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IV. No. 11

Sept. 16 — 30, 1994

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A 'new' Ramanujan letter

(by R. Jaisri)

find in the ongoing process of documenting mathematics wizard Ramanujan's life and work...

that the entire lot of Ramanujan's correspondence (person and mathematical) had been collected and published...

Trinity College 17-12-14 My dear Sir, Received your letter of 2/11. My thanks to your wife for all her well wishes...

advanced part of pure mathematics. They have proved many properties of the zeta function (Riemann's) which defied all attempts to prove them...

the number of divisors of n, the number of decompositions of n into two squares, etc...

with these fractions. The series is absolutely convergent. But F(x) does not exist for any rational value, say 2/3...

Advertisement for Parry's Try-Me! chocolates, featuring the slogan 'An Invitation Like No Other' and 'Go ahead!' with an image of the product.

Continuation of the letter and a separate section titled 'Definite Integrals connected with Gauss's sums'.

The 300 million & the 600 million

American Ambassador Frank Wisner, a Southerner, appropriately made the South his first port of call on his first tour out of Delhi. And in Madras, he created the impression of not only being articulate, well-read and having done his homework well, as befits a Princeton man, but he also sent out a signal of willingness to learn. That signal came in the form of the person who accompanied him wherever he went, Prof Embree, an acknowledged South Asia specialist from another Ivy League institution, Columbia, and an old India hand.

Now while Ambassador Wisner's shirtsleeves camaraderie, knowledgeability and outspokenness impressed one and all he met during his four days in the city, *The Man From Madras Musings* couldn't help musing over some of things he spoke about and the timing of his visit. Ambassador Wisner spoke long and often on corruption in India, level playing fields, the difficulties of doing business in India and nuclear proliferation, happily willing to debate all these issues with whomever he met. But it rather struck *MMM* that all this concern was over subjects that would be the pre-occupation of those dealing with the more fortunate 300 million in India rather than the less fortunate 600 million in the country. These thoughts were rather reinforced in *MMM*'s mind by the week that followed.

First there was Coke painting the town red and Pepsi challenging it in red, white and blue in the days immediately following the Ambassador's visit. That might have been purely coincidental, but *MMM* couldn't help but muse that this only emphasised his view that it is the great consumer market that India's 300 millions offer that is the greatest concern of America, not the 600 million. And THAT concern over issues impeding liberalisation in the marketplace of the 300 million or which have little or nothing to do with the rest, the welcome given the standard-bearers of consumerism — the great American and British advertising agencies now tying up with Indian names — and the need for American insurance companies to be let in to further bolster international business morale in India were, curiously, the subjects *MMM* heard talked about most at a couple of parties he attended in the days that followed.

To any question about the 600 million the standard answer was that as more consumer-oriented industries arrived and grew, the sooner there'd be prosperity for all. And that was an answer that had *MMM* musing over the fact that the 300 million grew from the 10 or 20 million at Independence DESPITE all these odds. And over the fact that every year the 600 million are being added to by 15 million while the 300 million are being added to by less than half that number. And over the thought whether a Republican Party philosophy nowadays being mouthed by a Democratic Party leadership is really the answer to India's ills.

That last bit of skepticism was rather reinforced by a film seen during this period. *Thunderheart* is a film that starkly focusses on the privations in an American Indian RESERVATION. The reluctant hero, when he first sees such a 'protected' bit of America, is compelled to burst out in words to the effect, "A Goddamned bit of the Third World in America!". That Third World may not be in the ratio one-third to two-thirds as in India, it is probably 80 per cent to 20 per cent, but it EXISTS and all the business houses and advertising agencies that fuel consumerism have not been able to find the answer to its problems — or some of the questions *Thunderheart* raises.

Which is why *MMM*, while welcoming liberalisation, while condemning the impediments to it, while agreeing with all Ambassador Wisner said, also

calls for a widening of horizons by all concerned to take in the 600 million. And that calls for more than a Rs. 3 million here and a couple of million somewhere else — which receivers enthuse over even while forgetting these are sums many an INDIVIDUAL donor in the US could rather easily spare. To make India a Germany or Japan of tomorrow, there's much more America needs to offer than Pepsi, Coke and a Republican viewpoint. The Democratic Party appears to have forgotten the legacies of FDR and Harry S Truman. Perhaps it's not yet too late to remember them.

Press natter

Don't say *The Man From Madras Musings* didn't warn you if, shortly after Deepavali, *The Times of India* lands on your doorstep and offers you a more attractive price than *The Hindu*.

Once upon a time, *MMM* had been under the impression that the owners of both papers had a gentleman's understanding that *The Hindu* wouldn't come to Bombay and *The Times of India* wouldn't come to Madras.

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

There'd even been natter at the time *The Mail* was on its last legs that *The Times of India* would move in — but the understanding had prevailed. Now, apparently, it's different times, different generations and, so, *The Times of India*, which sees itself, even more than any other paper, as business first, has begun to eye Madras.

The natter *MMM* hears is that *The Times of India* plans to use its Bangalore printing facilities to offer Madras a *Times of India* 'Madras edition' at Rs. 2 or less. If that does come about *MMM* is rather inclined to believe that it will be the *Indian Express* that will be the loser, not *The Hindu* with its brilliant organisational, managerial and LOCAL advertising strengths. Meanwhile, if *The Times of India* does arrive, the fun and games will be worth watching.

Another 'new' paper on its way in Madras is scheduled for a Pongal launch. This will be a Tamil daily, with Prakash Swamy, former *India Today* Madras correspondent, looking after the daily affairs of the paper set to emerge from the *Ananda Vikatan* stables.

With a *Vikatan* lineage and Swamy's executive role, the target is likely to be the *Dinamani* where another *India Today*-ex, Mallan, is in charge. Both papers are likely to fight for the top-end of the market, but the revenue is likely to be grabbed by the rest, *MMM* rather feels.

In brief

★ The last issue of *Madras Musings* featured an analysis why Tamil Nadu was no longer making its presence felt in the Civil Services. But *The Man From Madras Musings* recently heard a few disturbing facts about the attitude found among the last two batches of I.A.S. Probationers. A survey has reported that revelries were held by the probationers of the 58th batch on the night of December

6, 1992, to celebrate the destruction of the Babri Masjid, with some of the top scorers participating in the 'fun'; 40 per cent of the probationers consider themselves above the law; another 40 per cent think it is very important to marry within the same caste; only 32 per cent condemn corruption in the Civil Service; 36 per cent are indifferent to it; and 36 per cent said they would not care about integrity while selecting their subordinates. As if this were not bad enough, the house journal of the Lal Bahadur Shastri Academy of National Administration carries articles which hardly befitted those who are going to govern our country tomorrow. And there are reports of caste discrimination in the hostels of the Academy. Such a report might well be reason enough for Tamil Nadu students to deliberately give the Civil Services a miss!

★ The birth centenary of Rukmini Lakshminipathi, a freedom fighter and social worker of yesteryears, falls this year and, as part of the celebrations, her statue is to be installed at the junction of Marshall's Road (which has been named after her) and Montieth Road, if the go-ahead comes from the Government. The statue is ready and the Centenary Celebrations Committee hopes to get the Chief Minister to unveil the statue, on which occasion a Tamil biography of Rukmini Lakshminipathi will also be released.

★ The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam appear to have lost a rather splendid opportunity to set their rather unfortunate human rights record straight, *The Man From Madras Musings* feels. This year's Poetry International Award was to be presented to a Tamil poet, 26-year-old Selvanthi 'Selvi' Thiagarajah, at a festival to be held in Rotterdam, The Netherlands. Sadly, the poet from Jaffna is stated to be held in solitary confinement since 1991 for her poetry critical of some aspects of the Tigers' operations. It was hoped that she would be released to receive the award, but, with hope dwindling, it was decided to postpone presentation of the award till next year while poe worldwide mounted a campaign for her release. *MMM* wonders whether poets and other men and women of letters in Tamil Nadu, as well as such friends of the Tigers as Vai Gopalaswamy, shouldn't be persuading the Tigers to release poet Selvi. Whatever the rights and wrongs of her utterances, a demonstrable quality of mercy wins friends worldwide, and this is what friends of the Tigers in Tamil Nadu and the literary movement here should be persuading them of.

★ A few years ago, magnificent Shanmukhanada Hall in Matunga, Bombay, the cultural centre of the metropolis's South Indians, especially Tamils, was burnt down. Ever since then, there have been plans to rebuild the hall on an even larger scale. Unfortunately, *The Man From Madras Musings* hears, all plans for that have been plagued with that common ailment of those in power not being able to see eye to eye, even though the funds have been collected. The result is that Southern culture has no centre in Bombay where its heart can beat loud and clear.

Business briefs

★ Among the bidders for the five luxury tourist train circuits, one of which passes through Tamil Nadu (Bangalore-Mysore-Madras -Kodaikanal-Kanniyakumari-Thiruvananthapuram-Kochi-Mettupalayam-Bangalore), there is not a single foreign bidder. Even companies which have earlier expressed formal interest have not actually bid for the circuits. Of the 23 bidders, *The Man From Madras Musings* finds just one Madras bidder, Goodwill Travels, part of the SPIC-MAG Group, who probably are eyeing the Tamil Nadu-centred route. But the most popular route among the bidders has been the Goa-Bangalore circuit. Meanwhile, a wing of Goodwill Travels - Sports and Resorts - has already gone beyond the ticket-booking business, *MMM* finds. Teaming with windsurfer Arun Vasu of TT Travels, Goodwill Sports is developing WAVE, possibly the country's, certainly Tamil Nadu's, first Water Sports Resort. Being set up in the backwaters of Muthukkadu, the resort will have two speedboats for water skiing, para sailing etc. a high-speed speedboat for 'racing', four jet skis, crafts for windsurfing and even boats for children. Opening is scheduled for the 'season' - October. Meanwhile, a thatched roofed, bamboo bathhouse and restaurant is coming up, the backwaters are being dredged and an open deck pier is being planned.

