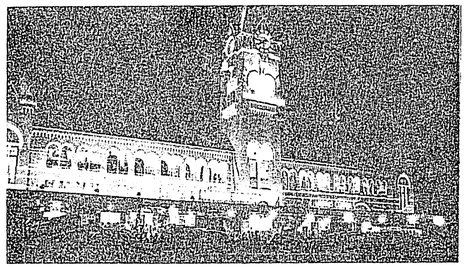


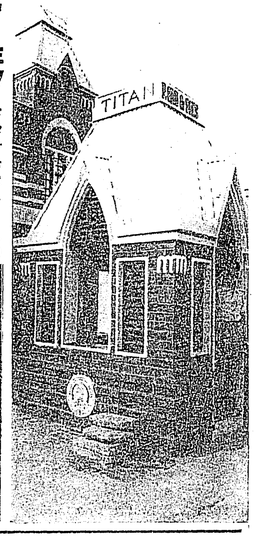
Our OLD this fortnight is Central Station, whose nucleus, designed by George Harding, was opened to the public in 1873. Work on the station went on till 1878 and then further improvements were added by Robert Chisholm, who had by this time begun to embellish with County Colonial the Indo-Saracenic he had started with in the 1860s. The present striking building was ready by 1900. Improvements to the station were made in 1959 and further improvements got underway last year.

THE OLD... & THE NEW

Some of those improvements feature in our NEW. Clever flood-lighting make the station a vision at night, but chaotic traffic flow rather dims the lustre, especially on the ground level. In a bid to regulate traffic somewhat — and make pre-payment of hire services practicable — a police booth has been built in front of the station with sponsorship from P Orr & Sons, who no doubt keep the Station's clock going. The booth captures the Station's characteristic red-brick and county tower style, but why, it may be wondered, is the Gothic preferred to the more conventional Indo-Saracenic arches under the gables?

(Photographs — The Old: SUSHEELA NAIR, The New: V S RAGHAVAN)





EQUITY RESEARCH

If to the stock exchange you speed,
To try with bulls and bears your luck,
'Tis odds, you soon from gold are freed
And waddle forth a limping duck

This riches to rags story might have unerringly hit the mark when investment decisions based on sentiment and guesstimates, rather than on any rational scientific research, were the order of the day. Not today, folks. Today, the odds are that you will only rake in more lucre. And all thanks to EQUITY RESEARCH, which has seeped into us and our bourses.

This is not to say that Equity Research, that which identifies and forecasts the possible price movements of equity scrips of companies under assumed conditions, has not been in vogue before. Banks and FIs which maintain portfolios have always used its techniques. But now, with the advent of the FIIs and the market headed towards wholesaling through compulsions of private placements and proportionate allotment, Equity Research has become a faculty by itself, as well as a Hobson's choice.

Though the ultimate motive of profitability cannot, of course, be ignored, to help the investor be more scientific and reduce the element of risk seems to be the main objective of Equity Research.

Equity Research involves the study of a company in relation to its industry and the economy. While the idea of studying the economy to scrutinise a scrip might sound far-fetched, it isn't really. GDP being the indicator of our economic growth, naturally a researcher would embark on those industries vehemently contributing to the growth rate. If such an industry is found profitable and having potential for growth and sustenance, a rational choice is made.

In that sense, agro, food-processing and export-oriented industries like software seem to be the prospective go-getters. Also, with GATT endowing enhanced opportunities to industries like agro products, floriculture and processed foods, members of these in the capital market cannot, obviously, be ignored.

The industry is then studied for its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in Indian conditions *vis-a-vis* the world. Let's take the software industry, which we had analysed in our previous column. We discussed its strength as the presence of highly talented professionals with a flair for numbers and fluent in English, lack of infrastructure as its weakness, a pronounced demand-supply gap for professionals as an opportunity and labour turnover and piracy as threats.

Now, let's talk about company specifics. A majority of our recommendations identify a good buy based on a company's performance, its promoters, share trends etc; or, in short, on fundamental and technical factors. These factors, which can literally rip apart a company, its financials and its position in the market, are very crucial and make a very interesting quarry for analysis. But the subject being one requiring exhaustive explanation, we'll take it up in the coming fortnight. In the meantime, below are some good-lookers for now:

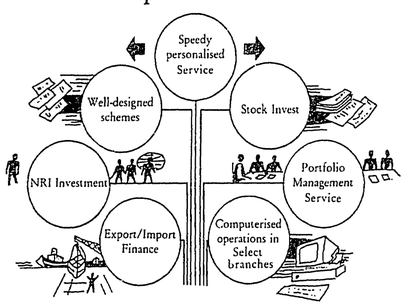
Moolchand Exports [CMP Rs. 48.50 (BSE)]: Moolchand manufactures leather garments and is also in the business of cashew processing. It came public in Jan. 1994 to meet its working capital requirements and to acquire plant and machinery for the cashew processing unit. The results for 1993-94 have been exemplary — a turnover of Rs. 26.80 cr and a PAT of Rs. 4.39 cr against its estimations of Rs. 27 cr and Rs. 3.37 cr respectively. We project a Rs. 52 cr turnover, a PAT of Rs. 8.30 cr and an EPS of Rs. 8.30 for 1994-95, which will support at least Rs. 100 for this actively traded share. Buy with a stop loss at Rs. 40.