★ *The Man From Madras Musings* is glad to hear that the Arbuthnot name is once again returning to Tamil Nadu. At the time, the ABP of Madras commerce was Arbuthnot's Binny's and Parry's, though not the opposite. Arbuthnot's, however, was the company that diversified the most and pioneered the ed industry in the Madras Presidency. The company, however, went under in unfortunate circumstances but not before contributing much to the birth of several Arbuthnot-linked companies in the country. One of them is Gillanders and Arbuthnot of Calcutta, still going strong and now planning to set up a Rs. 18 crore plant, in Madurantakkam to manufacture plastic barrels. That will bring the Arbuthnot name back to Madras industry. Charles Lawson of the *Madras Mail*, once virtually the No. 2 scribe in Madras and a prolific writer, tells well the story of the beginnings of the Arbuthnot empire and lists all the companies it godfathered.

★ Will the Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) beat the Trade Fair Authority of India in the race to set up an exhibition centre in Madras? The FIEO has stated that it plans to set up an office-cum-exhibition complex near Meenambakkam airport and had registered a company for this purpose. Madras International Expositions Ltd is said to be negotiating with the State Government for 41 acres of land on which to build, with international collaboration, 200,000 square feet of exhibition, office, convention centre and hotel space. The TFAI had similar plans some time ago, but could not get the land in Taramani. The Government had promised it. Has it given up the search for a new location or is Madras likely to wind up with TWO exhibition centres? — *MMM*

Shifting of State capital 'definite'

Express News Service

MADRAS, Aug. 11 — The decision to shift the State capital from Madras to a centrally located place is final and the Government has already given its approval to the proposal, Union Minister Shri G. Ramani, Union Minister for P.W.D. and Irrigation, told parliament here today.

The new capital will be located between Thrivandapuram and Thiruvananthapuram, he said. It was necessary, according to the Chief Minister, that it should be easily accessible from any part of the State, he said.

The Government has pointed out that the cost of providing drinking water to the present capital city is over Rs. 400 crores, and said that for this amount, they would like to have a new capital which would help reduce the population concentration in Madras.

The Minister said a major constraint in shifting the capital was the need to acquire a site of 100,000 hectares which could be done quickly. He said the Government would like to acquire a site of 100,000 hectares which could be done quickly.

Mr. Ramani said the Government would be pleased to take up the proposal to shift the capital, but he could not say when it would be implemented. He said the Government would be pleased to take up the proposal to shift the capital, but he could not say when it would be implemented.

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The cutting from Harry Miller's scrapbook that should jolt a few memories.

Shifting the capital 'definitely'

Well then, another thing I do, which few others seem to do, is to boost my sagging memory, as well as authenticate it when necessary, by keeping a scrapbook. As a matter of fact, I have two, huge, bulging files, crammed with little bits and pieces clipped out of the *Indian Express* and *The Hindu*, as well as a few other newspapers and magazines, down the years. Extraordinarily useful they are, too.

Well, what has Shifting the Capital got to do with your scrapbooks, you

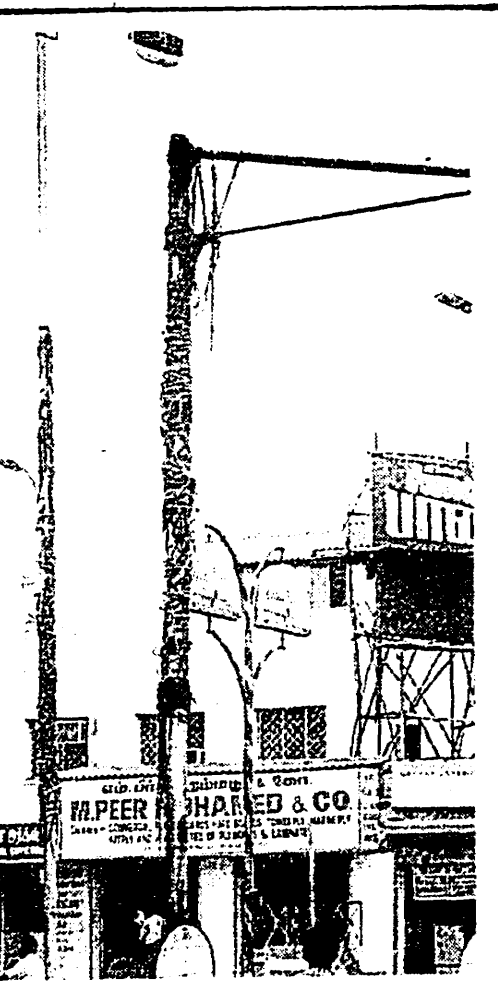
Some of you may remember a piece of mine in this journal telling the sad fact that we no longer had any diarists about, not anywhere. Well, these days, to sit every evening and write a diary of the day's events, of what they did, what other people said, what they saw, what they ate, and so on. Everyone's too busy watching TV before they go to bed. I had my brief diaries — kept when I was in the sea during World War II — when I came to write a book about those

OUR READERS WRITE on page 8

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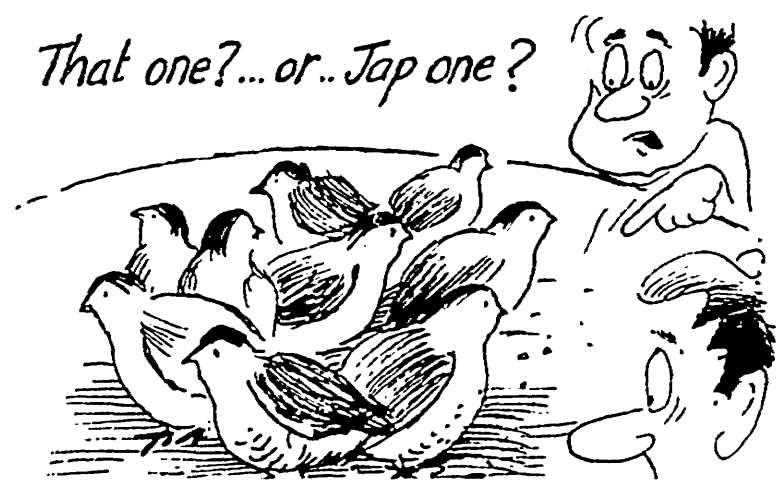
Endangering propaganda In ad-mad Madras

The people of Tamil Nadu seem to be extraordinarily responsive to advertising: at least that's the impression you get from the prodigious rash of poster-plastering on every conceivable space, often with one man's poster covering several beneath. Our trees are treasured not for their great wonder and beauty, not for the superbly healthy effect they have on the grossly polluted air we have to breathe, but merely as free advertising space. Advertising banners are tied to trees or lamp-posts by lengths of stout coir ropes, and when the banners disappear the ropes are left behind, often in company with dozens of older ones, while new ones are continually added, swathing and trussing up trees and lamp-posts as though they posed a threat to human life rather than testifying to laziness, dirtiness, bad taste and total indifference to public decency and decorum.

P. JUSTINE's photograph here today shows lamp-posts almost entirely invested with coils of such filthy old rope, the advertisements they supported long gone. The advertisers themselves should be prohibited from defacing our lamp-posts and our lovely trees as well as walls and statues, and made, under severe penalties, to amend the disgusting vandalism they perpetrate.

HARRY MILLER

EDITOR'S NOTE: It was one such rope, flying loose before being used to truss up lamp-post or tree, that *The Man From Madras Musings* referred to on July 16th in the context of its almost killing the rider of a two-wheeler.



Not quailing in Madras

(By A Staff Reporter)

Japanese quails are no longer available for the table in Delhi because of a dispute between the Agriculture Ministry and the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MEF) over the status of Japanese quail. According to the MEF, the quail is an endangered species. But apparently it doesn't distinguish between the wild Indian quail and the domesticated Japanese variety, which is being raised in India from the 1970s. Some quail farmers in and around Delhi have been arrested under the Wildlife Protection Act. 600, it is reported.

But in Tamil Nadu, and in the city, the rules either haven't come that far yet or don't seem to apply at all. For quails are quite freely available in Madras. The Poultry Research Station at Nandanam breeds Japanese quails for research purposes, while there are many commercial farmers who rear the Japanese quail for the market. However, the most important Japanese quail breeding centre in the state is the AVM Hatcheries in Coimbatore which meets a good portion of the regular state demand. Some chicken centres in the city get their Japanese quail regularly from Coimbatore.

However, Japanese quail is not available as freely as many would like it, as the demand-supply gap is quite wide. The common man is still not able to get quail that easily with the limited production being lapped up by the VIP's, say poultry industry sources.

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TRANSLATION
Translation: Indian/Foreign Languages: Tel: 569481.

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Recent Additions

Author	Title
ADAIR, J.	Effective leadership. 2nd ed.
BARRRELL, R (ed.)	The UK labour market
BENSON, E F	Ravens' Brood
BREEDS, J	Satellite television
CARSON, R	Silent spring
CARYWRIGHT, J	Two & bed
ENRIGHT, D J	Old men and comets
FABB, N	How to write essays, dissertations and theses in literary studies.
GANDY, M	Recycling and the politics of urban waste
GERSON, R	Measuring customer satisfaction
GRIFITH, N	Armonico
HOLDSWORTH, B	Digital logic design. 3rd ed.
JAMES, C L R	Beyond a boundary
KING, D	How good is your chess
LOWE, R	Voices of the new age Nomads: Travellers
McLEOD, I	Legal methods
NAIPPAUL, V S	A way in the world
RAWLINS, K	Presentation and communication skills
SADGROVE, K	Seductive selling
SIGMUND, K	Games of life

The cup that used to cheer

Large groups of people walking around, with glazed eyes and twitching limbs... it's a pretty common sight these days. There is only one word on their lips... "Coffee! Coffee!" Most of us live comfortably with the fact that we can never hope to buy the Kohinoor diamond, own our very own private island, or even a private aircraft. But now, when we're being told we cannot even hope to have a cup of coffee unless we sell land or jewellery, things have definitely begun to come apart!

The first question people ask each other is no longer "How are you?", but "What is the latest on coffee prices?"

by RANJITHA ASHOK
The cry goes out, "Oh, for a beaker of warm bluish South Indian coffee..." I watched my sister disintegrate the other day, and, believe me, it wasn't pretty. I realised something was wrong when she put her little child on the store-room shelf, picked up her rice dabbu, and began walking around, crooning a lullaby. "It is obvious you haven't had your morning cup of coffee..." I began. "Don't say it!" she begged. "I can't stand it..." "You need to pull yourself together," I admonished. "Just because you haven't had your coffee..." At that point, she buried her nose in the empty coffee-filter and broke into bitter tears.

Window, while the wife nervously buries the remaining 1/4 kilo of coffee powder in their backyard. Only then does the husband whip open the door and smile a false smile, while the wife offers mugs of... well, anything from plain hot water to soup... but NO COFFEE!
I know of a man who dived head-first into his TV set when they telecast a coffee advertisement. When questioned, he blamed the ad-makers. "It was cruel and insensitive!" he cried. "Who asked them to show a hot, steaming, fragrant cup of... of coffee... coffee... coffee...?" and then collapsed, yammering to the very end!
As for mornings! They are tough enough already. Now imagine trying to get the day started without coffee. Husbands and wives hover on the brink of divorce (or murder... whichever is easier!) over coffee, while children hold competitions in schools to pick the "Wackiest-Parents-of-the-Week".

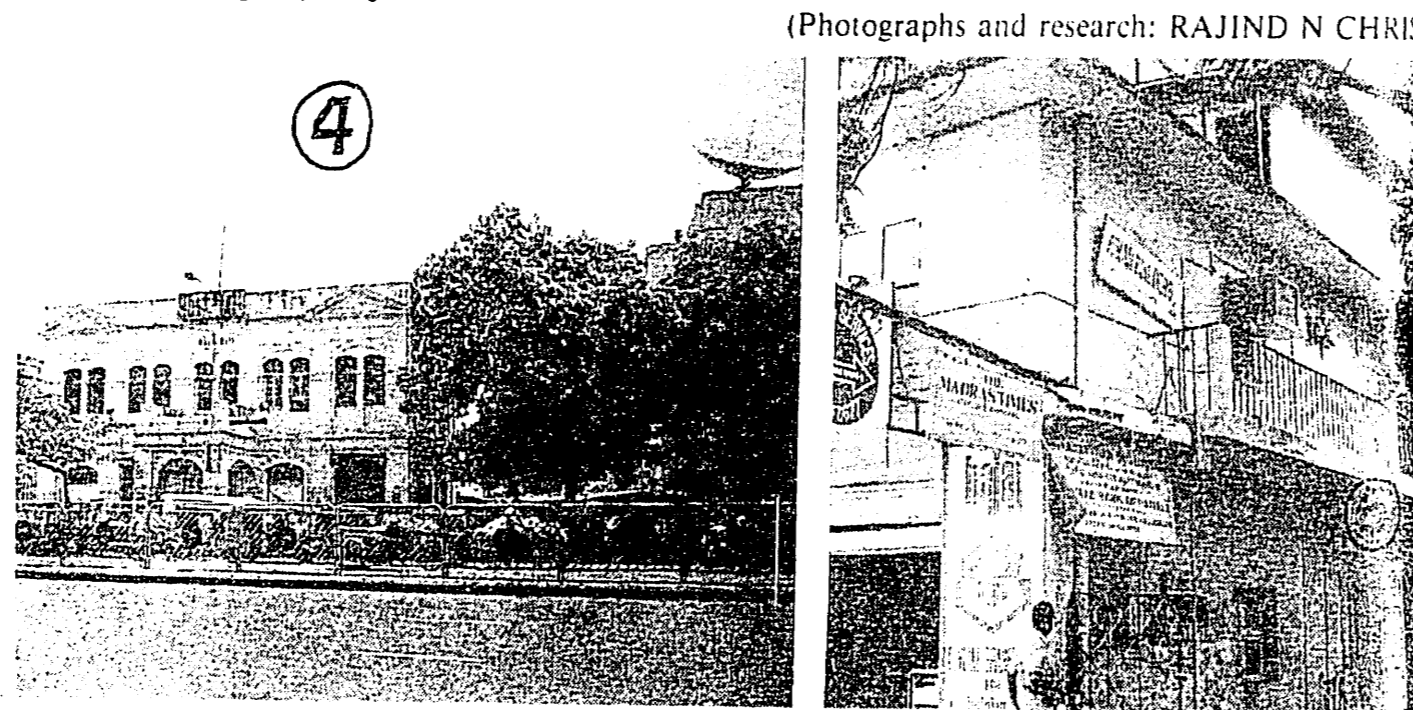
I have a friend who now makes brief excursions to shops that sell coffee powder. "I can't afford to buy it any more," she says, wistfully. "I just hang around and inhale the fragrance!" Unless the prices come down, civilisation as we have known it will cease to exist. Even newspaper reading won't be the same any more. What is *The Hindu* unless accompanied by South Indian coffee?
Somewhere in the distant future, our descendants will talk in hushed, awed tones of gentle creatures who once walked the earth, oozing hospitality, offering a magic potion made of a strange bean - coffee, to all and sundry...



Researching another project, Rajind Christy came across the rather striking old building on the right, discovered that it was 8 Popham's Broadway. It had been the offices of the Madras Times from 1901 to 1909. It was owned by Gantz, Pere et Fil, then the leading printers in Madras. Following through, Christy came with the other photographs we feature in this rather unusual OLD and NEW.

Above left is what 164 Popham's Broadway of yesteryear looks like today. It was at that address that Madras Times functioned from 1859 to 1894. Above right and to the left of 8 Popham's Broadway is what 5 Popham's Broadway, where the Madras Times functioned from 1895 to 1900. In 1910 it moved to Mount Road and in 1922 became Associated Printers, a firm still in business at that address behind Higginbotham's. In 1922 the Madras Times was merged with The Madras Mail under the banner of Associated Publishers. The Madras Mail, founded in 1868 by Charles Lawson and Henry Cornish who had quit the Madras Times in a proprietor... & THE EDITOR... moved into the premises on Mount Road, seen below left, in 1922. The Mail had a glorious innings here till shortly before it closed in the early 1980s, but its name and logo on the building appear to hopefully still look forward to a resurgence. Certainly Madras could do with an evening daily in the tradition of The Mail.

Meanwhile, a new Madras Times started in 1990 at Peter's Road, its offices entered by the door pointed to by the arrow, below right. This evening daily continues a name that had first entered Madras journalism as a bi-weekly in 1835. But it was not till the Gantzes took over in 1859 that the Madras Times became a daily to reckon with until 1911 when it began 'Indianising'. Caught between The Mail's Establishment policy and The Hindu's commitment to Indian independence, its centrist policies doomed the Madras Times. And its avatar has a long way to go to make a mark.

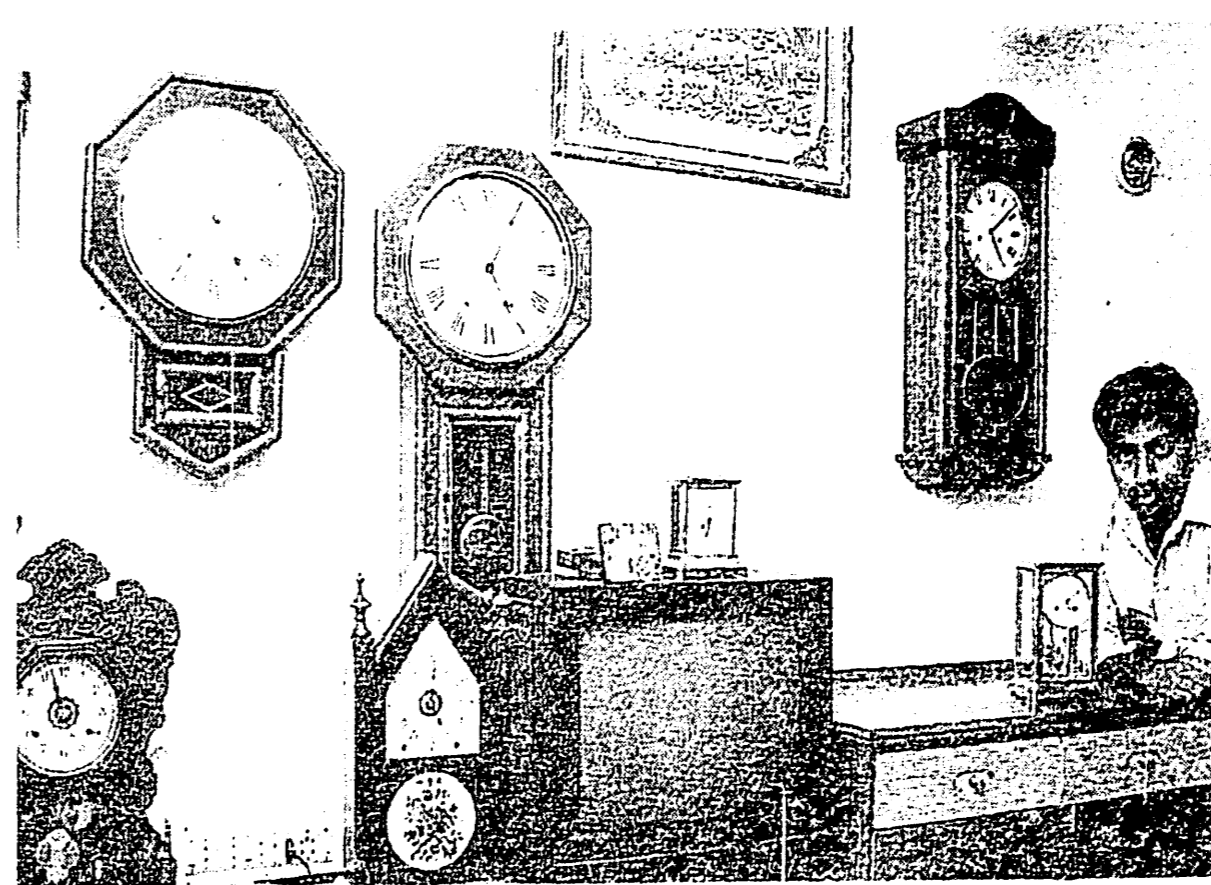


(Photographs and research: RAJIND N CHRISTY)