Indian Food Fermentations [CMP Rs. 11.00]: IFFL came out with a public issue in Jan. 1994 to set up a project to make dry *dosa* batter and potato *masala* mix, ingredients for making *masala dosas*. It has already franchised many *dosa*-making machines without much fanfare. Franchising of the machines abroad is also to be taken up by IFF Labs, the parent company, by 1995-96. An EPS of Rs. 0.36 is estimated for the year ending Nov. 1994, with a small profit of Rs. 18 lakhs. However, a six-month lag in the project might delay the projected profits correspondingly. But the company is the first of its kind in India and any doubts over the acceptance of the product should be doused as there is a repeat buying of *dosas* constituting over 50 per cent of the daily sales. In view of the very good prospects, buy.

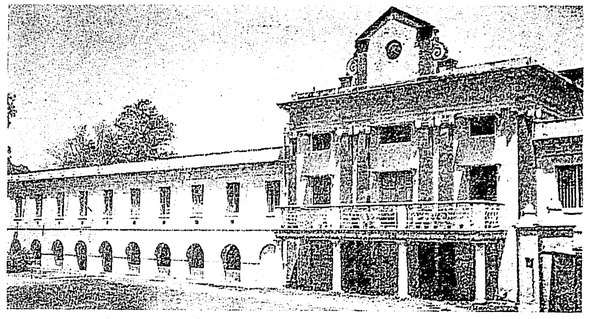
IP Rings [CMP Rs. 72.50]: IPRL is a part of the Amalgamations group, one of the largest and most diversified business houses in South India. It was promoted by Simpson and Co, India Pistons Ltd, and Tractors and Farm Equipment, together with Amalgamations, to manufacture steel rings and sophisticated cast iron rings. For the half year ended Sept. 1993, turnover was Rs. 5 cr and PAT Rs. 0.62 cr. For 1994-95, an EPS of Rs. 4.50 is projected, yielding a price of Rs. 110. Prices have been moving sideways for over nine months around Rs. 70. Buy above resistance at Rs. 75 with a stop loss at Rs. 60.

V. Gopalakrishnan

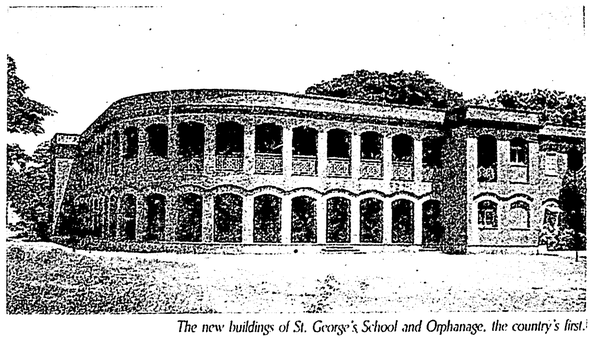
Better Customer Satisfaction through a wide spectrum of services



Bank of Madura Ltd.
Central Office
758, Mount Road,
Anna Salai,
Madras-600 002.



Conway House, *first home of the Orphans' Asylum when it moved to Kilpauk.*



The new buildings of St. George's School and Orphanage, the country's first.

St. George's — *The oldest school in India*

• *Madras Musings* this fortnight begins a series on Madras schools that are part of the City's heritage. These are not necessarily the better-known or more successful schools of today. These are the schools that helped the city to grow. Each of the schools to be featured is over 100 years old. And we begin with the oldest school in India, which introduced the "modern (or Western, if you will) tradition of education" in the country.

St. George's School and Orphanage on Poonamallee High Road, the oldest school in India to impart the modern (or Western) type of education, is situated on a vast 26-acre campus of quiet avenues and walks and several large shady trees.

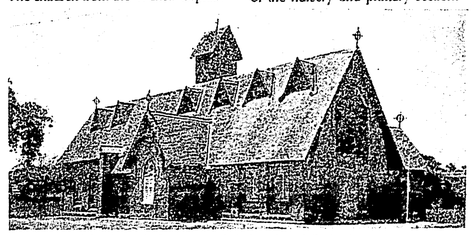
The school was founded in December 1715 by the Rev. W Stevenson, a chaplain of St. Mary's Church in Fort St. George. The school started with 18 boys and 12 girls in a large house called *Jersey House*. In 1719, a new building was built for St. Mary's Charity School, as it was known, on the Island, outside the Fort. Until 1780, the school kept shifting from houses outside the Fort to houses inside it and back.

St. George's was the school for the Male Military Orphan Asylum (M.M.O.A.) from 1782. The Lawrence Asylum, founded in the Nilgiris in 1858, was taken over by the Government in 1860. Later, the M.M.O.A. and Lawrence Asylum were amalgamated. In 1863, the Female Military Orphan Asylum (F.M.O.A.) was also amalgamated with the M.M.O.A. and the Lawrence Asylum. These were shifted to Lovedale in 1871.

A Civil Male Orphan Asylum had, meanwhile, been founded in 1807 and a Civil Female Orphan Asylum in 1810 in 'Black Town', what is now George Town. These schools catered for children of Europeans and their descendants who were ineligible for admission to the military asylums. The Civil Orphan Asylums were regarded as charitable refuges for destitute children.

In 1872, the Asylums and St. Mary's Charity School were amalgamated as the Civil Orphan Asylum and moved to Egmore Redoubt, its spacious premises being altered to suit the new arrangements. The children from the Waltair Orphan Asylum, founded some time between 1830 and 1840, were, in 1894, transferred to the COA.

The school moved to the present site in Kilpauk in 1904. In 1954, the school's name, Civil Orphan Asylum, was changed to St. George's School & Orphanage. The school was upgraded into a High School in 1960-61 and into a Higher Secondary School in 1978-79. I.C. Leslie has been the Headmaster since then. Mrs. G. Poornalingam, winner of the State's Best Teacher's Award, has been a teacher for a record 46 years and is in charge of the nursery and primary section.