Guardians of Father Time

There is nothing special that strikes you about this old house down in San Thome. But as you enter one evening, the music of grandfather clocks transports you into a world of gracious antiquity. The house is an antique shop or museum but it is the hobby of collecting clocks that has made him known even over the

years. The clocks which Salam has collected over the years are in all shapes and sizes, but every one ticks away quietly. The oldest is a grandfather clock over 150 years old. A special feature of this clock is that it strikes not only every hour, but also every 15 minutes. It strikes you have missed it the first time it is another grandfather clock in



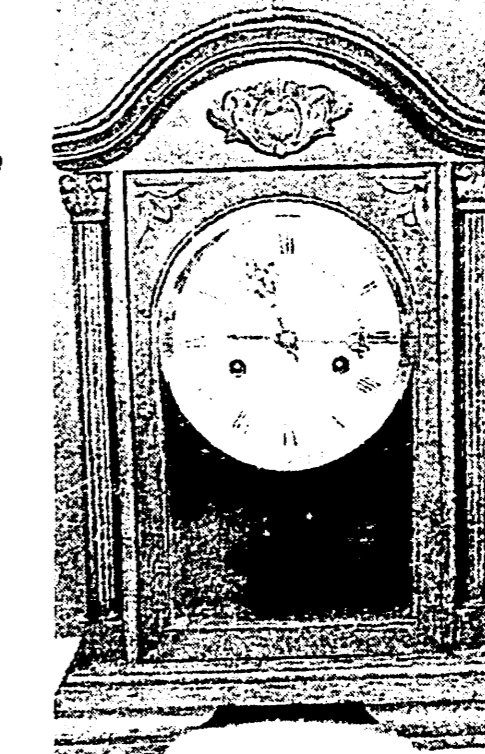
Fiaz Ahmed (left) - carrying on his father's work - and a part of the family's collection. On right, the late Dr V.A. Salam, with his antique clocks, a fitting background.



A TRIBUTE

This story is a tribute to Dr. V.A. Salam whose life-time passion was clock collection. We met an ailing Dr. Salam in May and subsequently his condition worsened and he passed away in July. His son Fiaz is carrying on the work of a true gentleman-collector and his latest acquisition is a 'French carriage clock' won by a corporal Stephenson in a rifle shooting competition in 1930. This bit of history is engraved on the clock.

R.J.



A German-made clock from Dr. Salam's collection.

This is a house-hold name in clock collector's circles and Salam's house, these days, is beginning to get included in the itinerary of many a tourist who comes to Madras. Jeff Dujon, the West Indies cricketer, for instance, walked in one day and bought a pocket clock from Salam. One foreign visitor was so taken up by the collection that he declared, "Once I retire, I am going to buy a few clocks like these, wind them and watch them work for the rest of my life!"

The clocks are very much a part of Salam's life and two generations of children have grown with them. As Fiaz's son runs through the room, I wonder aloud, "Isn't it a problem with kids and clocks in the same place?" And Fiaz chuckles, "Well, my son is not even half as meddlesome as I was. And the children know that the clocks are something special". Indeed, the love of clocks runs in the family!

Salam's collection, younger by about 20 years. These are the most accurate of any type of clocks, as they work by means of weights suspended from the body of the clock.

The older grandfather clock almost made it to the big screen when a Telugu producer offered to 'cast' it in a movie. But Salam turned the offer down, as it meant transporting the clock - and that involved considerable risk. His concern for his clocks is understandable as every one is a rare piece. The 'ship clock', more than a century old, is a prize possession. Used, as its name indicates, by mariners, this clock runs on what is called 'escapement' which ensures that its movement is not affected even when the ship tosses on the roughest seas. While on land, the clock works even when placed upside down.

If you were to judge a clock in terms of convenience, the 'birthday clock' beats the lot. It has to be wound only once a year! As its name indicates, if you wind it on your birthday this year, you don't have to worry about it until you cut the cake next year. It has four, cute little domes mounted on a cross placed horizontally that moves to and fro, and this is connected to the body of the clock by a metal strip which is barely as thin as a hair.

• by R. Jaisri

Combining clock-making and architecture is the 'kitchen clock' made in the 1870s in the shape of a Gothic church. A special feature of this clock is its glass face. Flowers and scrolls are painted on it by a technique called 'reverse painting', something considered difficult to achieve in painting.

And for those of us who have not seen Big Ben, there's the 'Westminster Chime', whose chimes sound exactly the same as those of Big Ben. This clock strikes every quarter hour too. Then there are the table pieces with their solid presence and unhurried movement. Unlike the other clocks, these work by 'luzee' movement, i.e. driven by a chain.

As Salam's son, Fiaz, informs you, these are only a part of the collection. There are many more behind the doors leading to the hall, all of them being got ready for the showcase.

Once Salam or Fiaz buy a clock, a schedule of painting, varnishing and supplying parts where needed is gone through. This over, the clocks tick away merrily, as they have done for the 30-plus years Salam has been in this hobby turned profession. What

THE (TAMIL NADU) HIT PARADE



Quiet muscleman

Like the acronym that makes his tyre company famous, K M Mammen Mapillai is in his own way quite a muscleman. This rubber technologist was among the few pre-Independence entrepreneurs, when he up the Madras Rubber Factory to manufacture balloons. Today, this alma Shri recipient is a much-respected figure in India's leading rubber industry and the rupees one thousand crore MRF Ltd is the country's largest tyre-maker, having a collaboration with Michelin of France. From balloons, MRF moved into tread rubber (which was at that time a multinational domain) and then into auto tyres. Mammen Mapillai had all the right credentials. His initial training in rubber and polymer chemistry was at Bayer Rubber Research Labs, Germany, and then ICI, Monsanto, and Rubber Latex Ltd, U.K. His father, K C Mammen Mapillai, was a freedom fighter and founder of the Malayala Manorama publishing group. MRF was a typically conservatively-run, family-dominated enterprise till KM's son Ravi was inducted. Ravi gave a big push to MRF's profile with a massive advertising and marketing drive. Ravi's untimely death at 40 years ago was a deep personal loss to the family and, many thought, setback to MRF as well. They were mistaken. The Mammens are made of sterner stuff. KM's mantle of succession has been bestowed on his son Vinoo and MRF continues to be in high gear.

(Sketch by DHR, text by NAZHITH KARMALI - From THE HIT PARADE Symbols of Indian Industry, published by Banyan Books, New Delhi.)

PSUs: White elephants no more

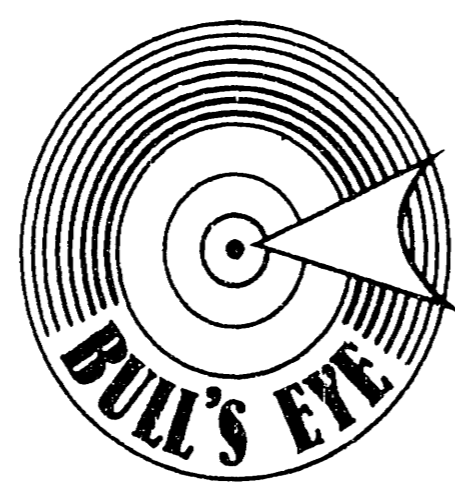
Did you know that British Airways (BA) was nicknamed 'Bloody Awful' in the 70s, because it dished out slovenly service, appalling food and regular losses? It was privatised in the 80s and its performance took a pirouette to the extent of it now being described as "Bloody Amazing". Not surprisingly, in the annals of economic liberalisation in India, the story of the PSUs will always be similarly bifurcated into 'before' disinvestment and 'after'. In India, PSUs have been factories of employment rather than production, suffused by gross mismanagement, poor pricing policies, cost and time overruns and accumulated losses, thanks to 'more government in business' and social objectives sidelining profit motives. 1991 saw the winds of reform sweeping in. As many as 11 out of 17 industries hitherto reserved for the public sector were thrown open to the private sector. The Government decided to offload 5-20 per cent of its stake in PSUs to Mutual Funds and Financial Institutions. Recently, the target for funds from disinvestment was hiked from Rs. 4500 cr to Rs. 8000 cr. All these measures have not been in vain.

Inherent strength such as economies of scale, infrastructure, huge marketing network and contacts are now being ruthlessly exploited. Recently, SAIL has hopped from ninth to fifth in terms of profit, amongst the largest metal producing companies in the latest Fortune 500 list. Financial crunch, the bug-bear of the PSUs, is gradually being sponged off through the sale of bonds and equity shares to the general public and investment institutions. In the process of these juggernauts sprucing up, our bourses haven't been passive. Far from it.

Ever since IJCL tapped the capital market, there has been no looking back. Recently, Bharat Immunologicals created history as the first PSU to rope in direct public investment. Scrips of SAIL, HPCL and ONGC are doing extremely well. ONGC, a Fortune 500 company, has on the anvil eight mega-projects for which it will approach the public. The floor for PSU bids was initially Rs. 25 lakh, which has now been pegged to a mere Rs. 1 lakh, within the reach of the common investor. Mutual funds like UTI have made a killing by cornering these PSU shares and nothing stops the investors from doing the same now.

All this just goes to show how lucrative the capital market can turn out to be for the accumulator of PSU scrips. Performance-wise, even now PSUs are a mixed bag - some are major contributors to the national production in the core sector and some are chronically sick. The future also poses challenges in the form of competition. However, progress at the end of the year was 7.33 lakh sq ft, out of which commercial ventures account for 1.78 lakh sq ft. For 1993-94, it reported a turnover of Rs. 24.01 cr and a PAT of Rs. 0.89 cr. Apart from 7.33 lakh sq ft WIP, the additions to the current year were 1.51 lakh sq ft. It is planning to construct a hotel and a rights issue is on the cards. An EPS of Rs. 4.50 will support Rs. 50 for 1994-95. Buy.

- K. Gopalakrishna



SI Property (CMP Rs. 29.00): Well known for its residential complexes in Madras and Bangalore, SI Property successfully completed 83,700 sq ft through 45 projects in 1993-94. The work-in-

start was made in 1991, and going by the sequel, there is room for 'great expectations' in the years to come.

Similar expectations can be anticipated with these three scrips:

Mardia Tubes (CMP Rs. 84.9) produces non-ferrous (mainly of copper its derivatives) rods, flats and precision engineering profiles which find use in industries like sugar, power and electrical heat exchangers etc. It reported a turnover of Rs. 21 cr and a PAT of Rs. 0.93 cr for 1994-95 which will support Rs. 1.33 cr in current year due to second conversion of its FCDs at a premium of Rs. 50. The should be Rs. 10 on the enhanced offer for 1994-95 which will support Rs. 1.33 cr in current year due to second conversion of its FCDs at a premium of Rs. 50. The should be Rs. 10 on the enhanced offer for 1994-95 which will support Rs. 1.33 cr in current year due to second conversion of its FCDs at a premium of Rs. 50.

Madhya Pradesh Glycogen (CMP Rs. 31.25): MP Glycogen is part of the Ruchi group, which is in the extraction and manufacture of edible de-oiled cake. For setting up a Rs. 19 crore modern food processing unit, a Rs. 92 crore milk processing unit and for manufacturing skimmed/whole milk powder and ghee came out with its maiden public issue in March 1994 at a premium of Rs. 19 cr. Its past performance has been good. MPGL bagged prestigious SEA Award from the Sugar Extraction Association for being the best exporter of Salseed extraction in 1991-92. It has already signed an agreement with Continental Enterprises Ltd, Hong Kong, for export of de-oiled cake in 1994-95. IDBI has projected a PAT of Rs. 6.66 cr on a turnover of Rs. 12 cr and an EPS of Rs. 5.50. We indicate an EPS of Rs. 3.70, supporting Rs. 60 for 1994-95 results. An excellent buy at current levels.

For your darling child and I.T. Relief for you



For your beloved daughter and I.T. Relief for you



This series is 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 featured is over 100 years old.

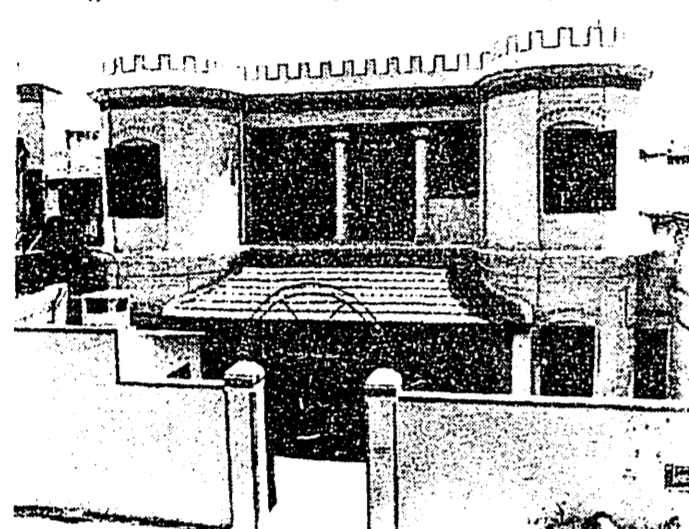
Chintadripet's blessing

The Chintadripet Anglo Vernacular School was started in 1845 by D. Kesavalu Naidu to provide education for the weaker sections of society. Of the founder, nothing much is known and the only picture of him that is available — it was copied from an old portrait — shows him in sanniyasi robes.

It was a primary school that Kesavalu Naidu started and it functioned from various rented buildings in Chintadripet. In 1914, the Chintadripet Secondary School Association was formed. The school became a high school in 1925 and sent its first batch of students for the S.S.L.C. in 1926.

A turning point in the history of the school occurred in 1928 when T.P. Meenakshi Sundaram, a great Tamil scholar and teacher of yesteryears, took over the responsibility of running the school. Shortly after he took over, he bought the rented building of the school in a auction, and the present building of the school owes its existence to him. In 1958, the school building was extended under his supervision with funds Government had allotted for schools. Two years earlier, the huge ground opposite the school had been taken on a hundred-year lease at a rate of one rupee per annum, after a down payment was made. In

later years, a fire damaged a portion of the ground and, more recently, the land was taken over by the MRTS, leaving the school with no playground.



The Chintadripet Middle School with its facade unchanged from the time it was built.

Meenakshi Sundaram, the moving force behind the school, took a significant decision in 1943 by allowing girls to join the school. Very soon, the strength of boys and girls increased rapidly, leading to space constraints. At Meenakshi Sundaram's request, the durbash of Parry and Co. Gurnunatha Mudaliar built a hall in the second



A view of Chintadripet Higher Secondary School

storey of the school in 1948. It was named after him, as Guranathar Hall. This too proved inadequate and a separate school for girls, the Chintadripet Kalyanam Girls Higher Secondary School, was started in 1948.

When the school was upgraded into a high school, it became necessary to bifurcate the school into middle and high schools. When the middle school was on the look out for a building, the Mayor at that time, Rao Bahadur Ganapathi Pillai, offered to donate a building on condition that the facade of the building should never be altered. The school had abided by the condition to this day.

At present, over 1,500 boys and over 1,400 girls study in the boys' and girls' schools respectively and over 800 in the middle school. These are mostly children from weaker sections in the neighbourhood.

Generally, teachers with secondary grade qualifications (Plus Two and an education degree) are taken to staff middle schools. But the management of the school has, from the beginning,

taken only trained graduates even in the middle school, to ensure the quality of teaching.

The headmistress of the middle school is C.S. Mohana and the headmaster of the higher secondary school is Raja Eather. The school became Higher Secondary in 1978. It was one of the first to offer vocational training and has been the school most visited by educationists from other states who want to study Tamil Nadu's pattern of vocational education. The library which Meenakshi Sundaram established with 10,000 books, now has 30,000 books.

The school was led in the past by people like C.P. Ramaswami M.C. Muthiah Chettiar and other eminent persons, who nurtured its present place of pride.

Text by A Staff Reporter
Photographs by V.S. RAGHAVAN

In the shade of 'The Banyan'

On August 27th, Vandana Gopinath and Vaishnavi Jayachandran celebrated the first year of their crusade against the inhumane treatment meted out by the so-called institutions of repute towards the homeless. It was a year during which they provided a decent home for several mentally disabled women of Madras.

Their crusade began during their college days at WCC, when they saw

a woman lying naked on the roadside. Her hair was matted, her behaviour delirious, she was obviously mentally ill. They also witnessed the apathy of the crowd gathered around, either entertaining their sadistic pleasures or ignorant about what to do. They notified an established welfare organisation and had her admitted. But during a follow-up the next day, they found that the woman had wandered off the premises and those in charge were unaware of, and uninterested in, her whereabouts.

Frustrations began from the word 'go'. At the registration office, the authorities were sceptical about this "over-ambitious" project. But after several gruelling hours of paperwork and explanations, they finally got themselves registered as a trust on August 27, 1993. Since they did not have either the structural or financial backing, finding a place to rent and collecting funds were the most difficult tasks. People were bewildered to find two young girls knocking at their doors, asking for a rental to house 'mad

men. And this was what it was all about...

Alavandar, a Don Juan of the arts, was a fountain pen merchant who had a shop in the Bazaar. A young Malayali fell into his clutches. But she got married, and did not pay his attentions any more. Alavandar, however, was in her generation made a clean breast of her pre-marital aberration to her husband. He suggested that she should ask Alavandar to move to their residence, which was in Cemetery Road, on a Sunday. The husband, hiding in the kitchen, would come out with a knife and threaten Alavandar. That should scare him and keep him away from the girl. But when Alavandar went and the drama was enacted, the paramour was too besick to be put off by such threats. In the scuffle that followed between the husband and Alavandar, the knife struck Alavandar's head. The couple thought that if the girl was disposed of somehow, the crime would escape detection. They decided to cut up the body into small pieces, pack it in a steel trunk and put it on a train about to leave Central Station. When they started packing the pieces, they found the head was too big to go in the trunk. So the head was separately packed and thrown into the sea while the trunk containing the body was loaded onto a train in Central Station. However ingenious, such crimes do not go undetected. The police soon got hold of the girl's head as well as the trunk containing the cadaver. The culprits were also traced and brought to book.

NOTE: A detailed narration of this case has been made in an earlier issue of Madras Musings by Rander Guy.

Ramanujan's letter

(Continued from P 1)
value... I shall tell you one of the researches of Mr Hardy (not recent) about irrational numbers. He has shown that... I am at present doing researches in Arithmetical functions such as, the no. of divisions of N, the no. of decompositions of N into two squares etc., and functions connected with Arithmetical numbers. Here we get many sorts of functions that cannot be imagined at all. I shall show you an example. Suppose... Mr Hardy read before the London Math Society some of my results in Arithmetical functions. It will be printed in 2 or 3 months and you will find many interesting results there. In this paper I entirely devote myself to the no. of divisions of N and the functions connected with it. I hope you and your family are doing well. I thank you very much for your encouragement to my people. My compliments to your wife.
Yours sincerely,
S. Ramanujan
Is Mr Patnachariar doing well? Where is he now, in Saidapet or Madras?
M.S.