The chapel of St. George's School — a little bit of rural England.

The school has an excellent record in sports. It is considered one of the hockey nurseries of the city.

The Orphanage, which has 150 children aged between 5-18, is exclusively for Anglo-Indians.

The School's best known buildings are *Conway House*, in which it was first housed and which now houses the Orphanage's hostel and dining room, and the 110-year-old school chapel, which looks like having been transplanted from the English countryside.

The School has a unique scheme called 'School Partnership Worldwide'. The scheme was started in 1986 and, till date, the school has entertained twelve batches of students from Scotland and England. Two students at a time from there come here and spend about six months studying the culture and art of this country.

The annual budget of this 279-year-old state-aided school is about Rs. 7 lakhs and it does not receive any foreign aid.

Text and photographs —
·RAJIND N CHRISTY

Deep in the suds

by RANJITHA ASHOK

It is two minutes to the hour. Mrs. Every'un tosses the last *chappati* into the dish, and switches off the gas. Thank God, that is over! She bustles into the living room. The rest have already assembled in front of the TV. Her husband has taken up his favourite defence position... behind the newspaper. Her father-in-law, Mr. Old'un, sits grandly on the sofa, a thick book on philosophy spread significantly next to him. Her mother-in-law, Mrs. Old'un, sits in the straight chair. Her back hurts otherwise, you see. The kids have been dismissed to do their homework... although the adults are fully aware that over the next one hour there will be at least eight requests for water, six doubts on the homework, and five mini-discussions which can very well wait till later.

The serial *The Shallow and the Mixed-Up* is about to begin...!

Mrs. Old'un suddenly has a doubt. "Where did it stop last night?" she asks urgently.

As the title music is played, her daughter-in-law replies quickly, keeping her eyes on the screen, "The blonde girl found out that her father is not her real father, her mother has been admitted into hospital for an in-growing toe-nail, the brother has been arrested, but they still do not know who stole the money..." The old lady nods intelligently, while her husband shushes them up.

Two people, a man and a woman, with prescribed blonde good looks, are busy arguing on the screen.

"Those two have nothing better to do than fight," mutters Mrs. Old'un. "That is because the old lady, the mother, interferes too much," counters her husband.

Another couple have now appeared on the screen. Again, same standard blonde looks. Except that these two are rather obviously not arguing... and, right on cue, pipes up a young voice, "Amma, can I have some water?"

Mrs. Every'un "Can't you get it yourself?", but her son's attention is now on the screen.

"Hey, why is she kissing this guy? No, Amma, really, she shouldn't be kissing him. My friend's aunt lives in the US, and she has seen this part already and she told him and he told me that this girl ends up having an affair with that other guy..." He notes with satisfaction that he now has everybody's attention.

"Did... did... you say 'having an affair'?" splutters his mother.

"Yeah," he replies, "Why? Don't you know what that means?" and, obviously feeling that he cannot possibly top that for an exit-line, disappears into the kitchen. Also, he has suddenly noticed his father's wrathful eyes slowly appearing over the newspaper...!

"Impertinent!" pronounces Mr. Old'un "This generation thinks they know everything."

"That poor girl," sighs Mrs. Old'un. "She shouldn't trust that man at all."

"Decadent!" pronounces Mr. Old'un, keeping his eyes on the screen. "We, on the other hand, have values... Who would do that sort of thing here?"

"Third-Cousin's daughter," replies Mrs. Old'un, unexpectedly. "They hushed it up, of course, and quickly got her married...? Don't you remember? That is why they were so keen on a bridegroom from abroad. A local boy would have definitely found out."

Mr. Old'un is not too happy with this example of how human nature appears to be the same the world over, after all! "Don't keep talking," he snaps. "Now, see what you've done. I missed what was being said." He leans forward. "What did he say? What did she say?"

Things appear to be getting tense on the screen too , with lots of tears and sickly-sweet speeches.

"Oh, poor thing... that girl has been so devoted, and now he is walking out on her," sniffs Mrs. Every-'un. "These men... sometimes..."

Her husband chooses this moment to appear from behind the paper and ask tentatively. "It seems there is an interesting debate on Channel..."

Her eyes flash so dangerously, he retires promptly, cowed by his usually gentle wife.

The daughter wanders in. "Amma, have you seen my scrapbook?" she asks innocently, keeping her eyes on the TV.

"It must be in your desk. Go look."

The girl does not move. "Oh, have those two broken up? Good. That guy is ssssssoooooooo cute...he should go around with that other fabulous-looking girl..."

Her mother looks at her askance. "This girl is so sweet, and will make him a good wife..." she points out.

"Oh, Amma, she is such a bore... so **good,** all the time. Any guy will get bored... particularly a hunk like that... Anyway, if you don't know how to hold on to your man, you deserve to lose him!"

Mrs. Every'un looks at her daughter in horror, and then notices her mother-in-law is doing the same, making strange, gulping noises in the process! She orders her daughter to go look for the scrapbook... **"now!"**

"What did that fat woman say?" cuts in Mr. Old'un. "Why is she arguing with the bald man?"

Mrs. Every'un sighs. At this rate, she is going to miss the whole thing. "She is the grandmother. She owns the business. The bald man is blackmailing her."

"She doesn't look like a grandmother," muses Mr. Old'un.

"No," snaps his wife, cuttingly. "That is the trouble. I get mixed up as to who are the older women and who are the younger ones... their hairstyles are the same, their clothes are the same..."

("And they are also interested in doing the same things," murmurs the granddaughter, slyly... but no one hears, fortunately for her!)