And this was what it was all about...

Alavandar, a Don Juan of the arts, was a fountain pen merchant who had a shop in the Bazaar. A young Malayali fell into his clutches. But she got married, and did not pay his attentions any more. Alavandar, however, was in her generation made a clean breast of her pre-marital aberration to her husband. He suggested that she should ask Alavandar to move to their residence, which was in Cemetery Road, on a Sunday. The husband, hiding in the kitchen, would come out with a knife and threaten Alavandar. That should scare him and keep him away from the girl. But when Alavandar went and the drama was enacted, the paramour was too besick to be put off by such threats. In the scuffle that followed between the husband and Alavandar, the knife struck Alavandar's head. The couple thought that if the girl was disposed of somehow, the crime would escape detection. They decided to cut up the body into small pieces, pack it in a steel trunk and put it on a train about to leave Central Station. When they started packing the pieces, they found the head was too big to go in the trunk. So the head was separately packed and thrown into the sea while the trunk containing the body was loaded onto a train in Central Station. However ingenious, such crimes do not go undetected. The police soon got hold of the girl's head as well as the trunk containing the cadaver. The culprits were also traced and brought to book.

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M.S.

'Kitta Mama' hears' a case

decades ago I was living in a village. A stream of visitors from the village used to call on me. The one who came for treatment in the all-India free hospital (Gosha) Hospital, renamed as Kasturiba Hospital) was close by. The men usually came for some litigation or the other was coming up for hearing in the Court. They thought nothing of going on me for boarding and lodging. So when I got a letter from Kitta mama of my village about his visit on a certain day for a case in High Court, I was not surprised. Kitta mama was no uncle of mine, but my neighbour in the village. He was an elderly person. Everyone addressed him the suffix mama (uncle) and it

for office. I enquired at the Egmore station and was told that all morning trains had arrived on time. Kitta mama's train had arrived at 7 am. He should have been home by 8 am. What had happened to him? Had he fallen prey to one of the touts or pimps who abound in Egmore station? The wisdom of a villager is no match to the

Court. Kitta mama also went with them. He was able to get a place on the verandah outside the court where the case was to be conducted. When the court assembled, the police obtained an adjournment as the girl involved was ill and could not be produced. The crowd then dispersed. Only then did Kitta mama remember me and headed

by M. SETHURAMAN

improbability of these scoundrels! I could not concentrate on my work. So I took a day's leave and returned home at about 1 p.m. There was still no trace of Kitta mama. As I was wondering whether to scour the Egmore area or make a report at the Police Station, Kitta mama showed up. I was greatly relieved. He had arrived on time, but had gone to Cemetery Road in the Mint area he said. Normally I would not have known where that road was in Madras. But a sensational case was going on in the High Court. A murder had been committed in a house in that street. It was known as the 'Alavandar Murder Case'. In those days, the court proceedings of all such cases used to be reported in detail by all newspapers (The Hindu included). Everyone in the city avidly followed the cases. But I wondered what a villager like Kitta mama had to do with the road! Perhaps his lawyer lived there. I wondered aloud. No, said Kitta mama. He then gave a lurid account of his activities from the time he arrived in Madras that morning.

straight to my house. In his excitement, he had not even taken a drop of water from morning!

I enquired. "You said you had a case today. What happened to it?" "My case? I have no case! I only said 'a case' in my letter. I came to witness the Alavandar case. As it is now adjourned, I will go back tonight and return on the day of its hearing."

Kitta mama left that night. He thereafter came regularly on days when the case was being heard. On the last day, he saw the culprits being moved to Central Jail under Police escort. Only then did his visits to Madras cease.

Quizzin' with Ramanan

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

1. Who is the New Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, whose parents also held the same office?
2. Name the Tamil Nadu luminary honoured with the International Olympic Committee's award for 'promotion of sports and environment' for 1993?
3. Arati Saha, the lady who achieved an Indian 'first', passed away on August 23rd. What was her feat?
4. Name the Bombay city BJP leader whose assassination on August 25th sparked off tension?
5. What rare phenomenon did the Sri Chandra Prabhur Naya Jain mandir in Madras witness on August 19th?
6. Name the two-time Nobel Prize winner (Chemistry and Peace), and an advocate of Vitamin C to prevent cancer, who died on August 20th.
7. Name the latest model of car launched by Maruti Udyog Ltd.
8. At the recently concluded Commonwealth Games in Victoria, which two Indians bagged two gold medals each?

9. The Constitution (85) Amendment Bill approved recently provides for inclusion of what, under Article 51-B?
10. Where were the seven Indian soldiers of the Mahar Regiment serving with UN peace-keeping forces, when they were killed in an ambush?
11. Who bettered Kapil Dev's one-day wicket haul record on August 24th?
12. What is 'Pave-Way 2', which India is to acquire from the US to augment its defence capabilities?
13. The 'Real Thing' made its re-appearance in Madras on August 27th after nearly 18 years. What is the 'Real Thing'?
14. Where in Madras was the 'J. Jayalalitha Film City' inaugurated by the Chief Minister on August 31st?
15. The banning of the import into the US of which item, on the grounds of being 'unsafe and inflammable', has affected Indo-US trade relations?
16. Who is to captain the Indian hockey team in the forthcoming Asiad at Hiroshima?
17. Of the three industrial estates to be set up by SIDCO with Japanese aid, two will be in city suburbs. Where is the third one to come up?
18. Which country's President barred his wife, from discharging her duties as First Lady on grounds of disloyalty and blackmail?
19. P.A. Gladies, C. Chamundeswari and Bhagavathi of Tamil Nadu won titles at the national championship of which sport held in Madras recently?
20. Where are the village and indoor stadium for the SAF Games, scheduled to be held in Madras next year, to come up?

(Answers on page 10)

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by S. ABITHA

Disillusioned by this incident, they felt the need to take things in their own hands. This was the seed for 'The Banyan', a trust for the mentally ill, now home for seven schizophrenic women, each with varying types and levels of the disorder, all literally picked up from the roads in the most deplorable conditions. One of them had been found eating the excreta of a dog!

"This is not a dumping ground, but a catalyst for these women to become self-sufficient," says Vandana. "And every small comeback to reality is the driving force behind this organisation," adds Vaishnavi. Schizophrenics are fearless, their thinking characterised by hallucinations and delusions. Teaching them the facts of life is not an easy task.

"The Banyan" began after Vandana (23) finished her M.A. in medical and psychiatric social work at MSSW. After a day's work at a welfare organisation of repute, she quit, disgusted with the politics and cynicism in the administration. Vaishnavi (22), her partner, deserted her MBA and plunged into action with Vandana. "One doesn't have to be socially inclined to understand love and care," they say and add, "You just have to be humane enough".

women. "The owners questioned our credibility and some were rude enough to say that it wouldn't work," says an angry Vandana. Even when they agreed to pay an advance, people refused to heed them because they felt that "we would be a nuisance," explains Vaishnavi, sounding equally angry. Finally, a retired Army Officer, a friend of Vaishnavi's father, agreed to lease his home out to them.

Finding funds was a nightmare for these two idealists. They literally went around begging, often using personal contacts. But it hurt to know that close friends felt that the two always came back to them for funds. Most of them were appreciative and gave ample advice but negligible help. "People would give appointments and fail to meet us," recalls Vandana. She cites the example of a highly placed official.

One Saturday he called them to his house. "When we reached there, we were told that he was unavailable. A check with the nearby provision store revealed that the officer was very much at home". They called him up and explained to him about the time and energy wasted. He was sympathetic and agreed to meet them at his office the following Tuesday. When they got

Mehta
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Madras's own

I am just reading a book *Two Monsoons* by Theon Wilkinson, which reviews the 350 years of European influence in India in terms of the epitaphs and monuments left behind in Indian cemeteries of the British and other Europeans who lived in India. I am sure the following extracts should interest your readers!

● Sir Thomas Munro, one of the greatest Governors of all time, whose advice to the Court of Directors of the East India Company deserves to be quoted in full as the ideal of 'colonial government':

"Your rule is alien and it can never be popular. You have much to bring to your subjects, but you cannot look for more than passive gratitude. You are not here to turn India into England or Scotland. Work through, not in spite of, native systems and native ways, with a prejudice in their favour rather than against them; and when in the fullness of time your subjects can frame and maintain a worthy Government for themselves, get out and take the glory of the achievement and the sense of having done your duty as the chief reward for your exertions."

He was known in the ceded districts as 'the Father-of-the-People' and was reburied at Madras.

In Vepery, is a tomb to Petrus Usan De Coja Pogus with a long impressive epitaph in Latin. 'Coja' means 'a man of distinction' and 'Pogus' means 'Paul' in Armenian. This great Catholic benefactor built the Marmalong bridge, installed steps from the foot to the summit of St. Thomas' Mount and endowed a chapel to 'Our Lady of Miracles' to be built over the grave where he was laid to rest in 1751. ●

C A Reddi
Madras 600 007.

The dog pack

While passing through Sayee Natesan Main Road, MS-92, I found to my bewilderment about ten stray dogs running helter skelter.

This sight made my blood boil when a lady walking with a water vessel was knocked down by the fleeing group! This nuisance can be put an end to if only the civic authorities swing into action!

J Krishnamurthy
76 I Main Road
Madras 600 111.

OUR READERS WRITE

Tackling pollution

This refers to the letter captioned 'Fourth Noisiest City in India' (MM July 1) Pollution — of various types — came to be recognised as a problem interfering with man's life, only in the last thirty years or so. This is certainly going to become much worse as the years roll on, and will endanger the very existence of Man on this planet.