"Don't they realise they are old now?" the grandmother continues. "Just think... if I, at my age, wore a *choli* with a neck till here..." she indicates her midriff. The others try to imagine... and give up!

"Ah, but those women know how to keep trim..." says Mr. Old'un, oblivious to the look his wife gives him!

"They also dress so well," sighs the daughter, "Just look at that lovely hair, those clothes, those ear-rings..."

Her mother's attention, however, lingers on the shining dining table with its crystal-ware.

"How come **she** can watch, and I can't?" The son is back, prepared for battle.

"Oh, wow! Just look at that fancy indoor swimming pool," he adds.

Gleaming, perfect figures are draped artistically all over the poolside, sipping at something cool in long-stemmed glasses.

"All the time they eat or drink," mutters Mrs. Old'un. "And, have you noticed... they never seem to finish anything they pour for themselves or put on a plate."

"Who is the man in the black suit?" asks Mr. Old'un, suddenly noticing a new face.

"He is the Inspector," explains his long-suffering daughter-in-law.

(Continued on P6).

Travelling on the MET

Tramway lines were laid on the arterial roads of Madras at the beginning of this century. A company known as the Madras Electric Tramways (M.E.T.) was formed in 1903 (or was it 1904?). It was a subsidiary of the Madras Electricity Supply Corporation which had established its electric generators at Basin Bridge power house. The tramways connected Royapuram, Washermanpet, Purasawalkam and Egmore north of the Cooum with Mylapore and Triplicane to the south.

An estimate places the total length of rails laid on Madras roads by the Tramway Company as just over fifty miles. The workers who operated the system were about 1600. And total number of cars deployed was around 300.

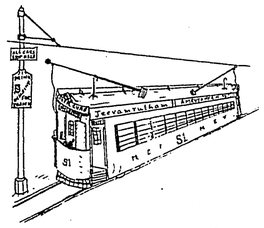
The tramways came at a time when the citizens of Madras were willing to try this new electro-mechanical contraption in place of the cramped ox- and pony-drawn gigs. Buses also appeared at the same time, but had their drawbacks. They were run on the whims and fancies of a reckless driver and an irascible conductor. The tramcar struck a golden mean. It was slower than buses, but faster than animal-drawn vehicles. No doubt it was noisy. But when compared to modern-day road hogs with their raucous horns, it was only a whisper! It was cheap, safe and comfortable. Hence Madrasis took to this mode of transport with enthusiasm.

The main depot was at the Poonamallee High Road — Rundall Road (now E.V.K. Sampath Road) corner, where a hotel complex, the *Dinathanthi* office and Periyar Thidal now stand.

The palmy days of the tramways may be considered as the years between 1930 and 1940. In those days, the fare per stage, say, from Central Station to Mount Road Post Office, was six pies or half an anna, equivalent to three paise in our modern coinage. The fare from Washermanpet to Mylapore was three annas (19 modern paise). On holidays and Sundays, you could buy a 'Go As You Please' ticket for one rupee and travel over all routes on that day. Monthly passes were also issued for regular travellers. There was an 'All Round' pass which cost Rs. 7 per month. A holder of this could travel on all routes any number of times in a month. This was a real boon to representatives and travelling salesmen.

The driver of the car was termed 'Motorman'. The conductors, motormen and ticket-checking inspectors were provided with khaki uniforms, with designation and number in solid brass lettering that was their badge.

A great share of the blame goes to this company for perpetrating the name 'Barber's Bridge' for what used to be Hamilton Bridge. Till the end, they stuck to this name, both in the destination boards of cars as well as on tickets. This in spite of many pointing out to the ridiculous twist to the fair name of Mr. Hamilton!



The ticket-checking inspector was provided with a black M.G.R.-type cap instead of the regulation khaki one. The motorman stood at the front of the car and manipulated the levers. When a car reached a terminus, the motorman removed these handles, fitted them on the controls at the other end and worked the car in the opposite direction. There was no windshield glass pane at the front of the car, so

• by M. SETHURAMAN

the motorman was exposed to the weather. His ordeal was worst during rainy days, as he had to face the beating shafts of rain. Although he was

The accident-preventing system was a unique device fitted in front of the car below deck level. It was a batten shield covering the full width of the car. This was hinged on top, while the bottom swung freely, almost touching the ground. If pushed inward due to any obstruction, a tray lowered in front of the wheels and cradled the object, preventing it from getting crushed. Many a dazed urchin or dog was pulled out of this tray unharmed except for a few scratches. These small fry had no respect for this slow-moving giant and stepped out of its way only at the last moment. But, occasionally, their timing failed!

provided with waterproof raincoat, it was cumbersome to manipulate the controls with the coat on. So he removed his clothing and worked the car in his underwear, getting completely drenched in the process. When the car reached the terminus, and when no one was around, he simply removed the wet piece of clothing around his loins, wrung out the rain water and wore it again for the return journey! It was a poignantly ludicrous situation indeed! But those valiant men took it in their stride!

The open type of cars were replaced by closed ones by 1930, with entrances at the ends of the cars. This was safer for the passangers and the conductor could move along the aisle without getting out of the cars to issue tickets. But these cars did not improve the lot of the motorman. He still braved the elements as before!

The tramcars would have jingled along the roads of Madras but for the rude onset of World War II. The density of traffic suddenly increased due to military vehicles. To keep pace with the military demand, civilian supply vehicles also multiplied. Since everyone was in a hurry due to the war situation, the speed of these vehicles also increased to breakneck proportions. Tramcars ambling slowly in the middle of the road, with passengers scurrying about to get in or out of them, was a trying deterrent to other fast-moving traffic. So the tramcar became unpopular. Only the brave crossed the roads in face of incoming speeding trucks to board tramcars.

The tramway system was not profitable even from the beginning. The fare structure was low and the detection

Since the rails had to be embedded below road level, with only its top plane being true with road surface for smooth flow of other traffic, a groove was provided on the inner side of the rails to accommodate the flanges of car wheels. As this collected dust from the road, a man walked along the rail with a long handled brush clearing out the rubbish that accumulated there.

of ticketless passengers was well nigh impossible. Only women, the infirm and conscientious passengers purchased tickets. Most others crowded near the entrance and exit. When the conductor approached, they just jumped down — as the car moved slowly — to board the next oncoming car. A car could not be stopped to complete the issue of tickets. If a car had stopped due to any

As the turn-outs were sharp in conformity with the lay of roads, the friction between car wheels and rail was high. This was mitigated by pouring water in the grooves of the rails frequently. It acted as lubricant as well as coolant.

eventuality, all cars behind it also stopped, causing traffic congestion. Since all cars had to use the same rail track in a section, there was no means of overtaking one another. Yet the system worked, as the company received electric power at a subsidised rate from its sister power company.

In the mid-Fifties, when all electricity companies were nationalised, M.E.T. had to give up its happy association with M.E.S.C. It had to shell out the full cost of the electical energy its system demanded. Simultaneously, internal labour trouble, which had been brewing for some years, compounded the issue. The City Fathers also were not keen on having trams on their roads as the traffic pattern had changed drastically. These factors contributed to the disappearance of the tramcars from the Madras scene. As Harry Miller pointed out in *M.M.*, it is a pity no one thought of preserving for posterity any item of this system as a museumpiece.

The trams did not run very fast, compared to buses, and getting in and out of trams in motion used to be a 'macho' pastime of the day. This writer, a kid in shorts, recalls vividly an up-and-coming actor and latter day phenomenon, M G Ramachandran, jumping out of the running trams in style near the Elephant Gate junction, where China Bazaar Road — now Netaji Subash Chandra Bose Road — and Wall Tax Road meet.

Soon after World War II, rubber slippers sold in Madras at Re. 1 a pair. Said to have been made out of surplus and abandoned army and airplane tyres, they proved extremely popular for an interesting reason. Known as 'aeroplane slippers', they were believed to be advantageous for jumping out of running trams.

A childhood friend found it was not always so at the cost of severe body bruises and a couple of chipped teeth!

I wonder if any old Madrasi has in his attic a pair of these 'aeroplane slippers'?

RG

DEEP IN THE SUDS

(Continued from P5)

"That old lady's son is falsely accused of embezzling funds... there was all that row last week, don't you remember? This is the man in charge of that case."

"Oh yes, that happened the day we went to that *pooja*," Mrs. Old'un reminds her husband. "They served dinner so late, we couldn't make it back in time."

"See, this is what happens if you miss even one day," grumbles her husband.

The hour is almost up. In one hour, boy has jilted girl, schemers have tried to break up families, plotters have tried the same thing with old business houses, the wicked have come perilously close to triumph... and, just when you think the loose ends are all tied up, there comes a new problem...

The bad guy leans towards the fat lady and hisses, "You are finished this time, sweetheart, you and your precious son... I'll see to that, I promise..." The camera then zooms to a half-open window and a beautiful blonde girl, who slowly lifts her slender hand and points a revolver straight ahead... and holds that pose as the screen fades...

It is over for the day. Mr. Every'un lowers his paper. There is a moment of pensive silence. Then they rise, one after the other, and move towards the tiny dining table, with its gleaming steel plates and tumblers. It is time for the *chappatis* and potato curry, hot *rasam* and cold curd...

Tomorrow is another day...

amrapati
(textile designers, dyers & printers)
MANGALGIRI SUMMER SALE
• Exquisite blouse material • Gorgeous dupattas
• Traditional saris
Fabulous discounts on selected varieties till stocks last at
AMRAPALI BOUTIQUE
115 FOUNTAIN PLAZA, EGMORE, MADRAS.

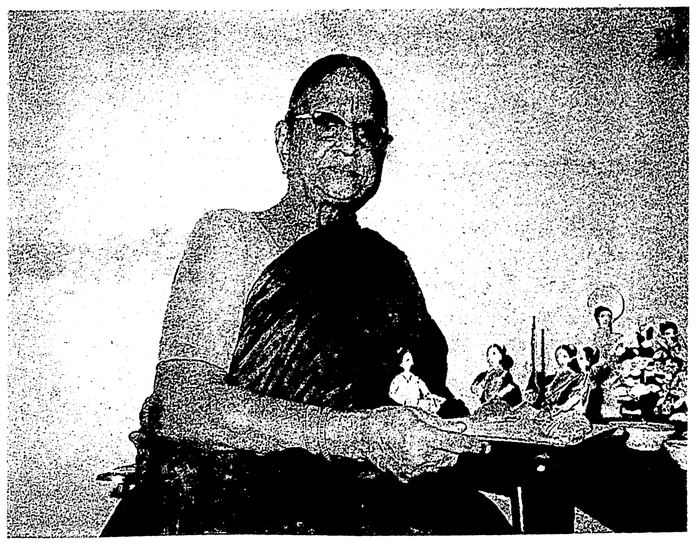
Quizzin' with Ramanan

(Quizmaster V.V. RAMANAN's questions are from the fortnight April 16 - 30)