It should be dealt with in two ways. One — by making people fully aware of the great damage being caused to the ecosystem (this is being carried out in one form or other by the Government and other organisations) and the other — enforcement of anti-pollution measures by legislation.

Enforcing of antipollution measures should be fully entrusted to one separate

body armed to the teeth with powers. The responsibility of enforcing anti-pollution measures should be taken away from the Police — they are too busy now with a thousand other jobs.

Unless pollution is treated as an imminent danger to our very lives and dealt with as such, we will have to live with air-horns, defective automobile engines belching out clouds of black smoke through their exhausts and loudspeakers blaring out "filmi-goeth" day in and day out from all public places at a very high pitch — and like them too!

K. Ramamurthy
Reld, Meteorologist
SA/2, Selin Apartments
Dr Rajamannar Salai
K K Nagar, Madras 600 078.

Dubious distinction

I am touched by the way you have expressed your deep concern about this city which seems to be acquiring the dubious distinction of being the most affected by pollution. We only have to see the black soot which accumulates on our fans even in two days' time. All this goes into our lungs also.

Y. Iru

10, 12th Avenue, Ashok
Madras 600 011.

Pressure groups

The MM July 1 edition has a section on air-pollution and the control of it by motorised vehicles, which was supposed to do anything about it. The meaning of government? Pressure groups are the only answer.

Pushpa Chari's article on the air pollution around Madras was just delightful. I know where Pushpa was, while I have been in Madras for a good thirty years. I love to walk, but I tend to stroll and this seems frowned upon in our part of the world. It does not seem so bad, and multiplies the joy.

In the '50s, when I used to go for a dinner-walk with my husband, I found it to be encouraging in Madras, there are there is absolutely no theatricalness, where theatre means a cinema theatre. And with en-

Mrs. Alia
7 Balaji
Bangalore 560 012.

Shifting the capital

(Continued from P3)

dream of running India from old capital. Why not move the capital to Tamil Nadu then?

So where does my scrapbook go? In, and why am I still flogging the Dead Horse? Well, because I have been through it in search of something new. The other day, I came across a copy about it. In case no one believes me, I've made a Xerox of it, and I doubt whether the Editor of *MADRAS MUSINGS* will find it possible to reproduce more than its heading from the small type is faint, it is certainly worth mentioning.

You see, I wasn't the only one who thought of moving the capital, for it was our late Chief Minister, MG Ramachandran, on his own, thought of the idea. As my cutting shows, S.D. Sundaram, his Revenue Minister at the time, announced it and was reported in the Indian Express of August 1981. Shifting the State Capital to 'DEFINITE', he had said. And you still think it could be done. It will be too late. Flogging another Dead Horse then, am I? Perhaps, like H. Wain, the announcement of its

is premature.

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Schools' theatre for interaction

A Special Correspondent)

The aim of facilitating "creative meetings between schools", an annual festival of Drama and Music was organised by The School-KFI in Madras. Students of Hindu Junior College, KFI, Vidya Mandir, Vana Sn Sankara Senior Secondary School staged plays — original works, in the schools and directed by students with some help from teachers. A *Question of Honour* (Sankara Marum) was an adaptation — of an Oscar play. Though the plays were to be entirely student efforts, certainly appeared to be a lot of help from teachers! The each with a cast of 15 on the stage, were well presented, critics

couragement, the plays will only get better, he felt.

On the second day, *Changing Props* (Vidya Mandir) and *Kalam Marum* (Vana Vani) were staged. *Changing Props* was about the conflict between youth and their parents, their attitudes, values etc. The conflicts in this relationship formed the crux of the play. *Kalam Marum* had a handful of people from Earth meeting in Yama's darbar and discussing life. And once again, it was only the ills that were spoken about.

V R Devika, who was one of the critics on this day, appreciated the efforts of the students, but wondered why it was that only the negative aspects attracted their attention. "There are so many good things happening around us," she points out, "and there

are so many achievers. So why concentrate only on the negative?"

Day 3 featured Sri Sankara Senior Secondary School's *A Question of Honour*. This play was about an upright man who had taken a 'bribe' just once — when he was young — and how it affected his life, and his relationship with a woman, as he grew older. The point made is that what you have done in your youth doesn't have to stay with you throughout your life. KFI's play was then repeated.

Speaking on the third day's plays in particular and the festival in general, Hans Kaushik, who is into theatre, sculpture, pottery etc., said that it was obvious that the students had not been exposed to any kind of theatre whatsoever. The talent was there, but exposure to theatre would have allowed it to blossom, he felt. He hopes

City dancers ignore experimentation



Anita Ratnam, Rajika Puri and Gitanjali Kolanad (from left) in *Under Her Breath*.

A surprising (not really very surprising!) fact about an important dance seminar held recently in the city was the absence of dancers, except for a few students of Sudharani Raghu-

pathi. The audience consisted mainly of theatre activists and enthusiasts.

Are the dancers of Madras trying to be insulated from the bold experiments taking shape in dance in India?

Dates For Your Diary

that he uses for his works. His photographs transform the pictures by partially covering it or supplementing it with texts and divorcing it from its original context in the media. The core of his works is to question the everyday handling of pictorial information and the standardised language of photographic form.

Till September 20: An exhibition of paintings and drawings by K M Adimoolam, the well-known abstract painter who has won many awards and whose work has been exhibited widely. (10 a.m. to 7 p.m. at British Council.)

September 21: Paper, Scissors, Film: *Turning Books into Movies*. A lecture by James Park, well-known British writer on films. (7.00 p.m., British Council.)

September 23 - October 6: For the first time, Alliance Francaise, British Council, Max Mueller Bhavan, Russian Centre and the USIS present an International Film Festival in collaborative effort. German and French films at SIFCC

British films : Sept. 26, 27 & 28 at British Council
American films : Sept. 30, Oct. 1 & 2 at American Centre
Russian films : Oct. 4, 5 & 6 at Russian Cultural Centre

September 25: Chamber Concert of Classical Guitar by DUO SONARE and Madras Guitar and String Ensemble. Sponsored by the German Consulate-General, Lufthansa, Welcomgroup Hotel Park Sheraton (At Museum Theatre, 7.00 p.m.)
Thomas Offermann and Jens Wagner, both university teachers (Berlin, Bremen, Essen), came together in 1984 to form DUO SONARE. They present classical-romantic works on original 19th Century instruments and captivate their audience with Spanish, Latin American, impressionist and modern music.

September 30, October 1: *Opler Helena* by Wolfgang Hildesheimer. Direction: N. Muthusami. Production: Koothu-p-Pattarai. Translation: G. Krishnamurthy. Another attempt at presenting on stage in Tamil translation a play originally written for the German Radio. (MMB Lawns, 7.00 p.m.)

October: Artist of the Month: Arputharani Sengupta, a painter in mixed media, who combines painting and textile construction and who has exhibited in India and abroad. She is currently a lecturer of Fine Arts at Stella Maris College, Madras.



A scene from *The School-KFI play* — *Pages of Violence*.

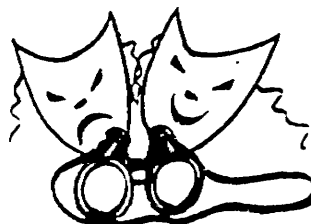
that this exercise is no passing fancy and adds that if the students begin to watch a lot more 'professional' theatre, even as offered by Madras, there will be at least a handful from these schools who will be able to make an impression in local theatre.

Be that as it may, the conviction to come on stage and say what they felt and put in their best effort to say it well, was what was heartening to Kaushik and the other critics and also

the fact that there were no prizes, to take away the fun.

As for the teachers, they hope to provide a platform of interaction between schools which is not based on competition of any kind, which is creative and evolutionary in content and form and presentation. They hope to be able to learn and grow from these interactions. A laudable thought — and it's nice to see it being attempted this way.

THE VIEW FROM THE WINGS



This would appear ironical, considering Madras is where opportunity was given for the modernising of dance by Rukmini Devi Arundale at Kalakshetra, for the Bharatha Nrityam of Padma Subramanian and for the integration of martial arts into Bharatha Natyam by Chandralakha.

There are said to be 6000 dancers waiting for performing opportunities in Madras. How can they grow in their dance if they shut themselves up and see only their own dancing? A pity really.

Refreshing dance festival

"The seminar was a corollary of a dance festival, *Old Texts*, new

festival and very refreshing indeed for Madras.

Psychic magic

An interesting young man I met recently claims to be India's only psychic magician. *The Magic of Dilip Raju* is very theatrical in its presentation but is totally based on psychology and mind-reading. Raju seems to have made the paper I wrote my notes on, while talking to him, disappear. I just can't find it!

Dilip Raju, a Telugu Madras, says he became interested in magic, at the age of seven. He began to learn magic from people he knew and gave his first performance at the age of nine.



Dilip Raju, who hopes to make a *Contessa* car disappear, one day, leaning on one.

Textures, organised by Anita Ratnam's Arangam Trust at the Museum Theatre, Veenapani Chawla of Bombay, Aditi Mangaldas of Delhi, Gitanjali Kolanad of Singapore, Rajika Puri of New York took part in the festival.

The dance performances, unlike the seminar, were well attended. The city's glitterati came to see Anita Ratnam, Gitanjali Kolanad and Rajika Puri perform *Under Her Breath*, based on A K Ramanujan's translations and tales, Aditi Mangaldas' *Explorations in Kathak* and Veenapani Chawla's *A Greater Dawn*. A well thought out

Nine seems to be his special number. Everything that happens to him has something to do with nine. The book on magic he has written has nine chapters and his birth date adds up to nine. He says he combines mental mathematics and psychology and can announce the numbers thought by a person and write next week's headlines of major newspapers!

His new project is to make a *Contessa* car disappear. He says he will make the *Contessa* car travel in a direction it has travelled before (can you guess which way?) and then make it disappear. Well, Madras has to wait for this event!

— V R Devika

A sport is revived....

In a club by the sea

The Royal Madras Yacht Club proudly lays claim to two distinctions. The first, as the inheritor in Madras of the sailing traditions of the Coromandel, known for its sea-faring people and maritime concerns. And the second is the fact that the Club, unlike many others, has held fast to its founding objective: that of promoting sailing in and around the city. But then, it would have indeed been surprising if Madras, with its history of maritime trade, did not have a club devoted to sailing!

The Royal Madras Yacht Club today is firmly anchored at the Spring-heaven Wharf in Madras harbour. Its sparkling white and grey building, with its bright red roof, stands conspicuous against the drab monotony of the harbour annexe. In its sprawling yard facing the wharf, white yachts are propped on holders, their sails neatly folded.

Your first impression of the clubhouse is that it is a curious blend of old world charm and modern ambience — an almost pre-intended combination, you are inclined to think. While the building on the outside looks every bit modern, inside are rooms with paneled walls, adorned with old trophies and older sailing charts. In the main room adjoining the lobby, your attention is drawn to a tattered picture which has the most prominent place on the walls. It depicts a flotilla of ancient yachts, but is marred by three gaping holes, as though it has been shot through. To cap it all, the framed

picture stands secure within another frame!

The story goes that when the marauding German cruiser *Emden* shelled Madras Harbour during World War I, the original clubhouse was hit and pieces of shrapnel damaged the picture. When the clubhouse was shifted, the members took the picture along to the new clubhouse where it hangs today. A reminder of a time that was.

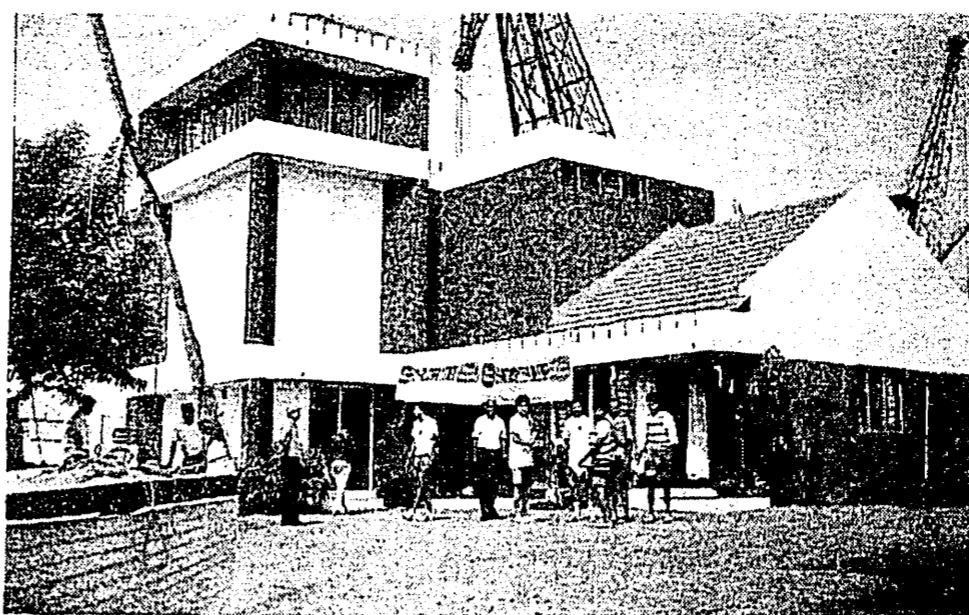
"The history of our Club is intrinsically linked with that of Madras

• by JOSEPH FERNANDEZ

Harbour," says Commodore K R N Menon. "In fact, the founder of the Club, Sir Francis Spring, was the builder of Madras Harbour and first Chairman of the Madras Port Trust." Ironically, the Club's new home is on the site originally chosen by its founder and by the wharf named after him!

The Club seems to have come full circle after being moved several times due to developments in the harbour. But Sir Francis's legacy to Madras continues, as sailing enthusiasts from all walks of life in the city make their way to the Club every weekend.

Come Sunday and action perks up at the Royal Madras Yacht Club. The mornings see the boatyard abuzz with activity as crews set to work on their racing yachts or 'Water Wags', as they are referred to. Within hours, the yachts are skimming across the azure



A view of the Yacht Club's clubhouse with some of the sport's enthusiasts.

sea. But, of course, it isn't quite as easy as it looks.

"In fact, the waters along the Madras coastline are extremely challenging," says Nawaz Currimbhoy, a sailing enthusiast and committee member of the Club. "The sea is extremely choppy," he explains and adds, "It has been known to deter the most skilful sailors." But for all the

inherent danger that the sport poses, safety has always been a top priority of the Club. "In the entire history of the Club, not one life has been lost during the course of a sailing event," adds V R Srikant, another committee member, "And we intend to keep it that way through abundant safety precautions".

After a gruelling three hours out at sea, the crews return sunburnt, tired and ravenously hungry. What is most encouraging about these enthusiasts is that most of them are in their 20's and 30's. And that will definitely go a long way towards ensuring the continuance of a tradition that is nearly a century old.

The Royal Madras Yacht Club was founded by Sir Francis Spring in 1911 as the Madras Sailing Club. Sailing as a sport had existed in the city for

regattas, the first of which was 1924 between the Royal Madras Yacht Club and the Madras Club. The event was continued in 1981 when the Club had to be due to expansion and development of the harbour.

There was a hiatus in the regattas until the new Clubhouse was inaugurated in February 1987. The house was built by the members of the Club without any external finance. In 1987, there has been a tremendous revival," says Currimbhoy. "In line with the past, we have come to international levels over the last few years." In recent years, members like Raj Malhotra and Trevor Ransom made their mark on the local yachting scene.

As always, the accent has been on encouraging young talent. The yachting scene in Madras has seen the emergence of young sailors — Sanjay Srikant and Miss Amarnath, to name just two. Miss Amarnath at the age of nine just might be the youngest girl to go out at sea!

The Club is now considering the purchase of new racing yachts to add to its fleet of Wags. "We are looking at international models, such as the Wags and Enterprises," says Srikant. The objective is to find yachts suited to the waters and in line with modern requirements."

The Club also plans to revive the inter-club regatta with the Colombo Yacht Club after more than a decade. And it has plans for the Games to be held in the city next year.

The last word on this venerable institution comes from Commodore Menon who says, "Our Club maintains its commitment to sailing and its world traditions, while doing everything possible to bring it in line with modern times and requirements in the sport of sailing." And to that admiring sentiment goes an old maritime greeting: May it enjoy fair winds!

The players' Press meet!

The "hut" at a Madras golf course was recently the venue of a rare Press conference. It underscored the transformation that had come over Press briefings on sport since they were launched in the city decades ago by K.S. Ranga Rao, the then Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) secretary. The BCCI founder-president, A.S. de Mellow, was in town, and Ranga Rao wanted T.S. Raman (PTI), S.K. Gurnathan (*The Hindu*) and J.C. Jacob (*The Mail*) to meet the distinguished visitor. They met him in the main hall of Hotel Connemara and, over a cup of tea, had a chat with him on Indian cricket affairs.

The media coverage the first-ever Madras sports Press briefing got, prompted nearly all city clubs to emulate Ranga Rao. They invited the same trio, later joined by S.P. Vasudevan (*Indian Express*), on the eve of their annual tournaments, and briefed them, over a cup of tea, on the entries and prizes. Before long, the briefings came to be held at night, and dinner replaced tea. With the advent of sponsorship in the mid '80s, they underwent another change. They were followed by cocktails and dinner. Several new Tamil dailies and journals having begun to take an interest in sport in the meanwhile, the briefing halls became packed with writers and photographers, all eager to quench their thirst.

But, never was a hall so packed as was the "hut". It was packed not by writers but by a women's golf body's officials, their husbands and competitors in the tournament for which the briefing was being held. The writers' thin attendance was understandable. The "hut" was

by
AJAX

not within easy reach, and there was the possibility of nocturnal reptiles honeymooning on the long, narrow, sparsely-lit lane leading to it.

Anyway, the few journalists who turned up were amused at the scene the "hut" provided. The briefing on a women's tourney, run by a women's body, was presided over by a man. He took the chair, glass in hand. He was so bombarded by queries by players that the briefing turned out to be the most noisy one ever held in Madras. The president repeatedly shouted for silence, but in vain. But a sip after every appeal was solace.

The unprecedented scene of players dominating a Press briefing continued until one writer ventured to ask why the

tournament was labelled a ladies' event, and not a women's one. The president had no answer. He consulted a lady, who informed the writer that the tournament was solely for amateurs and not for professionals. In other words, only an amateur was a lady golfer and every woman golfer was a professional.

What the rest of the country's golfing bodies have to say about the lady's explanation it is easy to guess. But it was significant, not to say ironic, that in his few utterances, the president hailed the highlights of the coming women's tournament, and not ladies' meet!

ANSWERS TO QUIZ

1. Chandrika Kumaratunga; 2. J. Jayalitha; 3. The first Indian woman to swim the English Channel; 4. Ramdas Nayak; 5. Holy saffron water appeared suddenly from the presiding deity's eyes and from the walls of the temple; 6. Linus Pauling; 7. The Esteem; 8. Jaspal Rana (Shooting) and B. Adhisekar (Weightlifting); 9. The Tamil Nadu Reservation Act providing for 69% reservation of seats in colleges in the state; 10. Somalia; 11. Wasim Akram; 12. It is a laser sensor kit, which, when attached to a conventional bomb, enables accurate hitting of targets; 13. Coca-Cola; 14. Taramani; 15. Chiffon-rayon skirts; 16. Jude Felix; 17. Mudalipalayam, Tirupur; 18. Alberto Fujimori of Peru; 19. Powerlifting; 20. Koyambedu and in the Old Zoo area in what was People's Park.

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