1. Where was a month-long India festival, 'India Today', inaugurated on April 17th?
2. Which locality in Madras has become the first to introduce a detailed 72 page guide map for the area, covering three postal zones?
3. Who is the first recipient of the Advertising Club, Madras, 'Distinguished Service Award',?
4. Name the founder-editor of *Kumudam* who passed away recently.
5. What new system has the postal department introduced in the four metros to speed up delivery of telegraphic messages?
6. What sporting achievement took place at 11.45 hrs on April 18th?
7. Name the Tamil Nadu Advocate-General who resigned on April 19th amidst controversy?
8. The first sportsman to be named a goodwill ambassador of UNESCO is...?
9. The acclaimed Indian novel *Crane's Morning* by Aikath-Gyaltsen is accused of having been plagiarised from a 1956 book. Name the book.?
10. Which place in India will host the FIDE's World Chess Championship Candidates series in July this year?
11. Which temple in the state has the unique distinction of having the maximum landed property, according to a recent survey of temples?
12. Name the first Indian film to be chosen to contest in the competitive section at the Cannes Film Festival later this year?
13. The first double-decker railway platform in the country is to come up at...?
14. The national awards for the best feature film and best Tamil feature film for 1993 have gone to...?
15. The rare event of discovering a rare species of large mammal was achieved recently. Name the species and the place?
16. What distinction did Ms. Nomaza Paintin achieve?
17. In a landmark judgement, the Supreme Court has struck down Sec 309 of the Indian Penal Code. What is Sec 309?
18. Why was the German pop group 'Die Angefahrene Schulkinden' (The Run-over Schoolkids) in the eye of a storm recently?
19. "I know it's a damn good excuse, but don't take the day off just because I happened to die and am not around". The corporate legend who made this remark passed away recently. Who?
20. The new national Women's Chess Champion, who was crowned in Bangalore recently, is...?

(Answers P. 8)

Shells maketh Mami's dolls



Rajammal and her dolls. (Photograph by V R DEVIKA)

Sujatha Vijayaraghavan took me for a long ride recently. To introduce me to an old relative of hers. Sujatha is a musician, musicologist and a writer with a particular interest in dance. She has just released a novel in Tamil with music as its background. She also has two lovely daughters who are dancers

• by V.R. DEVIKA

and musicians. The long drive to Padi from Besant Nagar was made light with talk about music, dance and the goings-on in the art scene.

Rajammal, her relative, is past eighty and gave us a toothy smile when we arrived at her house in Padi. An orthodox Iyengar woman in a *Madisaree* (the nine-yard saree), Rajammal has an interesting hobby. She was married when she was about eight, and marriage, children, temple and rituals at home and outside had occupied her time till she was in her fifties. Then Rajammal visited an exhibition in Bangalore and saw some dolls made of sea shells. She was smitten.

Back in Madras, she started collecting sea shells and conches and glued them together into very modern dolls. Her son, working at Philips, did the lighting for the Asiad in New Delhi and had taken her there. Mami sat down to re-create the entire cultural programme of the Asiad "Bharathiyam" in small sea shells. She also made the athletes and the athletic events. She now sits in front of the TV and any programme that attracts her attention becomes a scene in her dolls' collection.

"Thirty years ago, I would go to Thiruvanmiyur or Thiruvottriyur, where wholesale shell merchants operated and lorry-loads of sea shells would be brought in by fishermen. There were people wanting broken sea shells for the whitewash mixture and also for making domes, curtains etc. I would also be there, looking for beautiful shells." Though extremely orthodox, she would sift through the fishy smelling mountains of sea shells in the Muslim wholesale shops and clean thoroughly herself whatever she bought.

Her children and Sujatha remember how Rajammal would look at a shell and call it a bird or something else. The doll would get created around the shell. Small shells would be used for long plaits or fancy hairdresses of girls or for a saree or an umbrella. Rajammal even makes the small mechanical things needed for doll-making with shells, like a small hand-operated lathe or a drill for making holes. Sujatha described how Mami would have her cooking on the fire in one corner of the kitchen, all her shells, glue and colours in another corner and her grandchildren on her lap — and she would manage all three at the same time.

Rajammal was asked by the Government's Department of Culture to teach doll-making to a group of urchins and she did that for four years. Now she supplies dolls to the Victoria Technical Institute.

Sujatha says Rajammal Mami has sustained an enthusiastic interest in her art through all the trials and tribulations of her life. A little hobby of one's own always does wonders, doesn't it?

MANAALI RAMAN...

"Ban or stay, the loud-speakers will stay for ever."

IN MAD MAD MADRAS

The great Madras garment bazaar

The exclusive India Garment Show held in Madras at the Park Sheraton Hotel recently, the first garment trade show of its kind held in the South, took the city by storm. While impressive delegations comprising fashion buying houses, agents, buyers, garment exporters, manufacturers and fashion designers from 19 foreign countries, including the US, UK and Canada, examined the high fashion garments being designed and manufactured in India, Madras went gaga over the glittering fashion parade held under the auspices of the Show. Some of India's top models, including six former Miss Indias, sashayed down the catwalk modelling seductive beachwear, formal evening gowns, enticing Western and Indian ensembles, sportswear, cool casuals, sleepwear — all designed by some of India's top fashion designers. It was *haute couture* at its most elegant, and a perfect venue for deals and lucrative orders which, hopefully, would put Indian garments firmly on the world designer map. Apparently the concept of a well-packaged garment and accessories trade show has finally arrived in Madras, making it a new centre of the world garment bazaar.

The Indian Garment Show was primarily designed to attract the foreign market, a kind of watering hole for jet set designers and the mandarins of the international garment trade to make their deals and decisions. In fact, overnight the hotel hall was jampacked with elegantly done stalls displaying Indian garments — a kind of 21st century high-tech *souk* with traders displaying the wondrous garments and designer wear of Hindustan!

The sheer variety, vitality and elegance of the display items was compelling. Pastel to vivid

• by PUSHPA CHARI

to "shocking" hued T Shirts, shorts and pants, smart sportswear and jogging apparel, swirling skirts and the miniest of minis, children's wear and the sheerest blouses came in a bedazzling variety of colours and styles from Tiruppur, the Mecca of high fashion hosiery items. There were pretty towels in pastel colours or boldly striped to add a designer touch to designer bathrooms. There were exquisite fashion accessories from belts, buttons and bows, hair bands and clips to elegant bags and shoes. And there was a mind-boggling array of accessories for the accessories!

Making eye-catching fashion statements were leather and suede jackets, *couture* men's wear and designer sleepwear, exquisitely designed blouses encrusted with beads, sequins and semi-precious stones, romantic evening gowns and ensembles. And breathtaking *salwar-kamiz* outfits — embroidered, sequinned, worked at with shell, silver and gold threads — each a tribute to the designer's wondrous creativity and age-old Indian craft traditions. The Government of India's presence and support to the show was seen in the display of printed shirts and ladies' jackets manufactured at the Ordnance Factory.

The quality, finish and design of the Indian garments and accessories on show seemed impeccable — a blend of high-tech textile technology, ancient craft and textile heritage, and an innovative design approach. The idea of the India Garments Show, as an executive of the ANZ Marketing Associates put it, was to help Indian garment manufacturers to get to foreign buyers and markets, marketing being a major area of concern for most Indian exporters. Did the Garment Show make an appreciable difference in what is already a whopping foreign exchange earner?

"We are more than hopeful of bigger deals being struck. The foreign buyers have seen and scrutinised under one roof all that India has to offer in terms of garments and accessories. We're waiting for concrete offers to pour in..." was the refrain of most of the manufacturers. To which one says Inshallah and more power to Indian garments, textiles, fashion, designers and, particularly, the buyer...

Natural and artificial

(Continued from P4)

of wetland needs at least 2.5 tonnes of earthworm compost per season. Some farmers not only use earthworms, they also sell them.

K Gunathilagaraj, Professor of Environmental Science at Tamil Nadu Agricultural University in Coimbatore, however, warns against unscientific vermiculture: "Studies show earthworms can damage paddy and cotton crops. Their droppings tighten the soil around paddy roots, depriving the crop of moisture. Earthworms also carry Anthrax beetle pathogens, which attack cotton." — (*CSE/Down to Earth Features.*)

S. Rajendran

CHILDREN!
Enjoy Your Holidays With Exciting Computer Courses!

VINKAAR
32, Subramanyam Street,
Abhiramapuram, Madras 600 018.
✆ 4995866.
ALSO AVAILABLE LAN, C++, - DTP, GRAPHICS & ANIMATION

Off to Everest

They're off to Everest — or, at least, to Everest Base Camp — the first girls' expedition from Tamil Nadu. The girls also plan on climbing nearby Kalapathar Peak (18,192 feet).

The 17-member team on the 35-day expedition, which plans on trekking and climbing 180 km in 24 days, includes six girls from Stella Maris, one girl from Meenakshi College, one from Tamil Nadu Hospital and two others. The expedition, led by P S V Kumaraswamy, has been organised by the Madras Institute of Mountaineering and Allied Sports (MIMAS).

Setting out from Kathmandu to Jiri on May 3rd, they begin trekking from Jiri on the 4th and reach famed Namche on May 17th. Moving on from there, they plan to reach Everest Base Camp on May 23rd and tackle Kalapathar on the 24th before making the trek back.

The Deputy Leader of the expedition is Chithkala and the other girls are:
Saraswati Sivaraman (a veteran trekker),
Sujaya (yoga instructor and paramedic),
Sujatha (dietician),
Bhavana, Kanmani, Ramila, Sowmya, Sudha and Swarna.

Marks that will promote sport

(By Sportswatch)

The Tamil Nadu Government recently took an important step to promote sport. It announced that grace marks would be awarded to students who excel in the sporting arena. This will enable those talented in sport not to be put on the back-burner when it comes to examination time.

In order to compensate students who bring laurels to the nation by their achievements in sport at some cost to academic pursuit, the following additional marks will now be awarded:

Medallist	*International*	*National*	*State*	*District*	*Edn. Dist.*
Gold	35%	15%	8%	3%	2%
Silver	30%	13%	6%	2%	1%
Bronze	25%	11%	5%	—	—
For participation	20%	10%	4%	—	—

Government's welcome decision will undoubtedly encourage marks-concious parents to allow their wards to pay more attention to sport. There is also certain to be a reduction in the drop-out rate of sportsmen from educational institutions. And yet another spin-off is likely to be the increasing participation of students in all sports rather than crowding cricket.

However, some clarification is needed on whether the marks will be allowed even in school final exams and, if so, whether the grace marks would be taken into account when considering the cut-off marks for admission to the professional colleges. And, finally, in this litigation-conscious state of ours, how will the Courts view this scheme if someone files suit?

No 'homes' for sports bodies

by JAICI

The entire Indian sports fraternity's sympathies went out to the Tamil Nadu Football Association, Madras F.A., and the Tamil Nadu Boxing, Carrom and Badminton Associations when their offices were sealed and locked by the Madras City Corporation because of nonpayment of rent and arrears. Their offices were in the Corporation's indoor stadium complex in People's Park, to where they were shifted from the old Nehru Stadium before its demolition and reconstruction.

Never before in the history of Indian sport had so many controlling bodies been so simultaneously humbled as these Associations, which have virtually been thrown out on the streets. As only to be expected, the eviction has led to controversy. While the Corporation's Deputy Commissioner, Finance and Revenue, has justified the sealing and maintained that it was only done after giving the concerned Association due notice, besides "four reminders", C R Visswanathan, the MFA president, has refuted the officer's claim and asserted that the Corporation had only "threatened to report the matter to the government".

It is, however, noteworthy that the Volleyball Federation of India, the Tamil Nadu Olympic Association and the Tamil Nadu Volleyball Association, which are also housed in the same indoor stadium complex, escaped the Corporation's wrath. Obviously, they are not defaulters. In fact, the Olympic Association secretary, K Murugan, has expressed his readiness to work for a settlement between the Corporation and the homeless Associations.

Visswanathan, on the other hand, is seeking an audience with Chief Minister Jayalalitha in the hope of a broader settlement that might give the Associations permanent office space somewhere..

Meanwhile, Visswanathan, as Vice-president of the TNFA, has another problem on his hands. The TNFA had decided to conduct the Jayalalitha Gold Cup women's international football tournament at the Nehru Stadium from May 1st. For various reasons, the first women's international tournament in India was postponed. When, if at all, it will be staged by the homeless TNFA is now anybody's guess. This state of affairs might well play a part in the meeting he hopes to get with the Chief Minister.

FOOT NOTE: At the time of writing, the Corporation has made a conciliatory offer, showing willingness, to accept a stipulated minimum part-payment.

ANSWERS TO QUIZ

1. Sydney, Australia; 2. Anna Nagar; 3. The legendary R.K. Swamy; 4. S.A.P. Annamalai; 5. The commissioning of a 128-line Store and Forward Telegraph (SFT) Switching System; 6. Brian Lara of West Indies overhauled Sir Gary Sobers' 365 n.o. to become the highest individual scorer in an innings of a Test match (375); 7. K.Subramanian; 8. Edson Arantes de Nascimento (Pele); 9. *The Rosemary Tree* by Elizabeth Goudge; 10. Sanghinagar near Hyderabad; 11. The Vedaranyeswarar Thirukoil in Vedaranyam; 12. *Swaham* (Mal) by Shaji Karun; 13. Kanpur, U.P; 14. *Charachar* (Bengali) and *Mahanadhi* respectively; 15. The 'Giant Montjac' Deer, Vietnam; 16. The first black to cast a vote in South Africa's first multiracial election; 17. It makes 'attempted suicide' a punishable offence; 18. It has been asked to pay damages of 60,000 DM to Steffi Graf for writing bawdy lyrics involving her and her father; 19. S.L. Kirloskar; 20. Bhagyashree Thipsay.

Classics — ALL in the family

by AJAX

With the curtains down on the Bombay and Calcutta seasons, and with the Bangalore summer meeting yet to get underway, the current Udhagamandalam racing season has enjoyed a month's off-course betting monopoly at Guindy. The ever-growing size of the crowd even on working days must have been a welcome relief to the Tamil Nadu Government's Department of Racing, for there was no denying the fact that while the Bombay and Calcutta seasons were on, Ooty got only step-motherly treatment from Madras punters.

The betting, both on the tote and in the ring, was particularly brisk on the days of the first two classics, the Fillies Trial Stakes on April 24th and the Colts Trial Stakes on May Day, even if the Classics themselves did not come in for any worthwhile investment. This was understandable, considering the size and line-ups of the two fields. Even so, they made Indian, nay, world, turf history, for they were the first-ever one-owner-one-trainer Classic contingents.

There were only four runners in the Fillies Trial, and all four ran in M.A.M. Ramaswamy's colours and were saddled by his trainer, Robert Foley. India's leading owner-trainer combination, thus, achieved the first-ever Classic clean sweep. It gave a repeat performance in the Colts Trial, in which there were only three runners.

The clean sweep of two successive Classics was yet another feather in Ramaswamy's cap. The latest feat by the first Indian to be mentioned in the Guinness Book of World Records for achievements on the Turf, went practically unnoticed, obviously because his colours have made racing virtually a family affair at Guindy and Ooty.

Punters at Guindy were wondering when there will be an end to Tamil Nadu's one-way Classics traffic. There, however, appears to be no sign of that happening in the near future. Owners like the famed hotel brothers, the planting families and the lungi exporters, who all had made their mark at Guindy before *MAM* began his phenomenal run and who might have put in a combined challenge, have virtually quit the scene. To complete the dismal scene, a newspaper magnate, who owns a sizeable string and whose father, paternal uncle, brother and cousins were all closely associated with the Madras turf as owners for decades, has preferred to race his horses not at Guindy, where he is a senior Steward, but at Hyderabad!

Ours is a Voluntary Organisation involved in Advocacy & Social Mobilisation for
The Elimination of Child Labour
We need volunteers, part-time and full-time workers to work as
Development Educators
Committed and concerned youths, both male and female, interested in working with children may apply to:
Action for Child Labour
3A, C.G.E. Colony, Old Beach Road, Thiruvanmiyur, Madras 600 041

Published by ANU VARGHESE for and on behalf of Lokavani-Hall Mark Press Pvt. Ltd., 62/63 Greames Road, Madras-600 006 and printed by T J GEORGE at Lokavani-Hall Mark Press Pvt. Ltd., 62/63 Greames Road, Madras-600 006. Edited by S MUTHIAH.